



acts

of the general council

year LXXXVI

january-march 2005

N. 388

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

anno LXXXVI
january-march 2005

N. 388

1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA "CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER" (Eph. 5,25) <i>Commentary on the Strenna 2005</i>	3
2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	2.1 Fr Francesco CEREDA INTERPROVINCIAL COLLABORATION IN INITIAL FORMATION	45
3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES	(none in this issue)	
4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL	4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major	66
	4.2 Chronicle of the General Council	74
5. DOCUMENTS	5.1 «When he (Barnabas) came and saw the grace of God, he was glad» (Acts 11,23)	103
	5.2 "Together for the young people of Europe" As Don Bosco did and would do today	108
	5.3 New Salesian Bishops	121
	5.4 The Rector Major appointed a member of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life	123
	5.5 Our dead confreres	124

Editrice S.D.B.
Edizione extra commerciale

Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco
Via della Pisana, 1111
Casella Postale 18333
00163 Roma

Tipolitografia 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: gennaio 2005

«CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH
AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER » (Eph. 5,25)

Commentary on the Strenna 2005

The reason. - Rejuvenating the Church: a gift and a task. - A testimony, a model, an image. - Church, the *light of all nations*, mystery and sacrament of salvation. - The Church, at one with the joys and hopes of humanity. - Union of the Church with the entire human family. - To whom is the Council addressed. - At the service of men. - Towards a youthful image of the Church. - A witnessing Church. - A liturgical Church. - An evangelizing Church. - A serving Church. - Ecclesial sense in Don Bosco and in Salesian tradition. - For a pedagogy of being Church and living with the Church. - Making the Church known. - Making the meaning of Church more widely known. - Gaining experience of Church. - Leading others to find vocation in the Church. - By way of conclusion: like the colours of the rainbow.

Rome, 1 January 2005
Solemnity of Mary Mother of God

My Dear Confreres,

I greet you with all the affection God the Father has for us, giving us his only begotten Son born of Mary through the power of the Spirit.

I do so at the beginning of 2005, in which we shall celebrate the 40th anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, which was a real Pentecost for the Church, called to continually renew itself so as to reflect more faithfully the face of her Lord.

This is the reason why I felt called to propose to the whole Salesian Family as the Strenna, that is, as a real spiritual and pastoral programme for this year, the task of **rejuvenating the face of the Church**. Someone might ask where this idea came from, what inspired it. Well my reply is twofold. On the one

hand, because travelling around the Congregation throughout the world I become aware of the need there is to recover, where it has been lost and to strengthen where it is weak, affection for the Church, who is *the Mother of our faith*. On the other hand, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, speaking about the action of the Spirit the sanctifier in the life of the Church says that "by the power of the Gospel He makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Constantly He renews it and leads it to perfect union with its Spouse." (LG4).

I also took the decision, in agreement with the General Council, to present as my circular letter at the beginning of this year my commentary on the Strenna, so as not to multiply messages and to encourage the assimilation of those that are offered. If in some Provinces there is the danger of indigestion from so many documents that are read without leaving time for personal assimilation, in others there is the problem of trying to keep up to date because of the difficulty in translating and presenting to the communities the documents that arrive, so that they struggle when they receive so many documents and consequently often fall behind, which can create a two or three speed Congregation. There is also another factor in favour of this idea, which I consider the most important one, and it is the attempt to offer an annual formation help for the whole Salesian Family to whom the Strenna is addressed, which then helps so strengthen in all the members a sense of belonging to the spiritual and apostolic family of Don Bosco. I am sure that my decision will be well understood and readily accepted by all of you.

This time I don't even provide information about the visits made to the Provinces in these months, although it would be worth doing so since it helps people to know the Congregation better and to appreciate the confreres and what they are doing in many very different contexts. This then throws light on attitudes, customs and behaviour both personal and communitarian that deserve consideration to encourage and launch forward all

the Provinces with Don Bosco's pastoral daring and imagination. I have noticed how in this regard the letters about the Regions are producing what I hoped for: an increase in knowledge of the Congregation and co-responsibility in her progress. It is an effective way of fostering communion and participation.

Among the events in which I have taken part in this period, the most important without doubt was the **World Congress on Consecrated Life** which with the theme "*Passion for God – passion for humanity*", wanted to face up with sincerity and humility to the current situation of a way of life that since the Vatican Council has been going through a process of renewal and which little by little is beginning to indicate the features of her new face. The Congress tried to be open to the newness of the Spirit, which continues to raise up seeds for new growth with forms of life that then become more meaningful intelligible and effective in the evangelisation of culture. The conclusions reached, while being illuminating and providing suggestions for the future, make an appeal to the will for conversion of each and every religious, so as to make clear the *absolute primacy of God* in our life, which is seen in an intense life of dialogue with God in which is nourished the *desire for brotherhood* and the *passion for the salvation* of men. I hope you have had the opportunity and been interested enough to follow the event on the website "Vidimus Dominum" which provided a wonderful service for religious around the world. In any case I hope to be able to share with you on another occasion the reflections this Congress offered me and their consequences for Salesian life and mission.

A first opportunity for sharing some thoughts about the Congress I had in the "Good nights" that I gave to the community of the Generalate and to the UPS Vice Province, and in the **Meeting with the Provincials of Europe** held at the Salesianum between 1st and 5th December, to reflect on our Salesian presence in this continent which is going through a quite rapid process of profound changes which provide new opportunities

for Salesian life and mission, and at the same time challenge it and oblige us to make decisions to modify the structures so as to repond more significantly and effectively to the needs of the young. I invite you to read among the documents in section 5 of these Acts the addresses I gave at the beginning and at the end of the meeting, where you will be able to find described both the aims we set ourselves and a summary of the more important conclusions reached. On Sunday 5 December, at the end of the meeting we had the gift and the joy of being able to offer a personal greeting to the Holy Father John Paul II in his house.

I won't expand on the matter as I prefer now to leave the word to the commentary on the Strenna with best wishes for the New Year. May Mary take us by the hand and guide us throughout 2005. From her we shall learn to love the Church as Christ loved her and gave himself for her.

The reason

There was a man sent by God whose name was Angelo; or rather, whose name was John. Yes, John XXIII, the good Pope who one day was prompted by the Spirit to rise up and proclaim a new Spring for the Church. With an unexpected gesture he not only opened the windows but threw wide the doors as well so that the Spirit could enter. The Second Vatican Council which he convoked was like a cyclone entering unexpectedly into a closed and blocked up environment, "*the rush of a mighty wind*" (Acts 2,2) as in the Cenacle on the day of Pentecost.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the ending of the Second Vatican Council, and in the light of *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, which have enabled us to see the Church as a Mystery, the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Mother of believers and Servant of the world, we are conscious as members of the Salesian Family that "it is the Church's task to reflect the light of Christ in every historical period, to make his face shine al-

so before the generations of the new millennium" (NMI 16). And so, reliving that extraordinary event, we commit ourselves to

**Rejuvenate the face of the Church,
the Mother of our faith.**

Rejuvenating the Church: a gift and a task

We could not fail to commemorate with grateful hearts this anniversary of the conclusion of Vatican II, a great event of the Spirit that was a real Pentecost for the universal Church. Already my predecessor, Fr Egidio Viganò had declared that it would be our guiding compass for the third millennium. Today our task is to take up and bring to fruition the dynamism stemming from the Council, an authentic blast of fresh air which filled with the Holy Spirit the lungs of the Church, in whose continued renewal we commit ourselves to collaborate. The Council's Constitutions *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, enriched by the recent reflection of *Novo millennio ineunte*, will be our point of reference.

Unlike the previous Strenna this new one will not be followed by a *pastoral proposal*. At the time I explained that such a proposal would be with us for several years; it was impractical to think that the commitments it suggested could be put into effect in a short time. And so for this year too it continues to be the objective and point of reference for the pastoral initiatives to be realised in the different places where the Congregation and the Salesian Family carry out their service to the Church and to the young. This is true to an even greater extent with regard to our commitment for youthful holiness, which finds in our pastoral plan its focus and in the present Strenna a great incentive.

Rejuvenating the Church is both an exciting gift and a demanding task; but what does rejuvenating mean? I will begin from the negative point of view of what it does *not* mean. It is

not a matter of a face-lift or cosmetic surgery, such as would be well suited to today's consumer culture of the ephemeral and the transitory, but hardly in harmony with the renewing power of the Spirit. Nor is it a question of making a few external changes or superficial adjustments, so as to make it seem that the Church has been updated to modern times in the manner of other social institutions. To make her beautiful and attractive we have to provide her with new vigour as does the Holy Spirit; we must do what Jesus does: love the Church and spend ourselves for her.

The theme of this year's Strenna is best explained by the passage in the Letter to the Ephesians, which says: "*Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her.... So that he might present her to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish*" (Eph 5,25-27). This beautiful text is both constructive and intriguing; it needs to be studied, contemplated, and lived out. The fundamental meaning is evident: Christ loves the Church, he purifies her, sanctifies her and nourishes her. He loves her out of his goodness and not for his own satisfaction. The Church spoken of here is not an ideal or something abstract but the concrete Church in history. Christ transforms her to make her beautiful, resplendent, true and holy. He takes the initiative in her regard, and spares himself nothing to remove from her every spot and wrinkle.

This is our task: to love the Church as Christ loved her, to the extent of giving ourselves completely for her. The beauty of the Church's countenance must reflect the beauty of her Lord, the Crucified and Risen Christ. It is the beauty of the love revealed to us by Jesus in his passion, "the fairest of the sons of men" (Ps 45,3), "a man of sorrows, despised and rejected by men" (Is 53,3), "by whose stripes we are healed" (Is 53,5c). It is the beauty of the love that in the resurrection could roll back the stone that closed the tomb and sit upon it, with the cloths that

were wrapped round the crucified one left on the ground and the veil covering the face folded and set aside, thus inaugurating the new creation (Mk 16,2; Jn 20,6-7). This is the beauty that will save the world and that we are called upon to make shine out in the Church. It is not vanity; it is the beauty of love.

Our task is also to bring it about that the Church resembles ever more the “*new Jerusalem*” (cf. *Rev 21, 10-23*), coming down from heaven and adorned like a bride for her husband; to ensure that she may be a community renewed by the breath of the Spirit which animates her and makes everything new; a community enriched by multiple charisms and ministries which keep it alive and dynamic; a community open and welcoming, especially to the poor, to whom it is sent and among whom it becomes credible and a beacon of light; a community that lives passionately for freedom, justice, peace and solidarity – values to which men and women of today are particularly sensitive; a community which is the leaven of hope for a society worthy of man and for a culture rich in ethical and spiritual values, to ensure that the Church becomes ever more a youthful Church, in which young people feel themselves at home as in a family.

The new Jerusalem “is an image that speaks of an eschatological reality, that is, one that touches on the last things, that goes beyond what man can do by his own efforts. This heavenly Jerusalem is a gift of God reserved for the end of time. But it is not a Utopia. It is a reality that can begin to exist here and now... Wherever there is an effort to speak and work for peace and reconciliation, even temporary, in every kind of human community life corresponding to the values of the Gospel, there is a break through which even now gives grounds for hope”.¹

Rejuvenating the Church means making her return to her original youthful state; like the Churches of the Acts of the

¹ C.M. MARTINI, *Perché la Bibbia è il libro del futuro dell'Europa?*, Cesano Boscone, 9 May 2004.

Apostles, of the Letters of St Paul, of the Book of Revelation, she lives by the strength of Easter and the power of Pentecost, she realises the truth of Christ and freedom of the Spirit; she recalls the "first love" (cf. Hosea 2,9). A Church which returns to her apostolic roots is courageous in *martyria*, that is in bearing witness to Jesus and his Gospel even to the extent of giving up life itself. She is characterized by the *euangelia*, that is, the communication of the Gospel to all; evangelization is the reason for her existence, as is explicitly stated in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the most important document on evangelization, promulgated by Paul VI ten years after the ending of the Council. She is brought together by *leitourgia*, because salvation is not just a victory to be gained but a reality to be celebrated with gratitude and made present and effective in every time and place. She is committed in *diakonia*, the significance of which is clearly dealt with in *Gaudium et Spes*: the Church is not the mistress of the world, but its servant.

Rejuvenating the Church means making it a home for the young. The Church will be young when it includes young people, especially nowadays when – at least in some parts of the world – there is a growing disaffection because of the Church's visible appearance. In consequence a mystagogic and pedagogical process must be devised to bring in young people and lead them to become Church. At this point the enlightening image of the disciples of Emmaus comes to mind once again: it helps us to understand the Church as mother and teacher, the travelling companion of all men and women who are looking for the meaning of life. She opens them to the revelation of God in Scripture, enlightens their minds and warms their hearts, offers the communion of the Body of Christ and so become community. It is a matter of making the Church the home of all who believe in the risen Christ and want to testify to their faith in him. The *Strenna*, therefore, is an invitation to make the Church young, and to make young people the Church.

John Paul II, in his message for the Fifth World Youth Day in

1990, wrote to all the world's youth telling them amongst other things: "Take your place in the Church, which is not only for those to whom pastoral care is directed but especially for those who play an active part in her mission. The Church is yours and, indeed, you *are* the Church". It is an invitation to the young in every place and time.

A testimony, a model, an image

In an effort to explain the meaning of the Strenna I want to offer you a testimony, a model and an image or icon.

First a **testimony** which has always remained vivid in my mind and heart. I was greatly impressed by the witness of *Fr Vecchi* during his illness, not so much because he was the Rector Major but because of the sign it gave of the identification of a man with God's will when it least coincided with his own. When the cross of his sickness was suddenly presented to him without any warning, he accepted it as something that deserved his love, His attitude was that of a true believer, of one who had many times consoled others afflicted by suffering and who, when his own faith was tried, showed himself a true son of Abraham, the father of all believers.

After his operation, *Fr Vecchi* had nourished the hope of a complete recovery, supported by the prayers of the whole Salesian Family who entrusted him to the intercession of his uncle, Blessed Artemides Zatti. As a good administrator he had many plans in mind, but he had to learn the significance of the words that Jesus said to Peter: "When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another will put a belt around you and lead you where you do not wish to go" (Jn 21, 18b). And so he willingly accepted his illness as a new message from God; and it found him ready; as the tumour developed, he came to realize that the Lord was preparing him for the great encounter.

While we were together for the retreat, he asked to be given the sacrament of the sick, after making his confession to Fr Brocardo. On that occasion he made his profession of faith in the presence of the members of the General Council, the Rector of the Generalate and a small number of other confreres. "I thank God", he said, "for giving me a mother in the Church. She has brought me to birth as a son of God. She has helped me to grow and mature through the Word and the Sacraments. She enabled me to find my vocation, my role in the Church and in society. She has accompanied me in every moment of my life, and is waiting for me as a true mother in heaven". Then he added: "now I entrust the Congregation to you. Take it in hand and carry it forward".

This was the testimony of a believer, of one who had experienced the Church as a Mother, who had given proof of his faith and who, at the moment of entrusting himself to God, had said with Paul: "I am certain that neither death nor life... nor any creature whatsoever will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8, 38-39).

And now I suggest a *model* for you. Last summer I was in Annecy, a place rich in significance for us because it speaks to us of *St Francis de Sales*, the model from whom Don Bosco drew certain spiritual and pastoral features. We recall his love of the Church, which made him prudent but decisive with the Calvinists who would not even let him take possession of his diocese; we remember the zeal of the good shepherd, who offered rest to the faithful in the green pastures of the gospel and went in search of the lost sheep; the well known kindness which he adopted as a pastoral method and for which he became known to everyone, and even to his opponents; his optimistic humanism which convinced him of the goodness of creation and the force for good to be found in every individual, even though he was aware of the wounds of sin; the conviction that holiness is open to all and must be lived according to the particular calling of each one.

By studying St Francis de Sales, we discover his sense of Church, derived from his spirituality and his pastoral ministry. For us he is an example to be imitated in being Church and in building the Church, decisive in his choices but at the same time magnanimous in manner. He is the holy patron given us by Don Bosco as an intercessor and model from whom to draw inspiration. And so in the various places I visited I prayed intensely, asking him to obtain for us the grace of the same love for the Church that he had, together with his ability to overcome its opponents with faith and kindness.

And finally I offer you an **icon** or image. It is the *Redemptoris Mater* Chapel, the masterpiece in the apostolic palace in Rome which represents the homage of the Cardinals to John Paul II on the occasion of the great jubilee of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Saviour of the world. In eloquent fashion it presents the Church to us as Mother. It is conceived in the Byzantine style, full of colour, light and movement. How I would like everyone to have the opportunity to visit the chapel and admire this beautiful representation of the Church as Mother.

Everything in her acquires dynamism and splendour. The cosmos is rich with life and meaning, thanks to the realization of God's saving design, from the creation of the world to its consummation when we shall all be everything in Christ. In it is presented the story of salvation, as narrated in the letter to the Ephesians (1, 3-14). The originality of this chapel lies precisely in the fact that it was conceived as an icon, telling us of God's saving plan and of its realisation in the Church as its sacrament. Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, is our Mother from the beginning of the world in Eve to the foot of the Cross, to the birth of the Church in the Cenacle, right down to the end of the world as the woman in glory. She is an icon of the Church our Mother.

Church, the *light of all nations*, mystery and sacrament of salvation

The Church is called to reflect the splendour of Christ, who is the “light of all nations,” to enlighten humanity which on the one hand is dazzled by its own scientific and technical discoveries and its own economic power, to the point of thinking that it can do without God, and on the other hand is enveloped in the darkness of poverty, social, racial and inter-ethnic conflict, relativism and moral confusion. The Church has still an essential role to play even in the changed circumstances of the present day; she is no longer, as some would have us think, in that phase of history in which science and human knowledge were incapable of responding to many questions, and in consequence the Church had to supply for the lack; the Church’s task is to enlighten humanity with the Gospel.

The first words of *Lumen Gentium*, the dogmatic Constitution on the Church, are significant and express the Church’s role at the present day: “Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, to bring the light of Christ to all men”. Pope John XXIII had spoken of the Church as the “light of all nations”; using the same expression the Council applies to Christ who is the “light of all nations” and shines on the Church’s countenance. In this way the Council takes up the oracular words of Simeon attributed to the Saviour (Lk 2, 32).²

According to the teaching of the Council the origin of the Church precedes history because she already existed in the primordial design of the Father, who wanted her to be the *sacrament of salvation*. The Son, at God’s side from all eternity, entered his-

² Cf. J. GALOT, *Il Cristo Rivelatore, fondatore della Chiesa e principio di vita*, in *Vaticano II - Bilancio e prospettive, venticinque anni dopo 1962-1987*, ed. R. LATOURELLE, Cittadella, Assisi 1987, pp. 343-360.

tory by means of the incarnation, and so gives a beginning to the Church in time. But nevertheless it is in returning to eternity that he becomes the principle of the life and development of the Church; the resurrection, in fact, made it possible for him to send forth the Spirit, who is the Church's soul.³ The Church therefore comes from the Trinity: "*Ecclesia de Trinitate*".

"The structure of the Church is based on two foundations, both of them equally essential: Christ and the Holy Spirit: Christ is her origin, end and limit; the Holy Spirit is the light which makes Christ resplendent to the eye, and the strength that leads her on her path to the Father. Without Christ the Church would not *be* what she is; without the Spirit the Church would not *know* what she is".⁴ Christ is the foundation of the Church; the Spirit is the memorial of Christ and the awareness of the Church. The Spirit has a triple ecclesial function: he is the *consoler* during the time that Jesus is physically absent, fostering the expectation of the Church which as a bride awaits the return of her Spouse; he is the *advocate* in our struggle against personal and social sin; he is the *teacher* who reminds us of the words of Christ and reveals him to us.

The vitality of the Church is proportionate to the fidelity with which she listens to and follows the voice of the Spirit. The latter, living in her, leads her unceasingly to Christ because, meeting herself in him as she does, she becomes renewed through lovingly contemplating him in attentive meditation on his words and fearless implementation of his message. The Spirit continues to mould the Church, conforming her to Christ; and the Church finds fulfilment by becoming aware of being founded on Christ.

"The first characteristic of the Church's self-awareness therefore is that of being a mystery, insofar as she has God him-

³ Ibid p. 347.

⁴ O. GONZÁLEZ, *La nuova coscienza della Chiesa*, in *La Chiesa del Vaticano II*, Opera collettiva diretta da G. BARAÚNA, Vallecchi, Florence 1965, pp. 238-239.

self as constitutive element and source of life. Down through the centuries the Church will try to be ever more deeply immersed in this her constitutive reality, knowing that she can never exhaust it even though she is ever more drawn towards it.⁵

This kind of awareness was present in Paul VI at the inauguration of the second session of the Council. "From where does our process begin, what path do we intend to follow and what goal do we intend to reach? These three questions have a single response that we must proclaim here and now to ourselves and to the world. Christ is our beginning, Christ our guide and our way, Christ our hope and our goal... The Church is mystery, that is a reality imbued with the divine presence and hence always capable of new and deeper exploration... The awareness of the Church is clarified in her faithful adherence to the words and thought of Christ, in the reverent recalling of the authoritative teaching of ecclesiastical tradition, and in docility to interior enlightenment by the Holy Spirit".⁶

The Church does not stop at self-contemplation; she always refers herself to Christ, from whom she receives life and of whom she knows she must be a living reflection, and to the Spirit who gives her this knowledge and by means of Christ leads her to the Father. Her contemplation is a conscious "act of thanksgiving – Eucharist – to him who lives in her, awaiting acceptance and vital response."⁷ This is the message of the author of the Letter to the Hebrews to encourage the community of believers, afraid as they were because of difficulties and tempted to give up, urging them to keep their mind on Jesus, "the Apostle and High Priest of our faith" (Heb 3, 1), and to "look to Jesus the founder of our faith, who will bring it to completion" (Heb 12, 2a).

⁵ Ibid p. 240.

⁶ PAUL VI, *Opening address, second session of the Council*, 29 September 1963, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum 1*, EDB, Bologna, 1993, nn.143-145.150.153.

⁷ Cf. O. GONZÁLEZ, *La nuova coscienza della Chiesa*, op. cit., p. 241.

The same point was made by Cardinal John Baptist Montini, when he was Archbishop of Milan: "The Church does not exist to be a thing of beauty looking at herself in a mirror and saying to herself: 'how beautiful I am as spouse of the Lord'; the church exists *propter nos et propter nostram salutem*... For this reason she seeks to update herself, discarding if necessary an old regal mantle for a simpler kind of dress more in keeping with modern tastes".⁸ From this derives the Church's duty in every age to make clear more precisely the awareness she has of herself, and discover the aspects that need to be reformed for the salvation of all.

When in the Creed we say that "we believe in the Church", we do not mean that we have faith in the human reality of the Church, which as such is limited and imperfect, but we believe that God reveals himself in this human reality which is sanctified by the Spirit and made by him the "Body of Christ" and an instrument of salvation. Hence to believe in the Church is to discover her true mystery, to believe in God who reveals to us what the Church is: it implies welcoming her as the place of salvation and loving her as such".⁹

The Church, at one with *the joys and hopes of humanity*

The Church lives her mystery in every period of history, and endeavours to provide a response to the burning questions of the day, in the light of the past and with an eye to the future. She knows she is at the world's service, because she was born from Christ, "who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10,45). Pope Pius XI used to say: "The world does not exist for the Church, but rather

⁸ G.B. MONTINI, *Discorsi e scritti milanesi*, vol. III: 1954-1963, ed. G.E. MANZONI, Istituto Paolo VI, Brescia, 1997, p. 930.

⁹ Cf. *Seguir a Jesucristo en esta Iglesia*, Pastoral letter of the Bishops of Pamplona and Tudela, Bilbao, San Sebastián and Vitoria, Lent - Easter 1989, pp. 13-16.

the Church for the world". The Church in fact must relate to the Lord who calls her, to the world to which she is sent, and to the Kingdom she promotes in the heart of the world.

It is of interest to point out some elements, internal and external, that have contributed to the direction of Vatican II's ecclesiology. I think they are well summed up in the following theological reflection: "Over the past 25 years society and the Churches of the Christian West have seen transformations that cause serious problems for western Christianity in the spreading of the Christian message. Economic and scientific development has taken place at a dizzy rate. The classical model of society is undergoing a crisis. The rebellion of the Third World against any form of neo-colonialism has called into question the superiority of the West. The Churches cannot be deaf to the emancipation of women, to the widespread diffusion of a new kind of culture among the young, and to the enormous problems of an economic, demographic and ecological order. Within them there is an ever growing tendency towards a greater participation of all the members at the two moments when decisions are formulated and taken, and at times of effective dialogue with other Churches and religions. The Church's commitment to what is good for man means she must defend his rights wherever they are violated. In the Latin-American continent, bishops, theologians and other men of the Church have made a preferential option for the "poor", understood in a wider sense than that of economic poverty alone. In recent years the "poor" have begun to participate in a real way in the political and ecclesial lives of Latin-American countries. From being objects of evangelization they have become transformed into evangelizers".¹⁰

Certainly the political, social, economic, cultural and even religious situations have changed even more over the last 15 years,

¹⁰ A. ANTON, *L'Ecclesiologia postconciliare: speranze, risultati, prospettive*, in *Vaticano II - Bilancio e prospettive venticinque anni dopo 1962-1987*, ed. R. LATOURELLE, Cittadella, Assisi 1987, p. 363.

that is, since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. With the ending of the cold war a new supremacy appeared and a neo-liberal economy was imposed. The situation took a new turn on 11 September 2001 when Islamic terrorism first made its dramatic appearance on the international stage, leading some people to speak of a “clash of civilizations”, but no one at present would venture to forecast how the present conflict will develop. Nevertheless the approach of the Church to the human situation is still valid: humanity is still the objective of and challenge to her activity, and ever more valid is the perspective, inaugurated by the pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, of speaking of faith not in the abstract but starting from human lived experience and historical events.

Two new aspects of today's Church were presented by *Gaudium et Spes*; they reveal a new awareness of being not the mistress but the servant of the world: the attitude of dialogue and the message of optimism.

The attitude of dialogue stems from the recognition of the fundamental union between the order of creation and that of redemption. The Church fully recognizes the dignity of human nature and human rights; she defends authentic human values and cooperates with all men and women of good will in the building of a more human world. With this attitude of dialogue the Church takes part in the common search for solutions to the grave problems causing so much anxiety at the present day. In this collaboration her objective is not to *make sacred* civil society, and still less to ‘*ecclesialise*’ it, because she recognizes the autonomy of the temporal order given it by its Creator. By her action the Church makes the inestimable contribution of the light of the Gospel, with which she is able to speak of eternal values when human knowledge can go no further.

Nowadays the Church knows that dialogue is absolutely necessary for her, as an expression of her mystery of communion and of unity in diversity, as a perceptible sign of her commit-

ment to create synergy with other religions and other Christian churches, with all men and women of good will, to collaborate in the building of a "civilization of justice, love and peace".

This involves a rethinking of the content and style of pastoral service. Its content is the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the sign of the new humanity, to collaborate in the transformation of society with all who do good, and to denounce whatever threatens harm to the dignity of the human person. Its style is that of respect for diversity without seeming to want to impose anything on anyone, of openness and honesty with all, and of the wish to be of service without compromising principles.

The *message of optimism*, in turn, seeks to embody the Gospel in the sense magnificently summed up by John: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life" (Jn 3, 16). Love of the world; love of humanity. This is in effect the message of optimism that *Gaudium et Spes* has proclaimed in the post-conciliar world, and to which post-conciliar theology has not remained indifferent. The Church has opted for total solidarity with humanity and its conquests, offering the ultimate meaning these have in the divine plan of the Creator.

The spreading of this message has been the principal task of the post-conciliar Church at universal level and especially at the level of the Churches of the Third World. For its implementation pastors, theologians and simple faithful have worked together; tensions that have arisen have never led to the questioning of this fundamental collaboration; on the contrary, such tensions have been the source of fresh energy.

The result of these processes of dialogue and optimism is the awakening of new ecclesial awareness among the great masses of Christians, who now feel themselves to be participants and, from certain points of view, leaders of ecclesial life in their communities. Moreover the Christian is beginning to learn to make himself a man among men, without on this account renouncing

his divine vocation. This obliges him to harmonize his tasks in the world with his eternal destiny. His Christian faith prompts him to place himself at the service of men and to see in the most deprived a brother needing help to free himself from oppression and live as a son of God.¹¹

Today the *Preface to Gaudium et Spes*, still remains both beautiful and inspiring, because it preserves all its freshness and its active force; and so I will not resist the temptation to transcribe it, not least because new generations may not know it or be less familiar with it. I will not hide from you my joy and enthusiasm for this vision of the Church, which I want to share with all the members of the Salesian Family, so that they can pass it on to our young people, that they in turn may love her and spend themselves for her.

Union of the Church with the entire human family

“The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.”¹²

To whom is the Council addressed

“Hence this Second Vatican Council, having probed more profoundly into the mystery of the Church, now addresses it-

¹¹ Cf. A. ANTON, op. cit., pp. 386ss.

¹² *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1.

self without hesitation, not only to the sons of the Church and to all who invoke the name of Christ, but to the whole of humanity. For the Council yearns to explain to everyone how it conceives the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today.

“Therefore, the Council focuses its attention on the world of men, the whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theatre of man’s history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumphs; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker’s love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin yet emancipated now by Christ, who was crucified and rose again to break the stranglehold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God’s design and reach its fulfilment.¹³

At the service of men

“Though mankind is struck with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity. Hence, giving witness and voice to the faith of the whole people of God gathered together by Christ, this Council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for, the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in dialogue about these various problems. The Council brings to mankind light kindled from the Gospel, and puts at its disposal those saving resources which the Church herself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, receives from her Founder. For the human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed. Hence the

¹³ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 2.

focal point of our total presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will.

“Therefore, this sacred Synod, proclaiming the noble destiny of man and championing the Godlike seed which has been sown in him, offers to mankind the honest assistance of the Church in fostering that brotherhood of all men which corresponds to this destiny of theirs. Inspired by no earthly ambition, the Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served.”¹⁴

There, dear confreres, you have the reason why the presence of the Church in the world is so precious. She is the light that helps us to discover God’s plan for humanity and leads the intelligence to solutions that are fully human. She is the leaven working for the deep transformation of humanity by engrafting energy for what is good. She is the unifying force in the task of raising up today’s society. If it is true that the Church has need of humanity, of which she is a part and with which she shares joys and hopes, anxieties and suffering, it is equally certain that humanity, in which she is called to be “the salt of the earth”, the light of the world”, and “the city on the mountain-top”, needs the Church.

The Church exists to be a sign of the Kingdom of God. For this sign to be visible and credible the Church must be renewed and converted, rejuvenated and purified. For this she must deepen her own fundamental options: zeal for God, who frees her from any conformation to the world in her criteria, values, attitudes and behaviour; she must deepen fraternity and ecclesial communion, so as to become a point of reference for the world and be attractive and convincing; she must deepen her missionary endeavour which helps her to overcome the fear or timidity

¹⁴ *Gaudium et spes*, n. 3.

of the disciples gathered in the Cenacle behind closed doors, and lead her to proclaim the Gospel to all; she must deepen her commitment to service, developing sympathy and solidarity towards all and especially the poor, who are the benchmark of her identity, quality and fruitfulness.

Towards a youthful image of the Church

It is especially from the *Acts of the Apostles*, which present the origin of the Church to us, that we can draw inspiration, purpose and dynamism for firmly committing ourselves to the task of rejuvenating the Church. As I said at the beginning of this reflection, in the Acts are found the specific and essential traits of a Church which wants to remain faithful to her Lord and be fruitful in her dealings with the world.

A witnessing Church

In the first place the Church manifests a “martyrial” nature, that is, she can explain the reason for her faith, why she is called to bear witness to the Crucified and Risen Lord. For this reason the Church is frequently *countercultural*, in the sense that she brings a Gospel that clashes with the mentality of the world. It is in this paradoxical aspect which appears very clearly in the sermon on the mount in Matthew’s gospel and in the discourse in the plain in that of Luke; that all her prophetic force and effectiveness are to be found.

Certainly the courage to oppose the prevailing mentality, to denounce ways of acting that are widespread but not less unjust on that account, can lead to isolation and rejection, and in certain cases to persecution and even death, as many of our brothers and sisters have experienced for themselves in various parts of the world. In line with what Jesus said in the sermon on the mount and particularly in the Beatitudes, it could be said that when believers are not persecuted, despised or marginalized in

some way, they must ask themselves whether they are failing in their prophetic role. Anyone who is an accomplice in the sins of the present-day world, who does not cause trouble and crises, who does not speak out against the dramatic problems that afflict us but which no one wants to talk about, such a one is a betrayer of the Gospel.

An authentic faith, on the other hand, is always accompanied by martyrdom, by the witness lived out in the daily routine, in the fulfilment of duty one's, in commitment in the Church and in society. It should not be forgotten that the martyrs of yesterday and today, those canonized and those not officially recognized, are not only the glory of the Church but also a point of reference for all believers, called to bear witness to their faith in every circumstance of life.

A liturgical Church

Secondly, the Church is a "liturgical" community, which celebrates its faith, helps new children grow through Christian initiation, and leads the believer to the full configuration to Christ. The liturgy is a true school of holiness, because it transforms personal and community life into prayer. Even though disaffection for the Church may often seem to originate in the lack of attractiveness of so many liturgies, neither the need nor the value of an authentic life of celebration can be ignored. In addition to the need for a liturgical catechesis which introduces us to the mysteries and helps us to mature in faith, this implies taking care over the quality of the celebrations, so that they may be simple but dignified, beautiful and fruitful.

In our celebrations we must recover the sense of gratuity and of mystery, the reasons for the celebration and its community dimension. We are urged to give to the liturgy its due place as the "source and culmination of Christian life" (SC 10). Here I want to refer in particular to the *Eucharist*, the supreme sacrament of the love of Christ and of union with him. In the Eucharist each one receives Christ and Christ receives each one.

We must never forget, as De Lubac used to say: “the Church makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the Church”.

This makes the *Sunday Eucharist* of capital importance: it is an encounter that strengthens our awareness of being members of a people travelling through the world with its gaze fixed on heaven. Taking part in the Sunday celebration means taking the life of the whole week to make of it an offering to God, and a witness in society to the fact that for us God is God and that Jesus Christ is alive and working in our community. Fidelity to the command “*Do this in memory of me*” (Lk 22, 19) refers to the liturgical action, but also to the task of making it relevant and prolonging it in the offering of one’s own life for the salvation of the world.

We must learn to live *Sunday* as the day of the Church, the day of man, the day of the Lord. Particularly relevant is Preface 10 of the Sundays of Ordinary Time, which presents this day as an anticipation of the “endless Sunday” when man will find himself finally free from all work and toil, from tears and death itself, and will enjoy peace, love and life without end.

John Paul II has proclaimed October 2004 to October 2005 the *Year of the Eucharist*, in the framework of the pastoral project of *Novo millennio ineunte*, in which he asked every Christian to “start again from Christ”, to “measure up to the high demands of the Christian life”, and to be assiduous in the “art of prayer”. For us it is important to live this year in harmony with the whole Church, The Eucharist “is the privileged place where communion is ceaselessly proclaimed and nurtured. Precisely through sharing in the Eucharist, *the Lord’s Day* also becomes *the Day of the Church*, when she can effectively exercise her role as the sacrament of unity” (NMI 36).

An evangelizing Church

The third characteristic element of the Church concerns her evangelizing force and ability to proclaim Christ and his Gospel.

Tertullian said that “*Christians are not born; they are made*”.¹⁵ This “is an assertion particularly relevant to our own times, because today we are in the midst of widespread processes of dechristianisation that give rise to indifference and agnosticism. The usual means of passing on the faith has proved impracticable in many cases. It cannot be taken for granted that people know who Jesus Christ is, that they are aware of the Gospel, that they have some experience of Church. This is true of children, young people and adults; it is true of our own people and obviously true of so many immigrants coming from other cultures and religions. There is need therefore of a *renewed first proclamation of the faith*”.¹⁶

It should be kept in mind that, at least in Europe, there is a growing number of families who no longer ask for their children to be baptized, with a corresponding increase in the number of baptized children who do not proceed to other sacraments and in those who after receiving the sacrament of Confirmation no longer attend Church.

The appeal becomes the more pressing therefore for a serious process of evangelization. This is achieved nowadays through a free and cordial welcome that makes people receptive to the proclamation of the Gospel, with the explicit declaration of Christ as Saviour of the world, listening to God’s word, and a personal follow-up which helps people to mature “until Christ is formed in them” (Gal 4, 19).

The purpose is to form disciples who are in love with Christ and faithful imitators of the Lord Jesus, who know that their vocation consists in being “*salt of the earth*”, “*light of the world*” and “*a city on the mountain top*” or, in other words, men and women who make the Gospel their programme of life and are

¹⁵ TERTULLIAN, *Apologetic*, 18, 4.

¹⁶ ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE, *Il volto missionario delle Parrocchie in un mondo che cambia. Nota pastorale*, Notiziario della Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, Numero 5-6, 1 July 2004, p. 140.

conscious of the responsibility they have "before men." For Jesus the disciple is as necessary for the world as salt is for the preservation of food, or light for seeing. The possibility exists of the disciple denying his faith. In this case what Jesus says about salt retains all its force which could be expressed as follows: "You are my disciples, but if the disciple loses his characteristics, who can give them back to him? He is no longer of any use to the world. He is like an object that can be thrown away, because it is scorned and trodden underfoot by men".

A serving Church

Finally the Church has a 'diaconal' characteristic; she knows that her mission is one of service to the people of God and to the world. This is not a task exclusive to the Pope, bishops, priests, religious or committed lay people; it is a duty of all the baptized who by reason of their baptism share the mission of their Lord and Master. This means they must learn to serve, be attentive to the needs of others, take the initiative in meeting them, being generous in giving help, and in general become apostles.

Christians are called to help men and women to overcome disenchantment and apathy, to enjoy the finer aspects of life, to be able to dream of a future made to man's measure, to establish new relationships between individuals and States, to respect nature, to put an end to war once and for all. It may be that even among believers lurks a certain scepticism whether a world better than the present one is possible. The Church cannot disappoint legitimate expectations and aspirations, especially those that are deeply rooted in populations well-to-do or penniless, hungry or sated, of West or East, North or South.

A serving Church is at one with the poorest of the poor, with those who have no one else but God to defend them and take up their cause. When hope animates the life of the poor, God and man have already met, because it is only with God's help that the poor can continue to hope when the future seems hopeless. The hope of the poor is already a living faith. Of this today's

prophets are also aware. Their task is to recognize the faith of the poor and bear witness to the gospel of God's total solidarity with them.

Ecclesial sense in Don Bosco and in Salesian tradition

Don Bosco knew how to be faithful to the Lord Jesus, while suffering each day from his experience of the situation in the church of his time. His vivid sense of Church was mainly expressed in an attitude and experience of collaboration with all those elements and resources that were contributing to her good. He showed his love for the Church in a deep but simple threefold way: *love for Jesus Christ*, mainly as present in the Eucharist, the central action of the Church; *devotion to Mary*, Mother and Model of the Church; and *fidelity to the Pope*, Peter's successor and the Church's centre of unity.

The three elements are mutually inseparable; they throw light on each other and converge in the person of Christ. Don Bosco's dream of the "two columns" is an immediate and positive exemplification of these dynamic elements, of Don Bosco's three "loves" which build up the Church: Eucharist, Mary, Peter. Don Bosco's Church is Eucharistic in form, with a Marian figure and a Petrine foundation.

This "sensus Ecclesiae" is found in a wonderful form in the fusion Don Bosco made of the titles of "Mary Help of Christians" and "Mother of the Church".¹⁷ It is interesting to note how well he had understood that the renewal of the Church must take place through mature Marian devotion, convinced as he was that the sense of the Church as a Mother is lost without the motherly vocation of Mary. This enables us to see the close

¹⁷ J. BOSCO, *Meraviglie della Madre di Dio invocata sotto il titolo di Maria Ausiliatrice*, Turin 1868, in *Opere edite*, vol. XX, Editrice Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome, pp. 198-199.

relationship between Mother Church and evangelization – between Mary, the Church and apostolic activity. It means that the “sense of Church” must be translated each day into a deep sense of membership and responsible commitment as believers.

In his *Edifying Letter*, written on his return from Rome on 14 June 1905, Don Rua spoke of Don Bosco as a model of attachment to the Church; he wrote: “Those who knew Don Bosco while he was on earth, or have read about his wonderful life, while admiring his extraordinary virtues will have become convinced that he lived only for God, that always and everywhere his least action was always guided by the Holy Spirit. For us his sons it seems almost impossible to visualize Don Bosco without his face aflame with holy zeal and on his lips the motto he liked so much: *Da mihi animas, caetera tolle*.

“I think it true to say that you too cannot imagine him other than as the perfect model of the priest, unmindful of himself and intent only on promoting God’s glory and leading many souls to heaven. And if we felt prompted to ask him how he had managed to overcome so many difficulties and obstacles, and continue unruffled along the path indicated to him by Providence and found his Pious Society, it seems that he would reply to us with that gentle look that radiated kindness and charity with the words of St Paul: *nos autem sensum Christi habemus*, as though to tell us that never did he think or act by worldly principles, but always and everywhere by trying to reproduce in himself the divine model, Jesus Christ, and it was this that enabled him to fulfil his mission.

“Nor was there any danger that he would stray from the practice of this spirit of the Lord, because in everything he wanted to follow the guidance of the Church which is the *column and foundation of truth*. If we examine his interior life, we shall find a Don Bosco determined in the first place to be a most obedient son of Holy Church, and ready for any sacrifice to spread her doctrines and uphold her rights. Not only did he observe her laws,

he even anticipated her desires. And the result is that we his sons have the ineffable consolation of seeing endorsed by the infallible authority of the Sovereign Pontiff many things Don Bosco did years ago by, a man with a deep knowledge of his times and a sure interpreter of the spirit of the Church which he inculcated in us with tireless zeal. The facts show this to be true".¹⁸

In the same connection Fr Luigi Ricceri, speaking of the ecclesial sensitivity of Don Bosco wrote: "His practical concept of religion and pastoral criterion of action are a supra-political and supra-cultural view of Christianity, made concrete in the Church which he loved seeing as founded on Peter and the Apostles and their successors, the Pope and the Bishops: *"No effort should be spared when the Church or the Papacy are at stake"* (MB V, 577). His was a vision rooted in the certainty of the living presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, in the conviction that the Pope is Christ's Vicar on earth, and in the awareness of, and devotion to, our Lady as the Help of Christians. In harmony with this approach he initiated projects, made enlightened decisions, undertook difficult tasks, and also suffered misunderstandings and injustice".¹⁹

And later, in the same letter, Fr Ricceri denounced as *"a practice of ecclesial dissent"* the attitude of those who disregard the guidance of the Magisterium, even by occasional public contestation of various kinds. Their actions disregard the "gift of enlightenment attaching to the ministry" of the Pope and the Bishops. At the root of this kind of attitude – to which Don Bosco was completely opposed – there is usually to be found a sociological interpretation of the mystery of the Church, which saves neither its divine institution nor its distinction from the world. In such a perspective the "people of God" become simply the people, and

¹⁸ M. RUA, *Lettera Edificante. Lo spirito di D. Bosco – Vocazioni – Buona Stampa*, 14 June 1905, from *Lettere Circolari*, Edizione Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome, pp. 384-385.

¹⁹ L. RICCERI, *I Salesiani e la responsabilità politica*, in *Lettere Circolari di don Luigi Ricceri ai Salesiani*, Edizione Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome, p. 942.

the basic assembly replaces the initiative of the Holy Spirit, doing away with any institutional role. This attitude too would appear to be in open contradiction of Don Bosco's practice, and far removed from the clearest salesian tradition".²⁰

Later, among the criteria for the guidance of salesian activity, Fr Ricceri puts alongside the task of ensuring the relevance of our mission that of *solidarity with the Church's option*. "In the first place she has opted permanently and definitively for Christ her Lord, as the bride for her Spouse. In this is expressed the absolute primacy of love and truth which sheds light on her entire mission and guides her activity. But against the background of this fundamental option there are pastoral choices formulated by the Church in differing historical situations. Faced with the crucial phase through which the world is living, she has made her concrete choices in the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council. In this she has "turned towards and not away from" the man of the present day; she has looked at him through the eyes of God, after considering herself as a 'sacrament' that must serve for his salvation. The Council wanted a Church presence that would be useful and liberating for human advancement, but a presence too that would take concrete shape in a commitment of a religious kind".²¹

"Our love for Christ necessarily gives rise to our love for his Church", says art.13 of the Salesian Constitutions. From our father Don Bosco we have received a particular sensitivity as regards the Church's ability to build "unity and communion among all the forces working for the Kingdom". The salesian spirit makes us centres of communion of many other forces; it makes us builders and promoters of the Church among the young. For this reason we must express and demonstrate an outstanding love of the Church through a dynamic and responsible

²⁰ Ibid p. 951.

²¹ Ibid pp. 951-952.

adherence to her teachings, a generous effort of communion and collaboration with all her members, and especially an unconditional commitment to opening the Church to the young and the young to the Church, so that all can discover in her the face of Christ and the treasures of salvation.

Perhaps no one has developed this "sensus Ecclesiae" in reflection and action so well as Fr Egidio Viganò. He spoke of it explicitly in his presentation of the ecclesial dimension of devotion to Mary Help of Christians.²² In the letter on "The animation of the Salesian Rector" he wrote: "The Rector, because he is a priest, must develop in an ecclesial manner the significance and objectives of his own pastoral activity and of that of the community; he must live and get others to live in harmony and collaboration with the Pope, the Bishops and priests; he must foster relationships with them: friendship, esteem and collaboration; not simply for diplomatic reasons or to make life easier, but because all of this is an important aspect of his service to the Salesian community".²³

In the letter "Our fidelity to Peter's successor", Fr Viganò told us that "among the components of Salesian youth spirituality there is a strong 'sense of Church', with specific attitudes to be created, developed and translated into lived experience".²⁴ In the same letter he explained some particularly strategic points in greater detail: the concept of the Church as a "Mystery" that helps in the overcoming of ecclesiological ideas that are deviant or too restrictive; the image of the Pope as the first and supreme Pastor, against all sociological notions; the including of the contents of the Pope's 'magisterium' in our evangelizing activities, as against a simply affective or sentimental adherence with no practical results; the willing acceptance, in view of the pastoral and pedagogical character of the Salesian vocation, of the moral

²² E. VIGANÒ, *Mary renews the Salesian Family of Don Bosco*, AGC 289, Rome 1978.

²³ E. VIGANÒ, *Animation of the Salesian Rector*, AGC 306, Rome 1982, p. 12.

²⁴ E. VIGANÒ, *Our fidelity to Peter's Successor*, AGC 315, Rome 1985, p. 26.

and social teaching of the Pope, to challenge the selfishness and permissiveness of modern culture.²⁵

As the Salesian Family we pray with and for the Church; we try to “sentire cum Ecclesia”; we belong to the Church; we live in the Church; we *are* Church. We could express this “sensus Ecclesiae”, which is an essential element of our charism, in an ecclesiological doxology: “*For the Church, with the Church, in the Church, to you almighty Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, be all glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen*”.

For a pedagogy of being Church and living with the Church

I said at the beginning that our task is that of making others fall in love with the Church, especially the young people. This is a challenge that has become even more important at the present day, when a growing tendency can be observed in some places to live a Christianity without the Church. There are Christians who have not given up their connection with the Church, but who are not members of nor identify themselves with any community; they are like shoppers in a supermarket who stroll about choosing items here and there that appeal to them.

We know that identification with Christ always implies identification with his Body, with his Church, and with those who belong to it. This is a criterion for verifying the authenticity of Christian identity. But at the same time membership of the Church only makes sense as a means for belonging to Christ: when we say yes to her we say yes to him. Now according to what Paul wrote to the Ephesians this identification is brought about through baptism and the sacramental life, is summed up in the profession of faith, is shaped by a Christian life and is expressed in prayer.

The crucial question therefore is how to educate young peo-

²⁵ Cf. E. VIGANÒ, *Our fidelity to Peter's Successor*, AGC 315, Rome 1985, pp. 26-30.

ple to be Church and to live with the Church. In a world becoming ever more pluralistic, relativist and secularised, the formation of believers calls for a clear and significant *witness by the Christian community*, so that young people may be offered an evangelical image of the Church's identity and of her mission in the world. It also requires a *journey of faith* and in particular a sound catechesis that will help them to mature their conscience so as to be able to open themselves to all that is human, harmonise their options with those of Mother Church, bear witness to their own faith, and in general identify themselves with Him who identified himself with us so as to be sons of the Father and brothers among men.

We know that the *witness of the community* is a strong element of support and credibility; education to the faith takes place through what one is and one lives, rather than what one hears and is taught. The process of the education of young people to the Church begins with a sincere commitment of the ecclesial community to deepen its fundamental choices, that is, its passion for God which brings it together through Christ in the Spirit, fellowship between all the baptised, concern for evangelisation, the will to serve society, and priority for the poor.

By making these major options the Christian community finds ways to be converted and to resist the various temptations of the present day: the temptation to accept without evangelical discernment the criteria, values, attitudes and behaviour of a society which tends to set itself up as a seductive idol for believers; the temptation to be afraid, which often keeps us closed within the Church's walls in an attitude of distrust and even of taking it out on society; the temptation to selfishness and passivity, to the seeking for honours and wealth, to the fear of being set aside with the marginalised.

In this effort at conversion our ecclesial identity must be ever more clearly transparent if it is to be effective and make visible and credible what we proclaim. And so in all our works

(schools, vocational training centres, universities, reception centres, parishes, oratories, youth centres and 'boys towns') the primary objective must be evangelisation, the proclaiming of the good news of the salvation God wants to give to all through his Son Jesus.

The professional management of the works and the serious approach to the programming of our activities must never obscure the primacy we give to evangelisation. "Without a zealous yearning for the true God, theology and pastoral work would be nothing more than activities of a purely technical or administrative nature. The Church must always cast out the buyers and sellers from the temple: *"Take all this away and stop turning my Father's house into a market-place (Jn 2, 16)"*.²⁶

We should never forget that structures necessary for the mission often run the risk of obscuring it, unless there is a spirit that makes it quite evident. I sometimes wonder whether the growing difficulty of identifying oneself with the Church is not a consequence of the fact that in some places the Church is not perceived as being seriously concerned about solidarity with those in need and with the suffering of the world, and as being too closed in and self-secure.

In the process of making the face of the Church more effectively significant, we must foster the *signs* that express it and make it manifest. Many people discover and experience the Church through its signs they find in daily life; these can forge new bonds or strengthen those already existing, but as well as relaunching movements that bring people closer to the Church they can also freeze or weaken them. And so it is important that the Christian community helps the signs of the Church to grow.

There are some particular signs that help young people in their attachment to the Church: the sign of a cordial and evangelical welcome, that shows an attitude of gratuitous openness,

²⁶ K. LEHMANN, *Vale la pena rimanere nella Chiesa e vivere per essa*, in J. RATZINGER - K. LEHMANN, *Vivere con la Chiesa*, Queriniana, Brescia 1978, p.36.

of unconditional listening, of the sincere wish to be of service; the sign of the human and Christian quality of welfare services, education and pastoral care; the sign of the truth of the liturgical and of the prayer life of the Christian community, expressed in a celebration that is prayerful, with participation, well-prepared and in harmony with the current problems and situations of society; the sign of pastors living an evangelical life filled with a zeal for God and an ability to welcome and express their fellow-feeling for the people, especially the young and the poor; the sign of service freely given, and a sincere concern for communion. Through these signs young people can be introduced to the experience of Church and helped to open themselves to her.

Together with the witness there is an urgent need to promote among the young a *journey of faith* that will lead them to a personal meeting with Christ, to the living of a sacramental life, to a more conscious insertion in the Church, to knowing and loving her, to commitment to her and living for her. One of the areas of this journey of faith of the young is concerned specifically with growth towards an intense sense of belonging to the church; Salesian youth spirituality too proposes an experience of ecclesial communion. This is the fundamental duty of the Christian community, and specifically of our educative communities; attention to the journey of faith of young people is an expression of the maternal role of the Church who takes care of her children and helps them to grow. It is something that calls for some specific options.

Making the Church known

The young must be helped to overcome a merely partial image of the Church, often seen only in its institutional aspects as though she were a social and political organization similar to others, or else identified with the hierarchy, or, on the contrary, reduced to a purely spiritual reality, individual and ideal. This requires a careful catechesis on the Church following the lines of

Lumen Gentium and *Gaudium et Spes*, but also an introduction to her practical life, making known her plans and concerns, her leading initiatives and significant persons and communities. The continual provision of positive and trustworthy information will certainly contribute to the development of a knowledge of the Church that is more real and effective.

Making the meaning of Church more widely known

Here it is a matter of developing in young people the sense of belonging: we belong to the Church and she belongs to us. We have been called together by Jesus to form his family and together continue his mission in history. It is not possible to be fully aware of one's own Christian identity without the living sense of membership of the Christian community. This requires us to develop attitudes of openness, dialogue and fellow-feeling towards mankind, as the Church has done in Vatican II; the Council tried to understand the situation of humanity and collaborate with all men and women of good will in the task of building a more human world.

This is learned and found to be true in family and social life; the individual family as it lives its own life must be a school and workshop of communion. "Being Christian implies a *new way of being human*; it demands a conversion, the conversion specifically asked for by the Gospel, by Christ. From this standpoint the contribution of the Christian educator, of the pastor of souls, is aimed at the formation of a certain spiritual attitude which is not just knowledge but one in which to knowledge are united attitudes such as the inclination of the will, and the emotions, the sensitivity of the whole person in bringing together experience and a fixed or habitual point of reference; it is the adherence in faith to God's loving plan of salvation in Jesus Christ".²⁷

²⁷ L. MACARIO, *Appartenenti a Cristo nella Chiesa - Note di pedagogia ecclesiale*, in AA.VV. *In Ecclesia*, LAS, Rome, 1977, p. 487.

This explains why, in the process of education to the meaning of Church, it is important to form the social conscience of the young through the social teaching of the Church, so that they may learn to live the social and political dimension of the faith, develop their solidarity with problems that beset the lives of so many men and women living in inhuman conditions, and offer themselves as volunteers, apostles and missionaries.

Gaining experience of Church

The meaning of Church and of membership is not created in the abstract but through the experience of Christian life in different personal situations, beginning with the family – rightly called by Paul VI the *domestic Church* – and continuing in the parish in which normally one has the experience of communion of faith, hope and charity. In our case we experience the Church with the young in the various kinds of educative and pastoral communities, which must be a signs and schools of faith and centres of communion and participation, “so that it can become a living experience of Church” (C 47).

It is a question, therefore, of strengthening our own faith community in all its educative and pastoral aspects so as to make them the leaven of social change. To this the brief descriptions in the Acts of the Apostles bear witness: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2, 42-47). Starting from the life of the communi-

ties they adopted a culture that differed from that of the Roman empire, a social model characterized not by the eagerness to amass goods, to possess and take the first places, but by the will to share, to serve and to live in solidarity with others.

This requires also that we mark in a special way moments of church life such as baptism, catechesis, participation in the Eucharist, listening to the word, celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation, group and community meetings, retreats and the celebration of the high points of the liturgical year, fraternal community gatherings, contact with the neighbourhood, etc. None of these things should be trivialized. Everything can and must foster the maturing of the sense of church.

Leading others to find vocation in the Church

The process of education to the faith must help people to pass from good dispositions of mind to firm convictions, from these to persuasive motivations, then to plans of life and eventually to total dedication of oneself to God and to others. This is what is meant by loving the Church and giving oneself for her. Love of the Church is shown also in the ability to let oneself be taken over by Christ to the extent of renouncing personal plans and interests and putting oneself completely at God's disposal to take part personally in the work of building the Kingdom. Adherence to the Church is made possible by knowing what it is; it develops through a progressive sense of belonging to it; it grows through practical church experiences and matures in vocational commitment.

"Anyone who places himself at the service of the Church nowadays must be convinced, even to the very depths of his being, of the possibility of showing to mankind – even in the midst of a secularised and atheistic world – the hand of God in history and in his own life. This duty to be living witnesses to the experience of God in our world must animate and pervade the various fields and activities of pastoral work in which every ministry

or service is expressed... Today, more than in times past, it is true to say that *God has need of men.*"²⁸

I hope we may all be able to love, follow and imitate Jesus with the zeal, conviction and fidelity of those great columns of the Church St Peter and St Paul, so that we may be able to publicly confess our faith and love as they did: "*Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you*" (Jn 21, 17); "*I know in whom I have believed*" (2 Tim 1, 12); "*The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*" (Gal 2, 20). Then our faith will be expressed in practical charity and become a credible and convincing witness.

It is my earnest hope and prayer that we may all attain the same goal as St Teresa of the Child Jesus: "Yes, I have found my proper place in the Church, the place that you have given me, my God. In the heart of the Church, my mother, I shall be love and in this I shall be everything and my desire will become reality".²⁹

By way of conclusion: like the colours of the rainbow

I finish with a native American legend, *All the Colours of the Rainbow*, which to me seems to be an appeal to bring together whatever is best in each of us to create something beautiful, enlightening and entrancing, and at the same time meaningful as a rainbow can be.

The Church is the community of Jesus' disciples, who recall and make present his love for man and the promise of the fullness of life. But to be credible and effective we need to set aside our self-sufficiency and to place in common our powers and resources, and so become a young Church without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but beautiful and resplendent.

²⁸ K. LEHMANN, *Vale la pena rimanere nella Chiesa e vivere per essa*, in J. RATZINGER - K. LEHMANN, *Vivere con la Chiesa*, Queriniana. Brescia 1978, p.33-34.

²⁹ *Manuscripts autobiographiques*, Lisieux 1957, 229.

"Once upon a time the colours of the world started to quarrel: all claimed that they were the best, the most important, the most useful, the favourite."

Green said:

– "Clearly I am the most important. I am the sign of life and of hope. I was chosen for grass, trees, leaves - without me, all animals would die. Look over the countryside and you will see that I am in the majority."

Blue interrupted:

– "You only think about the earth, but consider the sky and the sea. It is the water that is the basis of life and drawn up by the clouds from the deep sea. The sky gives space and peace and serenity. Without my peace, you would all be nothing."

Yellow chuckled:

– "You are all so serious. I bring laughter, gaiety, and warmth into the world. The sun is yellow, the moon is yellow, the stars are yellow. Every time you look at a sunflower, the whole world starts to smile. Without me there would be no fun."

Orange started next to blow her trumpet:

– "I am the colour of health and strength. I may be scarce, but I am precious for I serve the needs of human life. I carry the most important vitamins. Think of carrots, pumpkins, oranges, mangoes, and pawpaws. I don't hang around all the time, but when I fill the sky at sunrise or sunset, my beauty is so striking that no one gives another thought to any of you."

Red could stand it no longer. He shouted out:

– "I am the ruler of all of you - I am blood - life's blood! I am the colour of danger and of bravery. I am willing to fight for a cause. I bring fire into the blood. Without me, the earth would be as empty as the moon. I am the colour of passion and of love, the red rose, the poinsettia and the poppy."

Purple rose up to his full height. He was very tall and spoke with great pomp:

"I am the colour of royalty and power. Kings, chiefs, and bishops have always chosen me for I am the sign of authority and wisdom. People do not question me - they listen and obey."

Indigo spoke, much more quietly than all the others, but with just as much determination:

"Think of me. I am the colour of silence. You hardly notice me, but without me you all become superficial. I represent thought and reflection, twilight and deep water. You need me for balance and contrast, for prayer and inner peace."

And so the colours went on boasting, each convinced of his or her own superiority. Their quarrelling became louder and louder. Suddenly there was a startling flash of bright lightning - thunder rolled and boomed. Rain started to pour down relentlessly the colours crouched down in fear, drawing close to one another for comfort.

In the midst of the clamour, RAIN began to speak: *"You foolish colours, fighting amongst yourselves, each trying to dominate the rest. Don't you know that you were each made for a special purpose, unique and different? Join hands with one another and come to me."*

Doing as they were told, the colours united and joined hands. The rain continued: *"From now on, when it rains, each of you will stretch across the sky in a great bow of colour as a reminder that you can all live in peace. The rainbow is a sign of hope for tomorrow."*

And so, whenever a good rain washes the world, and a rainbow appears in the sky, let us remember to appreciate one another.³⁰

³⁰ *All the Colours of the Rainbow*, based on an American legend, presented by Leon Orb, 2 June 2004.

To Mary, Mother of God, under whose protection we begin this new year of 2005, I entrust each of you, dear members of the Salesian Family, educators and young people of the world. As Mother of the Church may she teach us to be and to form beloved disciples and joyful proclaimers of her Son. May she help us to recognize the Church as our Mother through whom we are always born and reborn in the faith.

With affectionate gratitude in Don Bosco.

Pascual Chávez
Fr Pascual Chávez V.
Rector Major

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICES

2.1 INTERPROVINCIAL COLLABORATION IN INITIAL FORMATION

Fr Francesco CEREDA

General Councillor for Formation

In our Congregation interprovincial collaboration for initial formation is an interesting and promising phenomenon. In fact there are quite a number of formation communities and study centres in which formation is carried out with the cooperation of several Provinces, each making their contribution by sending formation personnel, teachers and young men in formation. In addition there are other interprovincial initiatives: preparation for perpetual profession, retreats for deacons, meetings for those in practical training. Finally there is a more recent form of collaboration, which involves the setting up of formation communities for the specific formation of Salesian Brothers.

Ongoing formation is also a fertile soil for interprovincial collaboration. There are a large number of different kinds of links, various levels of service, aimed at different groups. There are occasional meetings, periodic initiatives, structured programmes. At regional level there are on offer updating courses, seminars, materials to aid animation. Meetings are held for Provincial Formation Delegates, for formation personnel and various groups of confreres, especially Rectors, Salesian Brothers, Salesians both Priests and Brothers in their quinquennium years.

The *Ratio* is aware of the inability of the Provinces to carry out on their own all their formation responsibilities and recognises their need for mutual assistance; because of this it recommends "strong and courageous decisions for collaboration between Provinces" (FSDB 230). These notes are intended to examine more closely and focus on practical decisions, with regard to initial

formation only; they are meant to draw out the reasons that may encourage the practice of interprovincial collaboration, identifying some questions, pointing out the priority areas for attention and proposing some requirements for their implementation.

1. Reasons for collaboration

Today it is difficult for one Province on its own to be able to cater for all or almost all of the stages of initial formation. It sometimes happens that in order to have a provincial solution considerable sacrifices are made with only partial results and some doubtful choices. It is therefore necessary to think about the reasons that might help in determining a decision based on conviction for interprovincial collaboration which cannot be a forced choice or just a lesser evil; in fact it is an opportunity to be weighed up even though it may be a challenge that has to be faced.

1.1. Experience of the charismatic identity

Initial formation is an experience of charismatic identity; it is a process of identification with the vocation; it is the gradual, responsible, and total assumption of the obligations that derive from it. The fundamental criterion that should guide us in the choices we make regarding formation is that of offering our candidates and young confreres experiences of the Salesian vocation that are valid, attractive and absorbing. We ought to pride ourselves on offering them meaningful experiences that provide the best formation conditions so that they can follow a good human, spiritual, intellectual and apostolic process. The Congregation has many examples of experiences and formation resources to offer young men. The formation choices that are made require a *discernment process attentive* to the charismatic quality of the experience offered. The charismatic criterion is the foundation of every formation decision and therefore also of the decision in favour of interprovincial collaboration.

1.2. Constitution of the formation community

During initial formation the one in formation "learns by experience the meaning of the Salesian vocation" (Con. 98). Now the *community* is one of the fundamental values. Every Salesian community is a setting for formation; but for initial formation the Congregation wants a community with special features: a "formation community" (FSDB 222). Special attention needs to be given to this kind of community, so that the conditions for a meaningful experience may be assured.

To carry out its tasks adequately, the formation community needs to be constituted of *the right quality and number of members*. If the community has too few people in formation there are certain limitations: the experience of living together and of constant give and take are weakened; relationships are limited; community activities such as discussions, sport, theatre, music, apostolates are restricted. If then the formation personnel are insufficient in number, their formation influence is generally diminished, since there is a lack of personal interaction and interpersonal relationships, of animation and encouragement, accompaniment and guidance.

In this regard the Instruction on formation in Religious Institutes *Potissimum Institutioni* quotes an expression of John Paul II, who says: "It will therefore be good that the young, during the period of formation, reside in formative communities where there should be no lack of the conditions required for a complete formation: spiritual, intellectual, cultural, liturgical, communitarian, and pastoral; conditions which are rarely found together in small communities. It is therefore always indispensable to keep drawing from the pedagogical experience of the Church all that can assist and enrich formation, in a community suitable to the individuals and to their religious vocation".¹

¹ CIVCESVA, *Potissimum Institutioni*, Rome 1990, n. 27.

The *Ratio* recognises the weakness of some formation communities and recommends collaboration between Provinces: "In more than one situation the conditions for ensuring the consistency of formation centres in terms of quality and numbers are such that it is not easy for a single Province all by itself to meet them. In such cases, it is desirable that a few Provinces, especially if they belong to the same cultural context, pool their resources to set up **interprovincial formation structures**" (FSDB 300). More specifically, considering the weakness of the formation, which is "one of the criteria for the setting up of a formation community", it states that it is "necessary in some situations to make strong and courageous decisions for collaboration between Provinces." (FSDB 230).

It would be as well therefore that as far as possible the Provinces avoid setting up or maintaining formation communities with a small number of confreres in formation and few formation personnel. By preference they should combine with other Provinces in an interprovincial collaboration so that together they might be in the position to provide the formation that alone they could not offer the young confreres.

1.3. Quality of the study centre

In a complex and pluralistic society one needs to have an open and critical mentality capable of discernment and dialogue. The choice for Salesian life needs to have a profound Christian cultural background, that helps a convinced faith and a motivated vocational experience to mature. Education and evangelisation, in particular the dialogue between faith and culture, demand a knowledge of the world of youth, a pastoral mentality, pedagogical competence, and a professional approach. Providing guidance for the adults involved in our mission requires the basis of a well-recognised competence. Today therefore there is an indispensable need for "a solid and *up-to-date intellectual formation* based on serious study, one that develops the ability to

reflect, to make judgements and to be discerning in the face of situations." (FSDB 124).

The quality of intellectual formation therefore is a matter of some urgency. This means having sound programmes of study, with an emphasis on pastoral development; up-to-date methods of teaching and of study which foster reflection and involvement; a well prepared group of teachers who are able to relate well to the student confreres. A commitment to give a Salesian slant to intellectual formation is also demanded; and this requires a "Salesian sensitivity" in the way topics are dealt with (cf. FSDB 160), the choice of subjects which deal with our pastoral work (Reg. 82), the "study of specifically Salesian subjects" (FSDB 160).

For this reason the Congregation has decided in ordinary circumstances on the choice of a Salesian study centre: "Among the different kinds of study centres, preference is to be given to the Salesian centre which offers a programme of studies with a Salesian slant and a particular pastoral and pedagogical character, and favours a blending of intellectual formation with an overall formation plan and a special relationship of Salesian students with their teachers;" (FSDB 145). There follows an explicit invitation: "the Salesian centre is ordinarily to be preferred" (FSDB 168).

The Regulations require that "the provinces able to do so should have their own study centre for the formation of the confreres" (Reg. 84). A Salesian study centre is a heavy burden for a Province; "Collaboration among the Provinces is therefore advisable and oftentimes necessary." (FSDB 146). In fact for the proper functioning of a study centre "they have to be solicitous in the first place for its teaching staff, and therefore its academic structural organization as well as the preparation, permanence, rational deployment and necessary replacement of the personnel, teachers to be qualified in those subjects that give the centre a Salesian complexion." (FSDB 146). For this reason the Ratio says: "There should be a determined and serious collabo-

ration on the interprovincial level in establishing Salesian study centres" (FSDB 171).

It would be well therefore that the Provinces, as far as possible, try to establish their own study centre or combine with other Provinces in the same context, in which there is already a Salesian study centre or with whom to set up a new one. Only "when it proves impossible to frequent a Salesian study centre, even at interprovincial level" (FSDB 178), can there then be other solutions, but it must be a case of a real impossibility.

2. Questions about collaboration

In addition to these positive considerations, which would encourage a positive view of interprovincial collaboration, one also finds some hesitation about its value. In fact there are Provinces which sometimes have doubts about collaboration in formation. For this reason it is important to consider the questions that arise about interprovincial collaboration especially those connected with contextualisation, inculturation, and intercongregational collaboration in formation.

2.1. Contextualisation of formation

Formation is something that is contextualised. In fact it takes place in a particular context, which is determined by a number of factors: the social condition of the area, the culture and life style of the people, the situation of the Church, Provincial practice. The context with its advantages or disadvantages has a considerable impact and influence on the formation process.

Our Constitutions require of each Province "through the various organs of animation and government to lay down the method of formation according to the needs of its own cultural context" (Cost. 101). The *Ratio* adds that "this responsibility re-

quires a permanent attitude of reflection and dialogue between Salesian identity and the cultural context. Collaboration in this field is to be encouraged among Provinces that are in similar circumstances". (FSDB 17)

Now then, when a choice is made for an interprovincial formation community, sometimes doubts arise about there being possible neglect in paying attention to the context; it is thought that those in formation may find themselves in a situation which will not help them to mature, given that they are being placed in a context "different" to that of the Province. The idea of "formation in context" is correct but it needs to be explained further.

Nowadays we are aware that formation cannot be limited simply to the context of the province, but must have wider horizons. The local and immediate context in fact is not the only one in which we live. Often within a province there are many contexts with considerable differences. Again, we belong at one and the same time to a *plurality of contexts*. For example, we live in the context of the local Salesian community, but also that of the provincial community and of the world-wide community; we are located in a particular area but also in that of the wider region, of the country, of the continent, of the world; we are part of a parish, but also a particular Church, of a Conference and of the universal Church. Very often we also live in "plural contexts" in which there are marked differences, as for example the pluricultural, multiethnic, interreligious contexts. Globalisation and immigration are certainly processes that produce a "melting pot" of contexts.

Yet in the variety of contexts, practising discernment, we can still find *homogeneous contexts*. If we compare two contexts we find similarities and differences, with positive aspects to be embraced and negative ones to be purified. Again contexts are not static but evolving. It is therefore possible to find a homogeneous context in a group of Provinces in the same country or Conference or Region. Today, for example it could be said Eu-

rope is in the process of becoming ever more homogeneous as a context; analogous situations can be found in other Regions of the Congregation.

In an interprovincial formation community therefore, especially when it forms part of the same Conference or Region, contextualisation is not ignored. At the same time, the interprovincial community provides those in formation with the experience of different situations, creating openings for minds and hearts. It fosters the ability to fit into different circumstances through its openness to the outside, through an analysis of the situation, discernment, a response to needs. Certainly the process needs to unfold gradually.

2.2. Inculturation of formation

Inculturation in initial formation is a process of *personalisation*; it occurs when the values of the vocation are assumed first of all into the culture of the one in formation, in such a way that he changes his way of thinking, his attitudes, his way of life, his behaviour. In this sense formation always needs to be inculturated; in fact without a personal identification with the charismatic values there is no formation. To facilitate this process, generally the first formation takes place in the cultural context of the one in formation or in a similar one.

On the other hand inculturation in initial formation is a community process, one could say a process of *socialisation*, in which the charism is expressed in a particular culture. The formation community is the principal subject which begins, accompanies and assesses the process. For this reason the community needs to have a knowledge, an understanding and an experience of the charism; it is necessary that it knows its history, its identity, its expressions. In addition the community needs to know the culture of the context and the way of thinking of those in formation, so that they may be helped to assume the charismatic values in their own culture. Therefore it is a community that

communicates, interprets and expresses the charism in a particular culture and in a specific context.

Besides this, inculturation always needs to be accompanied by a process of *intercultural experience*. This opens the one in formation to other cultures, leads him to appreciate their positive aspects and to recognise their limitations, brings him to value his own culture without making it an absolute value, and therefore invites him to assimilate and to integrate some valid elements of the other cultures with his own. This dialogue or exchange between cultures is an enriching experience which complements the process of inculturation. The interprovincial communities are open to a wider vision of the Salesian charism; they help to form the sense of belonging to the Congregation, attention to the needs of the young people of the world, a global vision of the urgent need for evangelisation, which are things that go beyond the horizons of the province.

The processes of inculturation and intercultural experience in initial formation are strictly connected to the charism, at the service of which they take their place. Ordinarily in the first phases of formation, until the postnovitiate – practical training, we need to pay great attention to the processes of inculturation, that is to the transformation of the culture of the one in formation. This requires a knowledge of the person, closeness, continuity in formation, accompaniment in the processes of change. Starting from the phase of specific formation, we need to pay more attention to the processes of intercultural experience. In this stage those in formation will be seen to have reached a certain degree of maturity in culture and faith and to possess an adequate openness and critical sense; they are therefore able to cope positively with it.

2.3. Intercongregational collaboration in formation

In today's world of communion and collaboration among Institutes of religious life, some Provinces ask themselves whether

it would not be better to attend intercongregational study centres. This would help in having a knowledge of other charisms and foster a pastoral approach of togetherness in the Church. The Instruction of the Congregation for Consecrated Life, entitled "Inter-Institute collaboration for formation," has gone into the question of the situation regarding collaboration in the area of formation.

The Instruction states that "every institute has a primary responsibility for its own identity" and that "it is in the process of formation that the charismatic identity is acquired"; for this reason "the first responsibility for the formation of religious belongs by law to each institute".² In addition it says that "The formation community is a primary point of reference for which no intercongregational centre can substitute."³ This means that in study centres in which we collaborate with other religious Institutes – as for example in Belo Horizonte, Caracas, Melbourne, Nairobi – the formation community assumes the taxing responsibility of ensuring the Salesian identity of the intellectual formation and makes sure that some requirements in regard to the study centre are fulfilled (cf. FSDB 178.180).

According to the Instruction, collaboration between Institutes for formation demonstrates a practical form of solidarity between the religious families who are better off in numbers and resources and those poorer; contributes to a better appreciation of one's own charism and of that of others; offers an eloquent testimony to the communion to which the Church is called by divine vocation; and is of great assistance so that formation acquires the level and the breadth that the mission of religious life requires in the context of the modern world.⁴ On the other hand faced with the situation regarding existing collaboration, the Instruction "considers itself responsible to offer some reflections

² CIVCESVA, *Inter-Institute collaboration for formation*, Rome 1999, n.7.

³ Ibid, n. 10.

⁴ Cf. *ibid*, n. 8.

and timely directives for the monitoring, consolidation, and development of these experiences".⁵

However, it would be an impoverishment for religious life itself and for the Church if in the name of these advantages there were to be the centralisation of formation for all religious in a geographical area and culture in a single study centre. Forms of collaboration between religious Institutes, also in formation, are varied and should be developed; not necessarily should this collaboration be by means of a common study centre. Each Institute is called upon to enrich the Church with the contribution of its own charism, which is not limited to its mission but includes different aspects: community life, prayer, the practice of the evangelical counsels and also formation.

If our Provinces, also by means of interprovincial collaboration, are able to set up a study centre with really Salesian characteristics, "as far as is possible it should also be open to externs, religious and lay, as a service to the particular Church" (Reg. 84), this is an enrichment for all. The *Ratio* in fact is convinced that "Salesian centres can offer the Province and the local Church a qualified service of spiritual, pastoral and cultural animation, such as: initiatives for the updating of confreres, members of the Salesian Family and the laity; professional advice for provincial and interprovincial bodies; research papers, publications, and the preparation of materials for use in animation; and various initiatives in conjunction with Church and religious bodies" (FSDB 146).

3. Priorities in collaboration

To foster the integration of the charism and the culture of the candidates, it is important that the first steps in forma-

⁵ Ibid, n. 6.

tion should be taken in their own context. On this account each Circumscription – Province, Vice Province, Delegation – ordinarily has its own *prenovitiate*. In this way it is possible to ensure a better accompaniment of the candidates, better knowledge of the families and a more organised link with the aspirantate.

3.1. Novitiate

The criterion of paying attention to the context and the culture of the candidates also applies to the novitiate. That does not take away from the fact that there are interprovincial novitiates, located in homogeneous cultural contexts, such as that of Alta Gracia for the five Provinces of Argentina; that of Gbodjome in Togo for the Vice Provinces of AFO and ATE, in which the novices come from thirteen countries in West Africa; that of Johannesburg for the Vice Provinces of AFM and ZMB and that of Namaacha for MOZ and ANG; the novitiate in Granada for the seven Provinces of Spain; that of Cebu for the two Provinces in the Philippines; that of Siliguri for the Provinces of INC and INN; the novitiates of Pinerolo and Genzano for the ten Provinces of Italy and the Middle East and for some other European provinces.

3.2. Postnovitiate

The postnovitiate is a priority in interprovincial collaboration, since it is a stage which requires demanding formation provisions, including a Salesian study centre. In this case too we have a number of examples of collaboration, regarding both formation communities and study centres: at Cape Town, Lomé, Luanda and Moshi in Africa; at Dimapur, Karunapuram, Sonada and Yercaud in India; at Canlubang in the Philippines; at Nave and Rome in Italy; at Burgos in Spain; at Krakow in Poland; at Avellaneda in Argentina; at Campo Grande in Brazil; in Mexico City; and Benediktbeuern in Germany ...

The postnovitiate has the purpose of consolidating the religious life begun in the novitiate, the maturing of a synthesis between faith, culture and life, and preparation for practical training. Consequently, "The delicate process of forging a cultural and religious synthesis in this phase demands a wise organization or choice of a study centre offering an apt programme for the growth of vocations. This is why Salesian study centres - many of them are at inter-provincial level, are to be preferred as they have as their objective a stronger emphasis on connecting philosophy and the sciences of education and integrating them with typically Salesian subjects - and all this in view of the unity of the Salesian vocation" (FSDB 414).

This stage helps the postnovice to imbue his own way of thinking with Christian, religious and Salesian values, comparing them with his own frame of reference, forming a new synthesis between these values and his own culture, to the extent of changing his own way of thinking and acting. "As a result of his intellectual development, the confrere gains a clear mental framework that is consistent with his fundamental options and that gives him a solid and open-ended outlook on his own life. He becomes capable of a serious encounter with culture, the world of youth, the problems of education, and the Christian viewpoint" (FSDB 401).

Ordinarily it is appropriate that the choice of the postnovitiate is in continuity with the cultural context of the novitiate; but it is not always possible to provide this opportunity. So the *Ratio* says: "Being a delicate and important phase and having characteristics of its own, the postnovitiate requires a number of conditions that cannot always be met by every single Province, either with regard to the community or with regard to the study centre. In some situations it becomes necessary for the Provinces, especially those of the same cultural area, to join hands in setting up inter-provincial formation and academic structures" (FSDB 418).

3.3. *Specific Formation*

When we are dealing with specific formation, either of the Salesian priest or of the Salesian brother, the perspective is different. It is presumed that at this point the one in formation will have reached a certain personal maturity in his vocation and will have learned how to assume the demands of his vocation in relation to his own culture. It is considered therefore that it is more appropriate in this phase to foster the introduction to other contexts, to have an intercultural experience, to broaden one's horizons.

For specific formation preference ought to be given to the interprovincial study centre and formation community, at the level of one's own Conference or Region. For some confreres preference ought to be given to an experience in international formation communities and Salesian study centres such as Rome - Gerini where the Italian language is used, and Jerusalem - Ratisbonne where the English language is used; these are available to all Provinces precisely because of the valuable contributions these places can make.

Interprovincial collaboration is a characteristic of the *specific formation of Salesian priests*; we have examples in all the Regions. The formation communities and study centres of Manila, Bangalore, Shillong, Nairobi, Lubumbashi, Turin - Crocetta, Messina, Tlaquepaque, Buenos Aires, San Paolo, Santiago in Chile, Benediktbeuern, ... are an eloquent testimony to the fact that such collaboration is possible, profitable and indeed necessary. In these days of globalisation these centres are an invitation to emerge from an exclusive view of one's own province and culture and to combine with other provinces to provide a formation that is broader in all its aspects (cf. FSDB 170-171).

Analogously the *specific formation of Salesian brothers* can only be carried out through interprovincial collaboration. Attempts are now being made in some Regions with a two year for-

mation experience. Our *Ratio* lists a series of necessary conditions for the specific formation of the brothers, and concludes saying: "To ensure these conditions, the Provinces must give a responsible and persevering collaboration in this field" (FSDB 458).

3.4. Preparation for perpetual profession

Finally there is the phase for preparation for perpetual profession. According to the *Ratio* "This is one of the situations in which collaboration among the various Provinces can result in the organization of initiatives and special events and can enhance the quality of the formation experience by making it possible to have a substantial number to form a community, choose competent guides and share experiences and methods" (FSDB 509; cf. 514).

3.5. Study of languages

During initial formation there are also examples of collaboration between provinces for the study of Italian and English, which need to be increased and given special attention. For example, in the East Asia and Oceania Region, in which there is the desire to develop the study of English, there are confreres who are doing their practical training or a year of studies in communities in the Philippine provinces. There are also Italian provinces which welcome those in practical training to study Italian in preparation for studies in Rome.

In conclusion, *in order of priorities* interprovincial collaboration is to be encouraged above all in setting up Salesian postnovitiate study centres, then in having formation communities with a Salesian study centre for the specific formation of Salesian brothers, and finally in having a Salesian theological study centre. In general, where there are situations of weakness, interprovincial collaboration for formation communities is always necessary.

4. Requirements for collaboration

As we have pointed out, in the Congregation there are a number of cases of interprovincial collaboration for initial formation. Now it is necessary to ask ourselves what are the conditions that need to be fulfilled in such collaboration so that it is formatively effective. The starting point is a *new mentality* to be created regarding responsibility for formation: an interprovincial formation community or a study centre does not “belong” exclusively to the Province in whose territory it is located, and the formation and academic responsibility are matters for all the provinces involved. Therefore a province does not give up its formation obligation by sending its confreres in formation to an interprovincial community; what changes is only the way in which it exercises its role, which is carried out in a situation of shared responsibility.

There are some *general conditions* that assist interprovincial collaboration and which depend on the relationships of cooperation that are established between provinces. If for example in the Region or the Conference there is an annual meeting of all formation personnel, it is easier to ensure continuity in formation between the different phases and agreement among the various formation communities about methodology and contents. Analogously, if as the *Ratio* envisages, there is a link between the Delegates and the Provincial Formation Commissions in a Region or Conference this too will facilitate interprovincial collaboration (cf. FSDB 248). Now in what follows some of the *particular conditions* are explained.

4.1. Continuity in collaboration

Every case of formation collaboration between Provinces has its own story with its beginnings, initial progress, periods of slowing down, assessments, relaunching. Any collaboration needs time for it to mature and to grow; there cannot be an un-

structured haphazard arrangement, nor improvisation in decision making. Only by means of a continuous process is it possible to harmonise different kinds of initial formation practice, a multiplicity of styles of life, varieties of the contexts from which people come. Only continuity will ensure a real inculturation in formation. The length of time for collaboration is guaranteed by the *Provincial Directory*, which is approved by the Rector Major with his Council. The interprovincial community and study centre then need a *Statute* that fleshes out the interprovincial characteristics and a *Convention* which indicates the practicalities of the collaboration between the Provinces involved.

4.2. Provincial formation plan

Interprovincial collaboration is not the renunciation by a Province of some of its formation responsibilities; it is rather a decision to assume them together with other provinces. The Provincial Formation Plan should state the decisions regarding collaboration. In it the phases, activities and interprovincial initiatives should have the same formulation that is found in the Plans of the Provinces with which it is collaborating. This means that the Provincials, with the Provincial Councils and the Provincial Formation Delegates with their Commissions must undertake a process of convergence on objectives, criteria, processes, and interventions.

4.3. Interprovincial Team

The team of the formation community and of the study centre should be interprovincial (cf. FSDB 173, 224, 300). This guarantees the committed cooperation of all in supporting the community and the study centre and above all facilitates a knowledge of the different cultural contexts from which those in formation are coming, in this way fostering inculturation. New formation personnel and teachers join the team on the recommendation of each Provincial, but are selected jointly. This is es-

pecially so in the case of the Rector of the formation community. For his appointment a practice is now generally being followed in which first of all candidates are proposed within the Provincial Councils. This is followed by a discernment process and a choice made by the Provincials which is then proposed for the approval of the Provincial Council of the place.

4.4. *Curatorium*

The *Ratio* explicitly states that interprovincial collaboration with regard to both the formation community and the study centre, "implies the creation and proper functioning of an *entity holding shared responsibility* for example a 'curatorium'." It also indicates what its components and its tasks are. Ordinarily only one curatorium is set up, which deals with both the community and the study centre (cf. FSDB 173 and 300).

The *areas of competence* of the curatorium are: the community Formation Plan, information and input regarding the annual academic programme of the study centre, the annual calendar, the guidelines regarding Ministries and Ordinations, criteria for practical pastoral activities, the style and the practice of poverty, the period of academic holidays, returning to the provinces, the economic budget and annual accounts, determining the annual charges, the academic fees. According to the *Ratio* the curatorium establishes the direction of formation through the approval of the Formation Plan; ensuring the necessary conditions and the means for carrying out formation with personnel, structures, finances; undertakes proper assessments (cf. FSDB 300).

The curatorium has the authority to make decisions; on important questions the Provincials should previously consult their Provincial Councils. There could be two stages: one in which all members take part and one in which only the Provincials are involved. The President of the curatorium can be the Regional Councillor or the local Provincial. It is preferable to

have two meetings a year: one to plan the programme and to approve the formation project, another for evaluation. It is appropriate that before the meeting of the curatorium, on some questions, the formation personnel hear the opinion of those in formation, and that the Provincials meet their own students. There are various ways in which this body can function; it is necessary therefore that each curatorium has its own set of *Regulations*.

4.5. Admissions

Admissions “are important occasions for discernment, both for the candidate who presents his request and for the one who is called to evaluate it” (FSDB 274). “Discernment takes place in close collaboration between the candidate and the local and provincial community” (FSDB 269). The *Ratio* proposes a procedure in which, in the case of an interprovincial formation community, provision is made for the opinion of the Provincial and the Provincial Council of origin to be sought before proceeding to the decision of the Provincial and the vote of the Provincial Council of the place in which the formation community is located (cf. FSDB 301 e CNDV 111).

The *Ratio* recognises that the Provincial of origin has direct knowledge of the candidate, especially as regards the family, previous phases, his motives. For this reason the Provincial of the place where the formation house is located seeks the opinion of the Provincial of origin and his Council regarding the candidate. Taking also this information into consideration, the Provincial of the place where the candidate is resident takes the decision regarding admission. Prudence indicates that in the case of problems regarding the admission or of differences of opinion, the Provincial of the place informs the Provincial of origin and together they decide what to do; for example, the request of the candidate may not be presented or it may be withdrawn, or the candidate may return to his Province of origin.

4.6. A sense of belonging to one's province

To cultivate a sense of belonging to one's province among those in formation in the interprovincial communities, the *Ratio* requires that in addition to the presence in the formation team of members of their own province, frequent visits are made by the Provincial, news is exchanged, meetings are arranged for communicating information and fostering communion with the confreres of their own province, the programme of activities during the period of the academic vacations to be undertaken is arranged in agreement with Rector of the formation community and the province of origin, and there are be other forms of communication (cf. FSDB 290).

4.7. Links with the General Councillor for Formation

Interprovincial collaboration is given a particular kind of support and accompaniment by the General Councillor for Formation, who makes it his business to know, encourage and give support to the formation process, which is not always easy. Then care for the Salesian study centres of formation falls within his specific competence (cf. FSDB 154). He is President of the curatorium of the international formation communities in Rome - Gerini and Jerusalem. The *Ratio* invites each interprovincial formation community to find a way "to maintain contact with the General Councillor for Formation" (FSDB 173); for example, a form of contact which would be desirable and which a number of interprovincial formation communities and study centres are already putting into practice consists in keeping him informed by sending him the agenda and the minutes of meetings of the curatorium.

At a time when net-working is becoming ever more necessary, interprovincial collaboration in formation is something that is bound to continue to develop more and more. It is based

on a sense of belonging to the Congregation; it responds to the need for solidarity between provinces; it is animated by the desire to provide every confrere with a good quality formation; it helps to develop a single vocational identity. Conscious of the importance of collaboration, in our own contexts we will know how to discover new motivations, face certain questions, identify particular priorities, find further ways to implement them. It is the task of each province to press ahead with processes of collaboration in formation; the growing appreciation of the formation communities which is present throughout the Congregation, will back up their implementation.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

– *September 2004*

The Rector Major began the month of September in *Brazil*, where he had been also in August, visiting the Province of São Paulo (cf. AGC 387, p. 58). He continued with a visit to the Provinces of Porto Alegre from 31 August to 2 September, of Campo Grande from 3 to 5 September, and of Manaus from 6 to 8 of the same month.

In each of the Provinces, with the necessary variations called for by the geographical location, context and type of work, Fr Chávez had meetings with the confreres, the youngsters and Salesian Family, and greeted the various Archbishops and Bishops.

Among the highlights was the visit to the social works of the São Paulo Province at Itaquera, which bring to mind Don Bosco's experience in the oratory at Valdocco, as regards both the social repercussions of the works and the commitment of the Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians working there and responding with creative competence to the needs of all the inhabitants of

that depressed area of the city of São Paulo and especially of the young people. Interesting too was the meeting with all the personnel, staff and students of the theologate which serves all the Brazilian Provinces except that of Belo Horizonte. Finally mention must be made of the Mass in honour of St Dominic Savio celebrated at Campinas with youngsters representing all the schools of the Province, and the conference held on the campus of the American University.

In the Province of Porto Alegre, there were meetings at Porto Alegre itself -in the presence of civil and ecclesiastical authorities for the inauguration of the University Faculty in its new premises after the transfer from Santa Rosa,- and subsequently at Itajaí and Paraná, where new additions to the social works were inaugurated.

In the Campo Grande Province an important event was the conference of the Rector Major at the university during his visit to the university campus; significant too was his meeting at Meruri with

missionaries accompanied by natives of the Xavantes and Borro tribes, to which Fr Chávez gave great importance as he said during his addresses at the Eucharistic celebration and in his meeting with the missionaries. Mention must be made also of the celebration of the 110th anniversary of the Salesian College of Cuiabá which included, among other events, a meeting in the school's auditorium with more than three thousand youngsters, parents, educators, civil and religious authorities, the Mass celebrated with young people representing the various activities in the parish, and the meeting with all the confreres of the area.

In the Province of Manaus the Rector Major visited the *Pro-Menor Don Bosco* social work, held a meeting of the Provincial Council and Rectors, followed by a further meeting with the Salesians, members of the Salesian Family and youngsters; he visited some of the houses of the Province and of the FMA Vice-province, and celebrated the feast of the provincial community which concluded with an excursion by boat on the Amazon river.

On 10 and 11 September Fr Chávez was at Saltillo, in Mexico, for the celebration of a family

event and on the 12th left for his return journey to Rome where he arrived in the evening of the 13th.

On the 14th he had discussions with members of the General Council present at headquarters and with other confreres of the Generalate. At supper he had as guests three Salesian Bishops who were in Rome for a course for new bishops: Mgr. Luc Van Looy, Mgr. Héctor Vargas and Mgr. Calogero La Piana.

The following day was given over to office work and meeting with various confreres who had come to consult him. In the evening Fr Chávez had supper with the missionaries who had taken part in the preparatory course for the new missionary expedition, giving them the 'Good Night' afterwards.

Thursday, 16. After a morning of office work the Rector Major left immediately after lunch for *Korea* where, at noon of the following day, he was received by the Provincial and numerous members of the Salesian Family. After a brief rest he travelled from Seoul to Kwangiu for a visit to the house of formation, where he took part in evening prayer, gave the 'good night', had supper and was present at an academy organized by those in formation.

The following day, still in Kwangiu, at the St Dominic Savio School (Gok Dong), he presided at the celebrations for 50 years of Salesian work in the country. In the afternoon he visited the mother house of the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki, where he stayed for evening prayer and supper.

On Sunday 19 September, after returning to Seoul, the celebration of the golden jubilee took place with all the Salesian Family, in the morning at Shin An Dong and in the afternoon at the provincial house of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, which was the venue for a conference, evening prayer, a festive academy and supper.

On Monday 20th the Rector Major visited the Don Bosco Youth Centre of Shin Kil Dong and then went on to the provincial house at Shin Weol Dong, with its oratory, youth centre and retreat house for the young; here took place a meeting with all the Salesians in the morning, and in the afternoon a meeting with the Rectors and Provincial Council.

On the following day, Tuesday 21 September, Fr Chávez said Mass for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and gave an interview for journalists, before proceeding to the airport for a flight

back to Rome where he arrived at midnight.

On the 22nd and 23rd he was at the Generalate, receiving confreres and other visitors, among them the Mexican Ambassador to the Holy See.

On Friday 24 September, the Rector Major left for Turin, where in the afternoon he received the *Doctorate Honoris Causa* of Turin University which was celebrating its 600th anniversary; the honour was conferred in recognition of the work done by the Congregation, especially through its missionaries in the fields of health, alternative medicine and the defence of biodiversity. At the same ceremony a Doctorate was conferred on Prof. Romano Prodi, the recently retired President of the European Union.

On Saturday 25th Fr Chávez visited the community of Lombriasco, where he said Mass for the Salesian Family and the educative community for the inauguration of the academic year. In the afternoon he had a meeting with the SDB and FMA communities of Valdocco and gave the good night.

On the following day at Colle Don Bosco he presided at the *Harambee* ceremony and gave an address to the missionaries, volunteers and young people of the

Salesian Youth Movement of Italy; in the afternoon he presided at the Eucharist for the departure of the new missionary expedition.

After returning to Rome in the evening of Sunday 28th, the Rector Major remained at the Generalate until the 30th, when he left for *Slovenia*, calling at Trieste on the way where he presided at a Mass for the Salesian Family and those involved in all our work there at the beginning of the educational and pastoral year; he blessed the newly reconstructed theatre and had supper with the confreres and representatives of the Salesian Family.

– October 2004

On Friday 1 October Fr Chávez continued his journey to Želimje, where he had a meeting with the pupils and a further meeting with the teachers, educators and Salesians. After lunch he went on to Ljubljana-Rakovnik, where he was received by the Bishop and later by the Apostolic Nuncio; in the evening he had a meeting with the provincial council and rectors.

On the following day he visited the works at Rakovnik, celebrated Mass in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians for the anima-

tors of the festive oratories and had a meeting afterwards with the animators themselves. In the afternoon he went on to Trstenik to visit the sick and aging confreres, and in the evening had a meeting with the FMA.

In the morning of Sunday 3 October Fr Chávez celebrated Mass in the Sanctuary of Saint Teresa of the Child Jesus and blessed the new parish and community buildings. Afterwards he met the Salesian Family and in the afternoon presided at Mass in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians on the occasion of the centenary of the blessing of the Sanctuary's foundation stone and of the Slovene Salesian Bulletin. He concluded his visit to the Province with a meeting with all the provincial community, at the end of which he inaugurated the community's new website on the internet.

He returned to headquarters in Rome the following morning and in the afternoon began the *intermediate session* of the General Council which lasted until October 13.

On Tuesday 5 October he went to the Auxilium for the inauguration of the academic year 2004-2005 of the FMA Faculty of Educational Sciences.

On Thursday 7 October in the

afternoon he went with the Vicar General to the Aula Magna to offer good wishes to the newly elected Superior General of the Pallottine Fathers, Fr Fritz Kretz, and greet all the members of their General Chapter.

On Saturday 9, in addition to normal office work, he received several confreres and with other Councillors went to visit the Polyglot community at the Vatican, which now depends directly on the Rector Major.

Monday 11 was a day of heavy work for Fr Chávez with two sessions of the intermediate council meetings and two further meetings with groups of confreres. Invited to lunch were the new and outgoing Superiors General of the Pallottines.

After the intermediate council meeting that ended in the morning of 13 October, Fr Chávez left for *Australia*, accompanied by the Regional Councillor, Fr Václav Klement, and by his secretary Fr Juan José Bartolomé. It was the first stage of a long journey that would continue until his return to Rome on 4 November.

The Rector Major arrived at Melbourne at midnight of October 14, and on the following day had a meeting with the Provincial Council. This was followed by a

further meeting with Rectors at the Bayview Conference Centre in the context of a day of recollection and ongoing formation.

On Sunday 17th the main event was the blessing and inauguration of the new house and provincial centre at Ascot Vale, with the participation of all the Salesian Family, the local Church, members of the educative communities of the various works, and friends of Don Bosco.

The following day Fr Chávez had a meeting with the leaders of the Salesian Youth Movement of the Province, organized by the team for Youth Ministry, and in the afternoon visited the house of formation at Clifton Hill, where he presided at the Mass and stayed for supper and a discussion with the confreres.

On Tuesday 19th he left for Samoa where he arrived on the previous day (because of the International Date Line). at 11.30 p.m. In the course of the next two days he blessed the foundation stone of the new multi-purpose hall at the Don Bosco Technical Centre of Alafua, had a meeting with the novices' community and another with the Salesian Family, visited the Theological College of Moamoa and said Mass there. He also said Mass in the Parish of St

Michael at Leauvaa, gave a conference to the confreres, and ended his visit with a fraternal supper at Sinagoga.

On 21 October he returned to Australia, reaching Darwin early in the morning of Friday 22nd and leaving again for Dili shortly afterwards.

From 23 to 27 October, Fr Chávez spent a very busy period in *East Timor*. On the first days, at Dili, he met the children at the school of Comoro, held a meeting with the Rectors, members of the Provincial Council and delegates of the Vice-province, and a further meeting with the FMA at their provincial house. He also presided at a Mass for the Salesian Family, the Salesian Youth Movement and civil authorities, and greeted the whole Salesian Family. On the following days at Fatumaca he spoke to the entire community – boarders, aspirants, prenovices and novices – and celebrated Mass for them. He also said Mass for all the Christians of the Fatumaca area, gave a conference to the confreres on the significance and value of inculturation, and visited the SDB and FMA communities of Venilale.

On Tuesday October 26 the Rector Major went on to Bacau where, after calling on the Bish-

op, Mgr. Basilio Do Nascimento, he visited the school we have in that locality before returning to Dili. There in the afternoon he received a visit from the Bishop, Mgr. Alberto Ricardo da Silva. In the evening he had supper with the past-pupils who were joined by the President of the Republic.

On the following day the cancellation of a flight to Bali upset arrangements, and Fr Chávez and his fellow-travellers, with the exception of the Provincial, eventually reached Bali by a roundabout route which entailed a flight to Darwin. After the visit to Bali he left for *Jakarta*. On reaching the airport there he left immediately for Tigaraksa where he visited the work and gave a conference to the novices, prenovices and aspirants. After returning to *Jakarta* he had a meeting at the Don Bosco Salesian Residence for the confreres of Indonesia at which the Rector Major spoke of the Salesian vocation in a pluralistic environment. After Mass he concluded his visit to the Vice-province with a supper with representatives of all the Salesian Family, after which he left for the airport to continue his journey to *Japan*.

The visit to the Japanese Province took place from Friday 29 October to Tuesday 2 Novem-

ber. On the first day at Chofu, Tokyo, a meeting with the Rectors and Provincial Council was followed by a Mass and supper with all the confreres of the northern part of the country. On the second day, Saturday 30, he visited the FMA and their pupils and greeted also the youngsters in difficulties of Akabane. In the afternoon he spoke with the Councils of the various groups of the Salesian Family, and celebrated Mass for them, followed by a supper. On the third day, Sunday 31, at Sugunami in Tokyo he gave a message to the teachers of Ikuei, and said Mass in the parish church of Shimoigusa, built by Mgr Cimatti in thanksgiving to Mary Help of Christians for the fact that no Salesian had been killed during the war. Subsequently he held a question and answer session with young people. After lunch he had a meeting with the Sisters of Charity, and then left for Miazaki, the cradle of Salesian work in Japan.

– November 2004

On the Solemnity of All Saints Fr Chávez visited the mother house of the Sisters of Charity and greeted the Sisters of all the communities there, speaking on

the importance of fidelity to charismatic origins and to the unique nature of the vocation as set out in the Constitutions, and of the holiness of the Founder and members of the Congregation. Returning to our own house he had a meeting with all the members of the Salesian community. In the afternoon he met the pupils of the school and later celebrated Mass for the Salesian Family before having supper with them.

On the following day, the Commemoration of All Souls, the Rector Major left for Beppu, where he paid a visit to the Bishop of Oita and had a meeting with the missionary confreres of the area. In the afternoon he presided at a Mass for the Salesian Family which was followed by a family get-together. In the evening, accompanied by the Provincial, the Regional and his secretary, Fr Chávez left by train for Fukuoka whence he took a plane back to Tokyo.

On 3 November the Rector Major spent the whole day returning to Rome where he arrived in the early hours of the following day. Later he returned to his office to receive confreres and get up to date with correspondence.

On Friday 5 November he gave

the good night to the Generalate community, and in the afternoon of the 9th went to the Vatican for the recording of the Strenna for 2005 which he was able to do in the *Redemptoris Mater* Chapel. On the following morning he received the Archbishop of Addis Ababa and, in the afternoon, Mgr. Adrian Van Luyn SDB, Bishop of Rotterdam, the Bishop of Bujumbura (Burundi), and the newly appointed Bishop Joseph Prathan SDB.

On Thursday 11, Fr Chávez joined the external commission he had set up for the verification of matters concerning the UPS.

From Friday 12 to Monday 15 November the Rector Major visited the Province of Slovakia. On Friday afternoon he met the Archbishop Mgr. Jan Sokol at Trnava and, in the evening, the FMA at their provincial house. On the following day he went to Kosice for meetings with the Don Bosco Volunteers of the Circumscription of Eastern Slovakia, with the provincial council of the Cooperators and with the Salesian confreres. In the afternoon he presided at the Eucharist in honour of the Salesian proto-martyrs Sts Luigi Versiglia and Callistus Caravario, before returning by train to Bratislava. He re-

mained there for the Sunday during which he had a meeting with the DBVs of the Western Circumscription and, in the afternoon, gave interviews for TV and radio before saying Mass for the Salesian Family and young people which was followed by a cultural programme. Later he went to the studentate of theology to spend the evening with the formation community. The next day began with a busy morning, including a Mass for the same community, a meeting with the President of the Parliament of the Slovak Republic, Dr Pavol Hrusovsky, a meeting with the Provincial Council, and lunch at the Apostolic Nunciature at the invitation of Mgr Josef Nowacki. In the evening he returned to Rome.

The morning of 16 November was another busy time for Fr Chávez in receiving Bishops and confreres and in dealing with correspondence. In the afternoon he went to the Auxilium for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Faculty of Educational Sciences.

Early on Thursday 18 November the Rector Major left for *Sierra Leone*, where he arrived in the afternoon, visited the work at Lungi and in the evening spoke with the confreres. On Friday 19

he said Mass for the Salesian Family and youngsters before going on to *Liberia*. In the early afternoon he reached Monrovia and visited the Don Bosco Homes, a programme for the rehabilitation of boy soldiers. In the evening he had a meeting with all the confreres. On Saturday was celebrated the 25th anniversary of the beginning of Salesian work in Liberia, with a Eucharist, cultural event and sporting contests in the "Sean Devereux" Youth Centre of Matadi. The Rector Major gave an interview for the radio and took part in the evening in a supper and celebrations to which were invited all the religious communities and local clergy. On the following day he presided at a Mass in St Joseph's parish, visited the house of the Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa, and left for the airport on his way to Ghana where he arrived in the evening. The plane was so far behind schedule that he was able to meet only a few confreres at the airport before continuing his journey to Rome, where he arrived on Monday morning.

From 23 to 27 November Fr Chávez took part in the *World Congress of Consecrated Life*. For the remainder of November he was at the Generalate, receiving

confreres and meeting with Councillors. He gave a good night to the Generalate community, and another to the FMA Provincials and Provincial Councillors of Italy, for whom he also celebrated Mass on the 29th. He ended the month by receiving the members of the presidency of the Salesian Biblical Association, followed by Fr Luciano Odorico, now a missionary in Papua New Guinea.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

The Vicar of the Rector Major

At the end of the summer session of the General Council, the Vicar of the Rector Major Fr Adriano Bregolin went to England to stay in Stockport, and to study English. He stayed with this community until 25 September. During his stay he was able to make short visits to the Communities of Bollington, Bolton, Liverpool, Glasgow, Farnborough, and London Battersea.

At the beginning of September he returned briefly to Italy to attend the Beatification of the Past Pupil Alberto Martelli, which was held in Loreto on 5 September.

Between 3 and 13 October he took part in the work of the "*intermediate session*" of the General Council.

On 15 October he went to Sicily, to Zafferana Etnea, for a Provincial meeting of the Salesian Family.

On 17 October he left for *Argentina*, the Province of Buenos Aires. Here he met the Provincial Council on 18th, and then representatives of the Past Pupils and the Provincial Committee of the Salesian Family.

On 19 October he visited the "Don Bosco" College and the "Mater Misericordiae" Church, focal point for the first Salesian Missionaries in 1875. Then he went to visit the "San Juan Evangelista" Salesian House in the district of Boca. Later he called on the Nuncio Apostolic in Argentina, Mgr. Adriano Bernardini. In the afternoon he met most of the Salesians from the houses in Buenos Aires. In the evening he presided at a Concelebrated Mass in the Basilica of Mary Help of

Christians, with a large number of members of the Salesian Family and also with confreres from the La Plata Province.

On 20 he went to Caleta Olivia. Here too he visited the work and met the confreres from there and also from Pico Truncado. This house he visited in the afternoon for a meeting with the whole of the Educative Community of the "Sacra Famiglia" College.

On 21 October he went to Río Gallegos, where he was received by the Governor of the Province of Santa Cruz. He met the Salesians and the youngsters from the primary and secondary schools. He also visited the "Obra del Carmen" on the outskirts of the city which cares especially for street children and those in difficulty. In the evening he celebrated Mass with the Salesian Family in the Chapel of the Bishop's residence.

22 October was a rest day spent in Calafate with confreres from various communities in Patagonia.

On 23 he went to Ushuaia for the Centenary of the house. On the same day he paid formal visits to the Governor of the State of Tierra del Fuego and to the Mayor of the city. In the evening there was a special Mass of Thanksgiving for the Centenary.

On 24 October the Vicar had a meeting with the Salesian Rectors of the Salesian Houses in the south of Patagonia and in the afternoon he went to Río Grande, where he visited the houses of the Salesians and also made a short courtesy visit to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

Having returned to Buenos Aires, on 25 October in the morning he met the confreres in formation and in the afternoon was received by Cardinal Bergoglio of Buenos Aires. The same day he returned to Italy.

On 28 October he left for Jerusalem where on 29 he took part in the celebrations for the inauguration of the new premises of the studentate of theology at the *Ratisbonne* Institute.

Having returned to Italy, on 31 October he left again for *Madagascar*.

Beginning on 1 November at Fianarantsoa he had a number of meetings with the student confreres in that community, with the priests following their quinquennium, with those in charge of Youth Ministry and with other confreres. While there he also held meetings for updating on the subject of the Salesian Family.

Returning to Ivato, on 5 No-

vember he met the Provincial Council. He then visited the works at Ijeli, the Novitiate at Ambohidratrimo and the Notre Dame de Clairvaux street childrens' centre at Ivato. On 9 November he returned to Italy.

Between 1st and 5th December he took part in the Meeting for the Provincials of Europe in Rome at the Generalate.

The Councillor for Formation

Between 24 August and 10 September 2004 the General Councillor for Formation made a third visit to the East Asia Oceania Region. He began in the *North Philippine* Province where he took part in the meeting of the Provincial Council and the Curatorium at the Theologate in Parañaque. He met the post-novices in Canlubang; and at Batulao he gave a conference on "Formation requirements of GC25" and celebrated Mass for the 64 Rectors of the Region, who were finishing a two week formation course. He then went to Port Moresby, capital of *Papua New Guinea* and headquarters of the

Delegation dependent on FIN, where he met the aspirants, prenovices and postnovices. He had a meeting with the Formation Commission of the Delegation. He also called in at the "Catholic Theological Institute", an intercongregational centre, attended also by our Salesian students.

The next stage took him to the Australian Province. In *Samoa* he visited the novitiate, the "Don Bosco Technology Center", the "Moamoa Theological College" and the two Salesian parishes on the island of Upolu; he also met the "Pacific Formation Commission". He then went to *Fiji*, to the postnovitiate and theological community in Suva and the "Pacific Regional Seminary", meeting the academic authorities. Finally he arrived in *Melbourne*, where he stayed with the formation community in Clifton Hill, the residence for the Salesian students attending the "Catholic Theological Institute". Fr Cereda met the Master of this Institute and they spoke about the course of studies. He visited the Archbishop of Melbourne, who expressed the great appreciation of the local Church for the presence of the Salesians. He also spent time with the Provincial Formation Commis-

sion. Before leaving Australia he stopped off at Ascot Vale to visit the new Provincial headquarters; in the previous days he had also been to the Engadine community in Sidney.

Having returned to Italy, on 12 September he presided at a Mass at *Colle Don Bosco* for the perpetual profession of six Salesians from ICP, two Salesians from MOR and a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians from the Piedmontese Province. On 13 September at *La Spezia* he took part in a meeting of young Salesians, priests and Brothers from the Ligure Toscana Province. On 22 September he visited the community of the students of theology in *Torino - Crocetta* for the opening of the academic year and to meet the students, formation personnel and teachers. Between 1 and 3 October he was in Krakow where he met the postnovices and the students of theology; at *Przemysl* he took part in the solemn celebrations in honour of Blessed August Czartorywski.

After the intermediate General Council meetings, which took place between 13 and 18 October, Fr Cereda left for Spain. In *Barcelona* he took part in the opening of the new academic year

at Martí-Codolar, giving the formal address on the subject "The Church's commitment to formation today"; he presided at the Mass and met the Staff Council. He also met the Provincial Formation Commission, visited the Abbey of Montserrat and the Salesian houses of Sant Vicenç dels Horts, Tibidabo, Sarrià and Ciudad Meridiana. Afterwards he paid a visit to Granada in the *Córdoba* Province, where he met the novices, prenovices and aspirants and the Provincial Formation Commission. The last stage in his visit to Spain was the *Sevilla* Province, where he visited the community of the students of theology and also the centre of studies; he saw the prenovices and the aspirants in Cádiz; he met the Provincial Formation Commission and the Provincial Council. In general he found that these Provinces were concerned about the shortage of vocations and prepared for interprovincial collaboration in the area of formation.

The Councillor for Formation then went on to Africa, between 18 and 27 October. First of all he went to *Zambia* where in the capital Lusaka, he visited the prenovitiate, which has prenovices coming from the four countries that make up the Province:

Namibia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Here he took the opportunity to have a meeting lasting almost all day with the Provincial Formation Commission. He then went to *Madagascar*, where he gave the Provincials and Delegates of *CIVAM*, (Interprovincial Conference of Africa and Madagascar), a report on the current situation of their formation communities. After the meeting with the Provincials, Fr Cereda visited the formation communities in Madagascar, going from the prenovitiate at Tulear, to the community of postnovices and students of theology at Fianarantsoa, to the aspirantate at Betafo, and finally to the novitiate at Ambuidratrimo, where he gave copies of the Salesian Constitutions to the novices.

Between 28 and 31 October he was in *Jerusalem* to take part, with the Vicar of the Rector Major, in the opening of the academic year in the new premises of *Ratisbonne*, in the presence of numerous civil and religious authorities; he then stayed in order to chair a meeting of the Curatorium; finally he went to visit the community in Cremisan.

Between 3 and 21 November he was in the Interamerica Region.

He visited the formation communities of *Central America*: the prenovitiate, the postnovitiate and the theologate in Guatemala; the community for the specific formation of Salesian Brothers, CRESCO and the Don Bosco University in San Salvador; the novitiate in San José in Costa Rica. He then went to Santo Domingo in the Province of the *Antille*, where he had meetings with the prenovices, the novices, the postnovices and those on practical training. He visited the young Salesians in formation in *Haiti*, appreciating the outstanding efforts made in the formation of the confreres, and the Centre of Philosophical Studies also open to other religious in Port-au-Prince. Then he flew to Cochabamba, where all the formation communities of *Bolivia* are located, from the prenovitiate to the theologate; and he also went to La Paz, where he met some university student aspirants. A quick visit to *Perù* enabled him to greet the young Salesians in formation. *Ecuador* was the last Province he visited: here too the meeting with the young Salesians and their formation guides in the various stages showed the efforts made to improve the quality of formation. In each of these Provinces he met

young Salesians and their formation guides; there was always a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission sometimes together with the Provincial Council. He also found interesting the visits to some of the important works of youth ministry in the Provinces visited.

Between 23 and 27 November in Rome he took part with the Rector Major in the *World Congress of Consecrated Life* with the theme: "Passion for God, passion for humanity". Between 1st and 5th December he also took part in the Generalate in Rome in the *Meeting of the Provincials of Europe*. He took part on 12 December in a Congress for Salesian Brothers from the Lombardo-Emiliana Province at Como. Finally, starting on 27 December, he took part in Krakow in the *Assembly of the Salesian Biblical Association* on the theme: "Prayerful reading of the Bible. '*Lectio divina*' and Salesian life".

The Councillor for Youth Ministry

When the summer plenary session of the General Council fin-

ished, on 29 and 30 July 2004 the Councillor for Youth Ministry took part in the Training Camp for Leaders from the Southern Province at Acerenza. On 4 August he arrived at Colle Don Bosco where he took part in several days of the Spanish and Portuguese *Campobosco*, followed by the *European Confronto* of the SYM. Between 6 and 9 August he was involved with the young leaders in the immediate preparations for the *Confronto* and then took part in the *Confronto* itself between 9 and 16 August. There were about 300 young leaders from 17 European countries there studying the message of Salesian holiness and visiting the places associated with the origin of the charism, in this way offering the SYM's specific contribution to the building of Europe.

On 30 August the Councillor took part in the Assembly for the opening of pastoral activity of the Province of Bilbao (Spain), speaking about evangelisation.

On 20-22 September he met together with the YM section of the CISI, to reflect on the theme of faith journeys. Immediately afterwards on 23 September he had a meeting with those responsible for youth ministry at provincial

and local level in the Northeast Province, at Venice-Mestre.

Between 25 September and 3 October he was in *Vietnam*, to lead a Seminar on the Model of Salesian Youth Work, attended by the Provincial Council, the Rectors and the provincial and local delegates for Youth Ministry. He took the opportunity to visit a number of the Salesian houses in the Province.

Having returned to Rome, on 10 October he went to Vasto to celebrate Mass and open the new sports complex at the Salesian Oratory.

Between 10 and 17 October, at Ayagualo (El Salvador), José Luis Anguiano, a member of the Department team, attended and represented the Councillor at a meeting of the Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry those responsible at Provincial level for Schools and for Marginalisation and other representatives from the Provinces of the Interamerica Region; the topic considered in the discussions was vocational training and work preparation in the context of Salesian Youth Ministry.

In the meantime between 18 and 24 October the Councillor was attending the annual meeting of the *CIVAM* at Ivato (Madagas-

car), to consider the organisation of Salesian Youth Ministry in the Region, according to the model for youth pastoral work in the Congregation.

He was also represented by Carlos Garrulo at the IUS Conference for 2004, held in Santiago in Chile - between 25 and 29 October attended by the Rectors and representatives of the IUS in America and Europe, to discuss and examine further the basic elements of the Three Year Plan "to guarantee the foundations of the institutions", in reference to the II Joint Programme.

On 29 October the Councillor left for Seville (Spain), where he took part in the Iberian meeting on vocations work.

During the weekend 19 to 21 November he met with the Provincial Delegates from the *CIMEC* and some other representatives from these Provinces to examine together the question of the specific identity of the Parishes entrusted to the Salesians and also to hold a second meeting with the pastoral coordination team of this group of Provinces.

The following weekend 26 to 28 November, the Department, together with the FMA Youth Ministry Team, met at the Pisana a

representative group of the SYM from the European Provinces to carry out an assessment of the European Confronto held in August, and to launch a European coordination committee of the SYM.

The Councillor for Social Communication

In July 2004 the first *World Consultative Committee for Social Communication*, was held in Rome chaired by Fr. Tarcisio Scaramussa.

Later in the months of August and September 2004 the Councillor for SC made the *Extraordinary Visitation of the "St Pius X" Province of Porto Alegre, Brazil*.

In the month of October 2004 in Mexico the Councillor took part in meetings of the Interamerica Region with the SC Delegates (Amatitan, 18 and 19 October) and with the Provincials (Guadalajara, 20 and 21 October). Following the programme of this six year period the meeting dealt with social communication in the Region and the Salesian System of Social Communication.

Subsequently, Fr. Scaramussa visited the Provinces of

Venezuela, Colombia-Bogotá (COB), Ecuador, Perú and Bolivia. In Bogotá he took part in a meeting for Salesians and lay people involved in social communication in the two Provinces of Colombia.

Having returned to Rome, on 15 November there was a joint meeting between the SDB Department and the FMA Group for SC.

During this period the Department has produced the final version for the press of the two guidebooks: The "*Salesian System of SC*", and "*Salesian and Communicator*" (the programme for SC to be followed in initial formation). In addition, a Style Guide for Salesian documents in English was produced (also available on the net: *sdb.org*), and other aids and support programmes for translation and archiviazione filing (Lexicon, Compendium of Salesian Terminology, Translation Memory). In addition there was collaboration in coordinating the English translation of "*Elementi Giuridici*". On the website a new protected area within the reserved area has been set up for Provincial Economers, the data bases of ANS and SDB have been separated, and older documents of the Congregation in the various languages have been introduced.

The ANS Agency has produced 631 news items, 119 FotoCovers, 2 ANSMag, 26 DigitalPhotos, 6 Services, 5 VideoInformations in collaboration with EuroFilm Missioni Don Bosco, a monthly production of ANSagenda and ANS-Foto, and continued the ANSInfo-Letter service which users receive twice a week. In August, the Agency actively collaborated with the Department for Youth Ministry in providing a Press Office for European Confronto, looking after information services, the video-report of the concluding Mass at which the Rector Major presided, and a twenty minute introductory programme broadcast via satellite by Telepace, and filmed and directed by Eurofilm di Missioni Don Bosco, Turin. It produced a Video-presentation of the Strenna for 2005, and also a Poster for it. Finally three important press statements were published: the first on paedophilia and the reply to the accusations reported in a North American newspaper; the second on the activities of the "Don Bosco Foundation" in China, and the third on the statements of the Salesians in the Lubumbashi Province about the violence suffered by some young people who were unjustly accused and killed.

The Councillor for the Missions

In this period the General Councillor for the Missions was mainly engaged in visiting various Salesian Missions and in some seminars for the Salesian Family.

Between 25 and 30 July 2004, with Fr Franco Assom, he visited Salesian communities in the south of Thailand, in particular at Suratthani. Here one cannot but admire the great work so far carried out in the rural areas, and the commitment of the new generations in following them up. It is worth noting that the missionary effort is mainly concentrated on the school apostolate. There are clear signs of collaboration with other branches of the Salesian Family in Thailand.

Between 31 July and 3 August the Councillor led a seminar on the *missio ad gentes* for East Asia which took place at Hua Hin (Thailand), in collaboration with Sr Ciriaca Hernández, Councillor for the Missions for the FMA (who was also present at other seminars held later in Port Moresby, Nairobi, Kinshasa). Open to all the Salesian Family, the seminar was attended by 75 people mainly SDB and FMA.

Planned as a help to the understanding of the challenges of the *missio ad gentes* in East Asia and how to respond to them, the seminar was a good opportunity to provoke new interest in this topic.

Fr Francis Alencherry then went on to Myanmar to Yangon, to preside at the inauguration of the new Vice Province MYM and to install the first Superior, Fr Joachim Ye Maung. The inauguration ceremony was held on 6 August, feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, in the presence of the two Archbishops, Mgr. Paul Grawng, of Mandalay, and Mgr Charles Maung Bo, SDB, of Yangon. About thirty priests concelebrated including the Provincial of Calcutta and various confreres from the Mother Province. The ceremony was well prepared and contributed to infusing optimism and enthusiasm in the confreres of the new Vice Province. The Councillor took the opportunity of spending a few days in the country to hold several meetings with all the confreres of the Vice Province as well as with the new Council.

A visit to Vietnam had been planned but it was not possible to do so on account of entry Visa problems. Fr Francis therefore

went to the Provincial House in Calcutta (8-9 August), and had the opportunity to meet various confreres working on the Salesian Missions. From there he went to his home State of Kerala for a few days which he spent with his sister whose husband had recently died in an accident

On 15-16 August in New Delhi, while waiting for the flight to take him to Port Moresby, he had the opportunity to visit the Salesian houses in Ashalayam, Najafgarh, the SPCI Centre (offices of the Provincial Conference for South Asia), as well as the Provincial house.

Between 17 August and 8 September the Councillor made a visit to *Papua New Guinea* where he gave a seminar and then he carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation* of the *Solomon Islands* (20-23 August), on behalf of the Regional Fr. Václav Klement who was busy in Japan, the Province to which the Solomon Islands belong. At the Technical School in Honiara it was very encouraging to see the work so far accomplished with a rapid expansion and to the great satisfaction of the local people. The second foundation at Tetere includes a parish and a newly established e "rural

training Centre" in which the local people are cooperating.

In Papua New Guinea, the Councillor had the opportunity to visit all the Salesian houses in the country and appreciate at first hand the impressive work done in the last 24 years. On the other hand there is a great need to consolidate with regard to both the personnel and the promotion of local vocations.

Between 4 and 7 September there was a seminar at Port Moresby (parallel to that already held in Hua Hin), in which about thirty people took part: FMA and SDB, and a few cooperators and past pupils from Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Australia and Samoa. Also on this occasion, there was a good experience of missionary animation aimed above all at clarifying the priorities for the *missio ad gentes* in Oceania.

Between 9 and 26 September Fr Francis was in Rome to finalise the preparations for the "Preparatory Course" for the new missionaries. For the first time this took place over two weeks (12-26 September), following the discernment carried out with some missionologists the previous year. For the first time the

Missionary Departure Ceremony with the presentation of the Crucifix to 14 SDB, 6 FMA and some lay people (from Italy and Poland), took place at Colle Don Bosco, on account of the restoration work being carried out in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. As always a very large number took part in the celebration in the "Upper Church".

On his return to Rome the Councillor accompanied by Fr Maurice Vallence, left for Washington, D.C., U.S.A – between 27 September and 4 October – for a meeting with those in charge of the Salesian International Mission Offices and NGO. The main topic concerned the *Development Offices* in the Provinces, a theme that will be taken up again at a wider level in a seminar to be held in Rome at the end of March and the beginning of April 2005.

Between 4 and 14 October in Rome Fr Francis took part in the *intermediate session* of the General Council.

In the period 15-26 October the Councillor was in *Angola*, on a visit that was well prepared and organised by the Superior of the Vice Province. He was able to vis-

it all the Salesian houses in the country, encouraging the confreres in their pastoral activities and at the same time drawing encouragement from seeing the spirit with which they were facing up to the many serious difficulties. Another source of optimism is the thousands of catechumens in the various communities who are being prepared by a serious process for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. The visit concluded with a meeting with the Provincial Council.

Between 26 and 31 October, although he only had a few days available, the Councillor went to *South Africa* and managed to visit all the Salesian houses of the young AFM Vice Province, thanks especially to the excellent organisation of the Superior. Particularly notable were the work for street children in Cape Town, the Youth Centre in Walkerville and the activities in *Lesotho* and *Swaziland*.

Between 1 and 5 November the seminar already held in Asia and in Oceania was also offered to the continent of Africa, with the active presence of the Regional Councillor and once again with the close collaboration of Sr Ciriaca Hernández, first in English at

Nairobi (Kenya). Again open to the whole Salesian Family it was attended by 35 people. It was a valuable opportunity to consider many of the problems associated with the *missio ad gentes* of concern to the Provinces. Afterwards between 8 and 12 November it was the turn of the French and Portuguese speaking countries at Kinshasa (D.R. Congo) where 44 took part.

At the end of the seminar, Fr Francis was able to visit all the Salesian houses in the *Rwanda and Burundi* Delegation and almost all those in the *Dem. Rep. of the Congo* and he had the possibility of many meetings with various groups of confreres as well as with the Council of the Delegation and the Provincial Council. Almost all the works of this Province are for poor and marginalised youngsters, which also offers good hope for the future. At present there are 45 prenovices between the Province and the Delegation. Having to pass through Zambia, he also managed to visit the community in Cingola.

On 28 November he returned to Rome, for the Meeting of European Salesian Provincials and the winter session of the Council.

The Economer General

When the summer session of the General Council concluded Fr Mazzali preached a retreat for the FMA novices from the novitiates at Castelgandolfo and Missaglia, between 25 July and 1 August, at the Generalate.

Between 6 and 8 August he visited Istanbul, especially with regard to the economic and financial situation of the Salesian work in the capital of Turkey. Afterwards he was engaged for several days in interviews and the selection of managers for the Polaris society.

Between 22 and 28 August Fr Mazzali preached a retreat to a group of confreres from the ICP at Cogne, Val d'Aosta. Afterwards as every year, he led the School Camp for the young people from the Don Bosco Oratory in Sangano (To). After a break with his family he took part in a meeting of the Board of Administration of the SEI in Turin on 16 September.

After the intermediate session of the General Council, he went to the Province of Paraguay, between 18 and 27 October, visiting some of the works and meeting

those responsible for the Province.

Finally between 1 and 25 November he carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Dutch Province*.

The Councillor for the Africa-Madagascar Region

Fr. Valentín de Pablo's activities between July and November 2004 were as follows:

- 25-31 July. The Regional Councillor accompanied the Rector Major during the latter's visit to Kenya to preach a Retreat to 93 Provincial Councillors and Rectors from the English-speaking parts of the Region, an event that proved to be an outstanding period of animation and ongoing formation. After the Retreat, Fr Chávez took the opportunity to meet the confreres of the Salesian communities of Kenya and spend a day of festivity with all the Salesian Family in the parish of Mary Help of Christians at Upper Hill in Nairobi.
- 13-15 August. Fr de Pablo went to Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be present at the episcopal ordina-

tion of Mgr Gaston Ruvezi SDB, as Bishop of Sakania-Kipushi in southern Congo. He is the second of two Salesian Congolese Bishops; the other is Mgr Jean-Pierre Tafunga, Bishop of Uvira.

- 20-22 August. He moved to Ethiopia to install Fr Alfred Ro-ca for a second period as Superior of the Vice-province of Eritrea-Ethiopia (AET). The ceremony took place in the novitiate on the feast-day of the provincial community. During the Eucharist the Regional received the religious profession of 11 novices belonging to the Vice-province.
- 15 August - 15 October. In the name of the Rector Major Fr de Pablo made the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Zambian Vice-province of Mary Help of Christians* (ZMB) with headquarters at Lusaka. The Circumscription embraces the four countries of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Namibia; it has 60 confreres and 8 novices. 22 of the confreres are local vocations of whom 13 are already perpetually professed. There are 14 foundations, of which 8 are in Zambia and 2 each in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The first Salesian mis-

sionaries reached Zambia on 12 October 1982, and the Vice-province was erected in September 1992. The Visitor was able to meet every confrere and visit all the communities. He was also able to participate in the joyful *Festival of Salesian Youth* which took place at Lilongwe (Malawi), with some 500 boys and girls from the four countries of the Vice-province. During the visitation Fr de Pablo also made the consultation for the appointment of the new Superior of the Circumscription.

- 17-25 October. The Regional was in Madagascar to preside at the annual meeting of the *Provincial Conference of Africa and Madagascar* (CIVAM). The main theme of reflection this year was "Youth Pastoral Work", guided by Fr Antonio Domenech, Councillor General. Other items studied were "Formation of Salesians in the Region", with a report by Fr Francis Cereda of the General Council, and the consideration of some first steps in the coordination of "Professional Formation" at Regional level.
- 26-30 October. On his way from Madagascar to Nairobi Fr de Pablo made a visit of animation

to Mozambique, to take part in a meeting of the "Curatorium" of Angola and Mozambique for their common houses of formation: the novitiate and post-novitiate. He took the opportunity to visit the six communities in the southern part of the country and meet the confreres.

- 1-12 November. The Regional took part in two *Missiology Seminars* jointly organized by the SDB and FMA Missions Departments. The seminar for English-speakers took place at Nairobi from 1-5 November, and the one for French and Portuguese-speakers at Kinshasa from 8-12 of the same month. The theme in both meetings was "The challenge of the mission 'ad gentes' in Africa and Madagascar" in the light of the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, on the tenth anniversary of the Synod for Africa. Among the initiatives was one for giving a new impetus to the spirituality and missionary commitment of the Salesian Family in Africa.
- 19-22 November, Fr de Pablo accompanied the *Rector Major* during his visit to Liberia and Sierra Leone. The occasion was the 25th anniversary of the Sale-

sians in Liberia and the presence of the Rector Major was meant to be an explicit sign to strengthen and support the confreres working in these two countries tormented by years of civil war.

- 13-30 November. In this period Fr de Pablo carried out the *Consultation for the new Provincial of the Central African Province* (AFC). On 13th and 14th he profited by his stay at Kinshasa to meet the confreres of the three communities of the capital, and from 27th to 30th he was in the southern part of the country to meet the confreres in the numerous communities around Lubumbashi. He made a particular two-day visit (26-28 November) to the community of Mbuyi-Maji in the centre of the country where, two months earlier, there had been an attack by armed groups trying to kill street-children, and the community had witnessed the killing and burning of two boys in the community's playground - a tragedy they had been powerless to prevent.

On 1 December the Regional Councillor returned to Rome for the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Latin America Southern-Cone Region

25 July. The Regional left Rome for Uruguay to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation* of the Province. It had to be interrupted for two periods: first from 28 August to 9 September to enable Fr Baruffi to accompany the Rector Major on his visit to the four Brazilian Provinces of São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Campo Grande and Manaus. and again to enable him to take part in the meeting of the *CIS-BRASIL* Provincials at Porto Alegre 24-25 September. The visitation ended with a meeting with the Rectors and a separate meeting with the Provincial Council for the presentation of some guidelines.

In the course of the visitation the Regional was able to hold several meetings with the Provincial Council and the Rectors; he visited all the works and spoke personally with every confrere, as well as meeting educative communities, pupils and members of the Salesian Family, and making contact with the various local Bishops.

From 1 October to 27 November Fr Baruffi made the *Extraordinary Visitation* also of the

Province of Rosario, Argentina. Here too he had meetings with the Provincial Council and Rectors, and was able to visit all the foundations and speak personally with each confrere.

Simultaneously with the visitation he also made the consultation preceding the appointment of the next Provincial, and for this purpose held a day of discernment in three zones of the Province: Rosario, Resistencia and Paraná. Each of these included a period of prayer, group-work to evaluate the progress of the Province over the last six years, a plenary assembly for reports on the group-work, and a time for personal reflection for the selection in writing of three candidates. The day ended with a Eucharist, and the participation was total on all three occasions.

The extraordinary visitation ended with a meeting with the Provincial Council for the presentation of suggestions and guidelines.

Meetings with Provincial Conferences

From 12 to 16 November Fr Baruffi took part in the meeting of the Southern Provincial Conference (CISUR) held at Zavalla

in the Rosario Province. It took place in four sessions. The first (12-13 November) was with the Provincials and delegates of the Conference to prepare for the coming Team Visit, reflect on the present situation of the Conference itself, and evaluate the meetings that had been held and the state of formation and pastoral work. The second session (on the 14th) was attended by the Provincials of Argentina alone (JIAR) and considered the particular situation of Argentina, and the prospects for synergy, a *curatorium* for the novitiate, IUS, etc. On the 15th there was a meeting of the Provincials with the FMA Provincials of the Region; and on the 16th the SDB and FMA Provincials (RIA) joined the leaders and delegates of the groups of the Salesian Family to study the situation of the Family in the country. Representatives took part from the following groups: SDBs, FMAs, DBVs, Cooperators, men and women past-pupils, and Damas Salesianas.

The meeting of the Brazilian Provincial Conference (CIS-BRASIL) took place on 24 and 25 September at Porto Alegre with two main points to consider: the first was the preparation to be

made for the coming Team Visit, and the second a reflection on some specific problems of the Region: the network linking salesian schools, formation in general, and the specific project for the formation of the salesian Brother.

On 3 December the Regional returned to Rome for the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Inter-american Region

Fr Esteban Ortiz González left Rome on 25 July for Toronto (Canada) to follow a two weeks course in English and share the community life of the confreres of that city; while there he took part in the closing ceremony of the summer camp organized by the Salesians of St Benedict's parish. While in Canada he was also able to meet Fr, Luc Lantagne, the Superior of the Vice-province.

6 August. He went to New York to visit his relatives, and on the following day at Paterson (NJ) received the perpetual profession of two confreres of the SUE Province. On the same occasion he was able to greet the New Rochelle Provincial, Fr James Heuser,

14 August. He flew to San Domingo to meet Fr Pastor Ramírez Fernández, Provincial of the Antilles. On the following day he went on to Havana (Cuba) where, on 16 August – Don Bosco's birthday – he presided at a Eucharist of thanksgiving for the 50 years of religious profession of Fr Guillermo García Montaña (an ex-General Councillor for the former Pacific-Caribbean Region), Fr Teófilo Castillo (ANT Vice-provincial) and Fr Jesús María Tejada.

17-18 August. He was at Santa Clara to greet the confreres of the community and get to know something of the pastoral work in the two parishes entrusted to the Salesians who animate various small Christian communities. On the 18th he left Havana for Santa Cruz (Bolivia).

19-21 August. Fr Esteban Ortiz was in Bolivia to make the *consultation for the appointment of a new Provincial*. This took place through three successive meetings: on the 19th for the confreres of the Santa Cruz and neighbouring communities; on the 20th at Cochabamba for the Salesians of that area; and on 21st for the confreres of the communities in and around La Paz. While in La Paz

the Regional visited the campus of the Salesian University and took part in the graduation ceremony of a group of students.

22 August. He travelled to Lima to meet the new Peruvian Provincial, Fr. Vicente Santilli, and on the following day had a meeting with the Provincial Council.

24 August. He went on to Quito, for a meeting with Fr. Francisco Sánchez Carrión, Provincial of Ecuador, and on the 27th reached Guayaquil, where he visited the communities of that city before moving on to Machala to meet the Salesians and greet the members of the local Christian communities.

On Sunday 29 August the Regional reached Panama to begin the consultation for the new Provincial of the Central American Province (CAM). In the course of the following week he had a meeting in the capital of each of the countries making up the Province: Panamá (Panamá), San José (Costa Rica), Managua (Nicaragua), Tegucigalpa (Honduras), San Salvador (El Salvador) and Guatemala (Guatemala)

5 September. Fr Esteban Ortiz began at Guadalajara, Mexico, the

Extraordinary Visitation of the Mexican Province of Christ the King and Mary Help of Christians (MEG). On the following day, after a first overview of the material prepared for the Visitation he had a meeting with the Provincial Fr Héctor Guerrero Córdova and his Council, and on the same day began his journey around the 28 communities of the province, beginning with the missionary foundation of San Antonio Las Palmas, in the Mixepolitana Prelature.

11 October. The Regional interrupted the visitation to go to Mexico for a meeting with the Provincial Fr Luis Rolando Valerdi Sánchez and his Council to assess the degree of implementation of the guidelines given in the extraordinary visitation of 2003.

12 October. He travelled to El Salvador to take part in a meeting on the Pastoral aspects of Work, at which were present also Fr José Luis Anguiano of the Youth Pastoral Department, Don Rafael Borges of the Salesian Regional Centre for Ongoing Formation (SRFP) at Quito, the provincial delegates for youth ministry of the Interamerican Region and those in charge of the Region's work for the marginalized.

16 October, Saturday. Fr Esteban Ortiz returned to Guadalajara to prepare for the annual meeting of the Provincials of the Region. In the afternoon of the following day he had a meeting with the Provincials of the Andes Zone (COB, COM, ECU, PER and BOL), to analyze the existing formation processes for preparation for the priesthood during the course of theology; this meeting continued on Tuesday 19th.

Beginning on Monday 18 October, the Regional coordinated the *IX Meeting of the Interamerican Provinces*. The first day was one of prayer and recollection, animated by Fr Macrino Guzmán Guzmán, a former MEG Provincial. The second day was given over to an analysis of the situation of the Centres of Ongoing Formation in the Region (Berkeley, CRESCO in San Salvador, CSRFP in Quito). On the third and fourth days, with the assistance of Fr Tarcisio Scaramussa, Councillor General for Social Communication, accompanied by Fr Renato Butera, the group studied the Salesian System of Social Communication drawn up by the Department, in view of its application in the provinces of the Region. The fifth day was dedicated to preparations for the Team Vis-

it of next year, which will take place in Bogotá (October 2005). On the final day the Provincials were given a short tour to get to know the salesian work in Irapuato (aspirantate, prenovitiate and youth centre - Temple of Don Bosco) and in León (Sanctuary of Don Bosco and the "Niños de Don Bosco" project).

24 October Fr Esteban Ortiz took up once again the interrupted Visitation of the MEG communities, ending on 28 November with a visit to Mexicali, on the border with the USA, where the Salesians have a parish and an oratory.

2 December, in the assembly hall of the Salesian Theological Institute of Tlaquepaque (Guadalajara) the Visitor presented his final report on the Visitation, in the presence of the Provincial and his Council, the Rectors of all the Salesian communities and a large group of other confreres (more than 100 Salesians in all). In the afternoon of the same day he had a further meeting with the Provincial and his Council, and thus brought the Visitation to an end.

On 3 December Fr Esteban Ortiz went to Quito to represent the Region at the celebrations for the

30th anniversary of the CSRFP and of the golden jubilee of ordination of Fr Fernando Peraza Leal, founder of the Centre, who has worked there all these years.

On 5 December the Regional left for Rome and the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the East Asia and Oceania Region

After the summer session of the General Council, Fr Klement left Rome for Thailand to take part in the *Seminar of missionary animation* at Hua Hin (30 July to 3 August), which was attended by 80 members of 7 different branches of the Salesian Family, and for the first time also by 4 Provincials and 4 delegates for youth ministry of the eight provinces of East Asia. After the seminar the Regional remained at Hua Hin for a meeting with the committee preparing for the coming Team Visit to the Region, and for a brief meeting with the THA Provincial Council.

From 7-11 August Fr Klement was in the *Philippines* for a visit of animation to the Cebu (FIS) Province, and was able to visit two communities – those of

Borongan (Eastern Samar) and Mati Maa (Mindanao) – that he had not been able to visit previously because of their distance from the provincial centre. At Cebu he had a meeting with the provincial council of the Cooperators, joined 50 confreres of the area for a day of retreat, and concluded with a meeting of the Provincial Council.

Subsequently (12-16 August) he visited the Province of Vietnam for the first profession of 20 confreres, the perpetual profession of 8 others, and the beginning of the novitiate for 36 candidates.

Between 17 and 28 August the Regional was at the “Mary Help of Christians” Retreat House at Batulao, near Manila, for the first *Seminar for Rectors of the Region*. 64 Rectors and 5 Provincials took part and the proceedings were animated and guided by Frs Julian Fox and Chrys Saldanha. It was a good occasion for getting a deeper knowledge of the challenges to the spiritual animation of the communities. The presence of the five Provincials enabled a day to be spent on preparations for the next Team Visit to the Region.

Fr Klement made the consultation for the new Provincial of the Manila Province (FIN) from 28-

30 August, in meetings with almost all the confreres in four different places. He concluded his stay in the Philippines with a meeting of the Provincial Council, at which Fr Cereda was also present.

On 1 September the Regional Councillor began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Japan*, which continued until 22 November. It had to be interrupted no less than three times. Fr Klement accompanied the Rector Major during the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of Salesian work in South Korea (16-21 September); he took part in the intermediate session of the General Council in Rome (9-13 October), and from 14 October to 2 November was with the Rector Major during his visits to the three Provinces of the Region: AUL (Australia and Samoa), ITM (East Timor and Indonesia) and GIA (Japan). On his last day in Japan he took part in the celebrations at Tokyo for the 75th anniversary of the work in Japan of the FMA.

After concluding the extraordinary visitation of Japan Fr Klement returned to Rome to take part with the Rector Major and Fr Cereda in the Congress of Consecrated Life (24-27 November). He

then went to Bratislava for three days to make the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial of Slovakia, before going on for a brief rest with his family in Brno (Czech Republic). On 6 December he returned to Rome for the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Region of South Asia

After the summer session of the Council, Fr Joaquim D'Souza left for India to begin the consultation for new Provincials for the two Provinces of Tamil Nadu: *Chennai* (INM) and *Tiruchy* (INT). He had discussions with various groups of confreres in several different places. After the consultations he went on to Sri Lanka where (14 August) he was present at the priestly ordination of four deacons.. The following day, Solemnity of the Assumption, he held a meeting of the Provincial Council of the new Sri Lankan Vice-province (LKC), at which the Apostolic Nuncio Mgr Mario Zenari presided and during which was read the *decree of erection of the Vice-province of St Joseph*, with headquarters at Colombo. On the following day (birthday of

Don Bosco) he inaugurated the academic year of the post-novitiate at Kotadeniyawa and preached the monthly retreat to the community. In the evening he had a meeting with the Archbishop emeritus of Colombo, Mgr Fernando Nicholas Mark.

From Sri Lanka Fr Joaquim D'Souza travelled to the North-East of India to preside at a meeting of the Provincial Conference of the Region (*SPCSA Council*, 20-23 August). On the 21st he inaugurated the new University College of Educational Sciences for teachers in secondary schools (the "Don Bosco College of Education").

On 25 August he took up once again the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Guwahati Province* (ING), begun in the previous April. It had to be further interrupted to enable the Regional to go to Goa for the solemn inauguration (31 August) of the new *Vice-province of Konkan* (INP), with Bl. Joseph Vaz as its titular. During the concelebrated Eucharist at which the Patriarch of Goa and Daman presided, the new Superior made the profession of faith in the presence of the Provincials of Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Portugal, together

with numerous confreres and members of the Salesian Family. The following day the Regional presided over a joint meeting of the INB and INP provincial councils to draw up the agreement provided for in the decree of erection.

On 3 September Fr D'Souza returned to the Visitation of the Guwahati Province, visiting one by one the houses and foundations in the State of Meghalaya and the lower part of the State of Assam. He met with the individual confreres and with the communities of FMA, MSMHC and VSDB Sisters who collaborate with us in missionary and pastoral work. On 8 October he was at the Palace of the Governor of Meghalaya with the Bishops of Northeast India to receive the Apostolic Nuncio to India Abp. López Quintana Pedro. Two days later he took part also in the solemn Blessed Sacrament procession at Shillong, at which the Nuncio presided and which brought together thousands from the tribes of the Northeast to honour the Blessed Sacrament in this Eucharistic year.

In the course of the Visitation the Regional had meetings also with the Salesian Archbishops of Guwahati and Shillong, with the

Bishop of Tura and his Coadjutor, and with the Bishop of Bonagaon. He also met individually the Mother General of the MSMHC, the Provincials of the MSMHC provinces of Shillong and Tezpur, and the FMA Provincial of Shillong. The Visitation of the Guwahati Province ended on 28 November, after which the Regional left for a few days rest with his family in Goa, where also he was able to take part in the solemn ten-yearly exhibition of the sacred relics of St Francis Xavier, patron of the Missions, of India and in particular of our Province of Mumbai. On 5 December he returned to Rome for the winter session of the Council.

The Councillor for the Region of Northern Europe

After the General Council's summer session Fr Albert Van Hecke went to Belgium to be present at some significant parts of the "*Eurizon*" of the Salesian Youth Movement organized by the North Belgium Province for the young people of the Northern European Region. From 25 to 30 July, some 300 youngsters from 12 Provinces of the Region were able to live for a week in the spir-

it of the SYM. By means of a vast and well organized range of educational, recreational and spiritual activities the youngsters spent together a fantastic week of joyful fellowship and sharing. The week ended with a festive Eucharistic celebration at which Bishop Luc Van Looy presided. Those responsible decided to organize another "*Eurizon*" meeting in the Province of the Czech Republic for the year 2005.

After visiting his family Fr Van Hecke went to Cologne for a few days rest before returning to Colle Don Bosco for *Confronto* 2004, which brought together this year in particular young animators of the SYM.

He then spent the period from 15 to 25 August at the Generalate to prepare a report on the Northern European Region for the intermediate meeting of the General Council at which a study of this region was on the agenda.

On 26 August he left for Munich to launch the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Southern German Province*, but from 3 to 13 October was back at the Generalate for the intermediate session of the Council, before returning to continue the Visitation which

eventually ended at Aschau-Waldwinkel on 14 and 15 November with a meeting of the Provincial Council, a concluding conference to the Rectors, and a conference to the lay people responsible for our works.

The Southern German Province is well organized and animated, with a wide range of works. Prominent among them are those for disabled youngsters and young people at risk. Specific to this Province is also the presence of more than 50 confreres from other European provinces who are working in German parishes or in Catholic Missions for Poles, Italians and Croatians.

There is unfortunately, as in the rest of western Europe, a growing process of secularization, with Catholics decreasing in number and a consequent falling off in vocations to the priestly and religious life.

But the Province has been able to give new energy to vocational animation by preparing some houses as welcoming communities for aspirants and young adults interested in the salesian life.

The house of Benediktbeuern, with its 15 departments, is the crown of the Province. Thousands of young people make Benedikt-

beuern probably the most youthful, and certainly the most lively, "monastery" in Europe. Despite its complexity, collaboration between the various Institutes is very good. Day after day it keeps the Province in contact with the world of youth by offering a vast panorama of educative, pastoral and recreational activities, as well as providing young confreres with a sound formation and a rich field of experience.

In view of the new German Province, due to come into existence on 15 August 2005, the two present Provinces are following a well-defined path drawn up by the Provincial Councils and ad hoc committees. Highly significant and greatly esteemed was the Provincial Chapter held in common, which defined the Project of the new Province, established certain priorities and so set the path for future progress.

On 16 November Fr Van Hecke returned to Rome, only to leave again on the 19th for Belgium to animate the consultation for the appointment of the Provincial of the new combined Province of North Belgium with Holland. Immediately afterwards he went to Germany to launch a similar consultation for the Provincial of the

single German Province; for this purpose he held meetings at Bonn, Hanover, Ens Dorf and Munich.

On 27 November the Regional returned to Rome again, this time to take part in the meeting of the Provincials of Europe from 1 to 5 December, and for the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Region of Western Europe

Between 31 July and 7 August Fr Filiberto Rodriguez was in northern Italy to take part in the *Campobosco* event with young people from the Provinces of Spain and Portugal at Mornese, Colle Don Bosco and Turin.

He then went to Spain for a visit to his family between 8 and 15 August. On the 16th at Sanlúcar la Mayor, he received the first religious profession of the novices of the whole of Spain, and for the following two days accompanied the Rector Major in his rapid visit to Salamanca. From 22nd to 28th he was at Madrid, visiting some of the houses belonging to the Iberian Conference to speak with the confreres and decide on the shaping of the new programme.

From 29 to 31 August Fr Filiberto took part at Seville in a meeting for programming events for the coming year. He himself will give two conferences on vocational animation and on the place of each one in the educative and pastoral project of the different works.

On 1 September the Regional began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Spanish Province of Valencia*, which kept him busy until 8 November when he presented his concluding report on the Visitation to the Provincial Council.

The Visitation was interrupted for two brief periods:

- to enable Fr Filiberto to take part in the intermediate session of the Council in Rome from 4 to 13 October;
- for the Vocational Congress organized by the Iberian Conference through the National Centre for Youth Ministry, which took place at Sanlúcar la Mayor, Seville, from 29 October to 1 November.

On 10 November the Regional was in Lyons for the combined annual meeting of the French-speaking SDB and FMA Provinces of France and Belgium. After the meeting he spent a week

visiting the provinces and communities of Southern Belgium.

From 20 to 25 November Fr Filiberto was in Madrid to visit some confreres of the Valencia Province who are in first formation outside the Province at Carabanchel, Burgos, and Atocha. This done he was able to present a corresponding supplementary report to the Rectors and Councillors of the Valencia Province.

Finally, from 28 to 30 November he presided at an ordinary session of the Iberian Provincial Conference.

On 1 December the Regional returned to Rome for the meeting called by the Rector Major of all the Provincials of Europe, and stayed on afterwards for the winter session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Region of Italy and the Middle East

After a short visit to his parents, Fr Pier Fausto Frisoli took part from 10 to 15 August in the European *Confronto* of young people at Colle Don Bosco, and in the following week was present at the Formation Course at Pacog-nano di Vico Equense for confr-

eres in their first five years of priesthood.

22 August. He opened the *XV Week of Education to Globalization*, arranged by the VIS organization at Rifreddo di Pignola (Potenza), with the theme "Men on the march - Migration and international Cooperation!"; he gave the opening address on: "What kind of intercultural education".

23-25 August. He visited the confreres from various provinces gathered at Caselette to prepare for their perpetual profession.

27-28 August. He took part in the Assembly of the confreres of the Sardinian Vice-province in Rome, and for the following two days was at the Theological Studentate at Messina with the confreres of the first phase of preparation for perpetual profession.

3 September. In the light of the Extraordinary Visitation the Councillor had a meeting with some 700 teachers from the schools and professional training centres of the Milan Province.

4 September. He presided at a meeting of the Provincials of Central Italy (IAD, IRO, ILT, ISA) to study matters relating to the re-configuring of Salesian work in that area.

8 September. He presided at the Eucharistic celebration at Colle Don Bosco, and received the first professions of the novices of Pinerolo.

9 September. At Sacred Heart, Rome, he presided over a committee set up to study the Offices and Services provided by the CISI, in response to the request of the General Council made in the intermediate session of March 2004.

12 September. Fr Frisoli was once again in Milan to meet all the province's confreres in formation and receive the perpetual profession of three of them.

13 September. He was at Loreto for a day of retreat with all the members of the Adriatic Province.

14 September. He took part in a preliminary meeting to prepare the CISI-CII Conference on the School and Professional Formation in Italy programmed for 8-10 October.

19-22 September. At Avigliana he presided at a meeting of the CISI sector for Youth Ministry, at which were present the appropriate provincial delegates from all over Italy, to study processes for education to the faith. He then re-

turned to headquarters, only to leave again on the 26th for Zafferana Etnea, for the Assembly of the confreres of the Sicilian Province.

29 September. The Regional began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Milan Province*, with a meeting with the Provincial Council. He then went on to visit during October the communities of Bologna "St John Bosco", Forlì, San Marino, Rimini, Ravenna, and Codigoro. The only interruption was from 8 to 11 October to enable Fr Frisoli to be present at a meeting of the Rectors of the North-East Province at Mestre.

In November he continued the visitation to the communities of Ferrara, Parma, Bologna "Beata Vergine San Luca", Castel de' Britti, Zurich (Switzerland), and the parish of Sesto San Giovanni.

14 and 21 November. He took part in the "parish days" of the province celebrated at Bologna and Milan, and on the 28th in the SYM Forum at Parma with some 200 young people of the Province.

30 November. The Regional returned to Rome for the meeting of the Provincials of Europe, and the winter session of the General Council.

The Secretary General

In this period, implementing the itinerary set out in the programming for the six year period, and in agreement with the Rector Major and the respective Regional Councillors, the Secretary General had *two meetings of Provincial Secretaries*, respectively:

- at Nairobi - DBYES, Kenya, for the Secretaries of the Africa and Madagascar Region, between 13 and 17 September;
- at Bombay - Matunga, India, Provincial house, for the Secretaries of the South Asia Region between 8 and 12 November.

As was indicated in the letter convoking the meetings the purpose was to provide an opportunity for updating and a sharing of

ideas. The topics on the Agenda were those specially relating to the Provincial Secretary and Secretariat, concerning documentation, statistics, juridical aspects, the archives and libraries. Special emphasis was given to the archives and to various juridical cases. Mention should be made of the active participation of the Secretaries and the friendly atmosphere of the meetings and the opportunity to learn about different situations. A special thanks goes to the communities of the house in Nairobi - DBYES and to the Bombay Province who played hosts to the Secretaries with a typical Salesian welcome, providing the opportunity to get to know some of the more important and significant houses in the Provinces.

5.1 «When he (Barnabas) came and saw the grace of God, he was glad» (Acts 11,23)

Introductory address by the Rector Major at the Meeting of European Provincials

Below is the text of the address given by the Rector Major on Wednesday 1st December as an introduction to the meeting of the Provincials of Europe, which he called in the "Salesianum" between 1 and 5 December 2004. In his address, in addition to recalling the background to this event, which refers back to a directive of the GC25, he carefully indicates the nature and the aims of the meeting referring also to the Word of God, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (11,23) which he gives as the title to his address.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A heartfelt greeting and welcome to the Generalate, and I hope that you feel at home during these days in which we want to look with the eyes and the pastoral heart of Don Bosco at the challenging and exciting situation of the new Europe.

An historic occasion

This is the third time since Vatican II that the Rector Major has called together the Provincials of the continent of Europe, which now involves three Regions, to examine together the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious situation in which the Salesians are being called to live their own religious lives and to carry out the Salesian mission, trying to know it better, examining the possibilities and the resources available, facing up to the challenges and planning a future presence.

I recall, as a premiss, that the starting point for such a meeting was a directive of the GC25 which asked the Rector Major to present to the next General Chapter a proposal for a restructuring of the Provinces and Regions in Europe. In the reflection carried out in the Council we have seen that more important than the restructuring of the Provinces and Regions is the clarification of the kind of presence that we want in today's Europe, and consequently the structural changes that will make this possible.

A new "house"

Europe is experiencing a unprecedented situation in its histo-

ry, after it resolved to close the book on the wars, concentration camps, gulags, on the Shoah, which tormented, bloodied and divided it for so many centuries. It was precisely the mature response of the "Fathers of the new Europe" committed believers and wise politicians (Robert Schumann, Alcide De Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer) after the Second World War who had the dream of a different Europe, reconciled, united, free, democratic and mutually supportive, while respecting the autonomy of each country.

The result is plain for all to see:

- a Europe becoming more united and expanded, which is not - as someone has suggested - merely moving the "iron curtain" further to the East, but constantly integrating all the countries of Europe more;
- a Europe also with a role in history with regard to the other countries which form the Mediterranean area including all the Middle East and the countries of North Africa to whom they would offer preferential treatment as "friends of Europe";
- a Europe that is pursuing and offering three great gifts to all the countries and their inhabitants in the area: peace, prospe-

city and democracy, so as to be able to present itself as a model to the world;

- a Europe that has succeeded in giving itself a Constitution that, while respecting the autonomy of the individual nations that make it up, strengthens the aspects of interdependence in various areas of life: economy, politics, education, research, culture...;
- a Europe that is becoming the most powerful economic force in the world so as to be able to alter the world situation;
- a Europe that can propose democracy and collaborate in the establishment of peace, without however, wishing to impose either of them.

Certainly not everything in the garden is lovely, not even at the level of the functioning of the European Parliament or of the Commission (for example there is a lack of a clear definition of what Europe is, as the question about Turkey is demonstrating, or the difficulty in establishing a common foreign policy, as for example with regard to relations with the United States, or the nightmare that results from continuing to operate according to a system that requires unanimity for the

taking of decisions as in the case of the approval of the Constitution), but especially at the level of society, where moral relativism and the recognition by law of certain practical situations is eroding the system of human and Christian values that have contributed to the building up of the Europe of today.

The old secularism

In our case, the greatest concern is the conviction that lies behind the current anti-Catholic secularism, that is, a conviction that considers humanism and Christianity to be mutually exclusive; even more, that between Catholic Christianity and the principles to be found in European institutions there is a fundamental incompatibility (consider the Buttiglione case), and which maintains that nations (the State) have succeeded in achieving what the Church and religion could not: unity, progress. From this comes the conclusion of this widespread secularism that from now on, the only way to guarantee the unity of the countries in this new Europe is to put religion, any kind of religion, totally to one side.

This European plan, without re-

ligion and without God, can be seen not only in the refusal to recognise the Christian roots of Europe in the Constitution that has been put forward, but especially in a social fabric characterised by:

- the irrelevance of the faith,
- the privatisation of religion,
- disaffection with the Church,
- the breakdown of the family,
- juridical recognition of other "family models",
- a break in the link between the transmission of faith and of values,
- social marginalisation of anything Catholic.

The Gospel model

In this context, a passage from the *Acts of the Apostles* (11,19-26) seems very illuminating as it offers us a concrete model and at the same time the most appropriate attitude with which to face the present situation. I should like to reflect on it with you.

The text refers to the foundation of the Church of Antioch. The importance of the Church in Antioch in spreading the Christian message is clear from the Acts: from there the mission to the pagans began, and on that account the Church in Jerusalem

came together to decide on the way to welcome the uncircumcised. The apostolate of Paul was focused on the Church of Antioch. It is not insignificant that it was at Antioch that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians. In addition to the historical value of this information, we can see its theological significance: from the very beginning this group of disciples has in its name a direct and close relationship with its founder, Jesus the Christ, and describes itself as a 'messianic' people.

The persecution that arose against the Church of Jerusalem (Act 8,1), rather than killing off Christianity at birth, became, paradoxically, or better providentially, one of the reasons for its missionary outreach. In fact, it obliged the community of the apostles to move out of its close geographical limitations and the ideological restraints of Judaism.

At Antioch *a new model of Church is born*. New not only because formed by a large majority of pagan converts, but especially because it succeeds in overcoming a mortal danger to the Church in Jerusalem. This, in fact, faithful to Jewish customs ran the risk of emptying the Christian message

of its novelty and of being reduced to another Jewish sect.

The community in Antioch is characterised by being a community in which there is a mingling of different people, different languages, different cultures, different races. Yet they form a real community. However, it is inevitable that in a community of that sort problems of a disciplinary and doctrinal nature arise; unity is always a gift and a task, something that just because it has been granted does not become less tenuous.. And so – the author of the *Acts of the Apostles* says – those responsible for the Church in Jerusalem send Barnabas to see and to discern.

The way Barnabas is presented can be summed up in three qualities, like the three things he does in Antioch. He is an example of Christian virtue: good, full of the Spirit and of faith; he knows how to recognise the action of God and to be glad about it; he exhorts the believers to remain faithful. These are characteristics that are the model of the apostolic Church; Luke's readers are taught that these qualities have encouraged the entry into the Church of the pagans and have made room for the novelty of the Spirit.

Nature and aims of the meeting

We are here like Barnabas to identify the real situation of the new Church in Europe, and as Salesians to take up the challenges it presents, to weigh up the resources available and to renew our presence preparing it for the future.

Various attitudes are possible, from those as confused as they are pessimistic of those who think that the life cycle of the Congregation in Europe is coming to an end and that we only have to wait for the last one to put out the lights and close the door, to those equally naive in fact rather lazy, of those who refuse to recognise the new circumstances, the society model, the dominant culture, the anthropological sensitivity and continue to act as they did thirty years ago. Both these attitudes are the result of a faith vision that is limited and weak.

An appropriate attitude, more evangelical, – the one in fact that is being offered by the marvellous passage in the Acts which I am proposing to you as a criterion for discernment – is that of Barnabas. This presumes adopting the approach of believers who in this

new situation of Europe manage *“to see the grace of God and be glad about it.”* It leads us to make the conduct of Barnabas our own so as to exhort the confreres of our Provinces to remain faithful to the Gospel lived and preached, without giving up hope in the face of the new situation. It implies putting down the foundations for the mission identifying and involving people who like Paul, with missionary zeal, can bring alive the new evangelisation.. It means being daring enough to set up those structures that make the spreading of the Gospel possible and to give up those that don't work anymore. It means in simplicity being docile to the Spirit who also today makes all things new.

We cannot resign ourselves to a natural death, that of those who want to leave things as they are and not to change. We cannot make the decision to act as did the Japanese millionaire who decided that when he died all the works of art he had acquired throughout his life should be buried with him..Quite rightly this raised a storm of protests: those works of art did not belong to him, even though he had bought them, since they were the patrimony of

mankind. The faith, the Gospel, the Salesian charism are a patrimony that does not belong to us; we have received it as a gift and we have to be active in handing it on because it is a gift from God to the Church and to the young.

It is my hope that we can come out from this historic meeting convinced that we have a future, because more than ever this Europe needs God and his Gospel, even though it may have explicitly rejected it; because Christ is the only one who can respond to the deepest yearnings of a person even though he may try to drown these in the seas of consumerism; because young people are our territory and they continue to need adults who want to accompany them even though often they do not know how to ask for it.

The apostolic exhortation "*Ecclesia in Europa*", which calls on all Christians to respond to the sense of being lost that Europe experiences by presenting Christ again as the source of hope, makes this the responsibility especially of consecrated persons. Today more than ever before it is vital to fight against a sense of resignation and to help young people tempted to go to slake their thirst at broken cisterns

(Jer. 2, 13) to find the reason for their hope pointing out to them Christ as the sure fountain from which to drink.

This then dear friends is our wonderful task today: the Salesian mission in the new Europe; more than ever Don Bosco wants to be close to the young in Europe and the young need us, Don Bosco of the third millennium.

Like Don Bosco, we have a mission; like him we have been given a "guide and teacher" in Mary Help of Christians. Let's have courage then! *Duc in altum!*

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ V.

Salesianum - Rome 1 December '04

5.2 "TOGETHER FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF EUROPE"

As Don Bosco did and would do today

Below is the address of the Rector Major on 5 December 2004 at the end of the Meeting of European Provincials, which – together with a summary of the contributions

*and of the work undertaken during the days of the meeting – presents the **conclusions of the Rector Major** who, putting together the challenges to the Salesian vocation in Europe, with the current difficulties, indicates the way ahead for a “new présence” of the Salesians in Europe, pointing to some forms of collaboration to be pursued and promoted.*

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have finally come to the end of this meeting of the Provincials of Europe, in which we have had an intense experience of communion, discussion, reflection and sharing. We met “to examine together the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious situation” in which as Salesians we are called to live our vocation and mission, trying “to examine the possibilities and the resources available, facing up to the challenges, and planning a future presence” in this Continent. (*Rector Major’s opening address at the meeting.*)

As Salesians we want to make our contribution to the effort the Church is making “to give a Christian soul” to the process of

the integration of Europe, so that it may fulfil the vocation that was so evident in the plan of the founding Fathers: to be a family of peoples united and of nations reconciled, committed to the building of the unity of the whole human family. We also want to give the support of our charism to the work of the new evangelisation to contribute to the building of “Ecclesia in Europa”.

The initial motivation of our meeting was occasioned by a directive of the GC25 which required the Rector Major and the General Council to consider “a new distribution and organisation of the European Provinces.” (GC25 129) In the Council it was seen that more important than a simple restructuring of the Provinces and Regions was “the clarification of the kind of presence that we want in today’s Europe, and consequently the structural changes that will make this possible.” (*Rector Major’s opening address at the meeting.*). For this reason our presence here together has taken on a wider view of tasks and future prospects.

From the beginning we allowed ourselves to be guided by the Acts of the Apostles which dealt with

the founding of the Church in Antioch (Acts 11, 19-26). This provided us with a concrete model and the most appropriate attitude to face the present situation.

At Antioch a new model of the Church emerged, a community of pagan converts, which results from the persecution and in which there are gathered together a variety of languages, cultures, races. The community lives the grace and the freedom of the faith: because of this it overcomes the danger of closing itself in in the Jewish culture. The Gospel shows its missionary outreach and for the first time the disciples are called Christians.

At Antioch Barnabas carries out a discernment of the new situation: "he saw the grace of God, and was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast spirit; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." This discernment is conducted in the Spirit and in faith, and recognises the grace of God, produces joy and leads to perseverance.

We are here together like Barnabas to identify the real situation of the new Europe, to take up the

challenges it presents, to weigh up the resources available, in order to establish the nature and the place of a future Salesian presence, to find the people capable of giving it a fresh start. Europe is a multicultural, multi-ethnic and pluri-religious world in which our communities can live the joy of the Spirit, exercise discernment and find new ways of mission.

We have lived this meeting together with the passion of the "da mihi animas" of Don Bosco, with his heart full of pastoral love and youthful dynamism, with his unlimited confidence in the young, with his faith in their education and evangelisation. Always able to see the seeds of good present in every situation, even the most difficult, to discover the grace of the Lord and to rejoice over it, to become as Salesian communities a prophecy for our European culture.

1. Horizons of Europe

On our journey we have had the company of eminent persons in culture, in the Church and in economics in Europe. This has been of great help enabling us to have a

broad view, a solid foundation, a profound outlook on the situation of the Continent. The outstanding authorities who have introduced us to an understanding of the history, the dynamics and the future prospects of Europe have at once led us to a high level of reflection and have helped us understand that the role we have to play is very important.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger helped us to understand the European identity which was born from a meeting of various cultures and which found its unity in a missionary message and the dynamism of evangelisation. The Christian faith provided an opportunity for universality and a focus on a rational approach. The Enlightenment produced a sharp division between the Gospel and culture; today we are at a crucial moment in the history of Europe in which one can expect either a conflict with Christianity or a working towards a meeting of minds. The greatest danger is secularism which by weakening the relationship between reason and religion, threatens the very foundations of that humanism that has characterised European culture and demands from Christians a search for a new positive

synthesis between human reason and religious faith, as the Second Vatican Council had already envisaged.

Monsignor Aldo Giordano helped us to reflect on two new features of Europe today: the expansion of its frontiers towards the East and therefore on the critical question of the boundaries of Europe and the new European Constitution with the question of Christian roots. The Church in Europe is the witness to the Lord Jesus, Crucified and Risen, and on this account makes its commitment to new evangelisation, helps the development of Catholicity and dialogue, pursues the path of Ecumenism, meets the different religions, helps Europe to understand its cultural vocation, and keeps open the prospect of an eschatological vision.

Doctor Antonio Fazio developed the theme of globalisation and Europe. Tracing the progress of the European Continent in the context of the evolution of the economy and social systems, he showed that globalisation has made the need for a new international order clear. This needs to place at its centre the human person and the common good, foster the conquer-

ing of the problem of poverty and marginalisation by means of strong and sustained economic development and the pursuit of peace. In this effort of European construction he also mentioned the problem of de-Christianisation, the result of a neo-liberalism which promotes a materialistic, consumer and individualistic mentality.

2. Challenges to the Salesian vocation in Europe

Enlightened by these reflections we have discovered the main challenges that this European situation presents to our Salesian vocation. European unification offers us new ways of acting beyond any frontiers, it offers the possibility of being more open to other cultures, to inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue; it offers the opportunity to make a fresh start.

2.1 The prophetic aspect of the community

In the face of European society, which is often being built up on a culture that is ever more individualistic, self-centred and consumerist, and on an undersanding of man without God and with-

out Christ we Salesians feel called to give a prophetic witness in our community life. At the heart of this prophetic witness is the witness of God whose love can fill a life and lead us to live holy lives. It is also a prophetic witness to a happily lived brotherhood, which demonstrates the fact that people of different ages and ways of thinking can live together. It is also a prophetic witness to a commitment to God that lasts all through life. Finally it is the prophetic witness of a self-giving and a dedication without reserve of one's life for others, for the young. We believe that we have an important prophetic role in the world of youth in Europe today; it is for us to accept the challenge to demonstrate and to build community in which the passion for God and the passion for the young are lived out.

2.2. The evangelisation proposal

Faced with a European culture closed in on itself, which has lost the memory of its Christian heritage, and faced with the religious questioning of the young that is often confused and vague, met with unsatisfactory and outlandish replies, we Salesians feel

challenged to live the commitment of our charism in the area of evangelisation as a response to the major questions about meaning posed by the young, such as the promotion of the values of personal dignity and a taste for life, such as the offer of the preventive system in dialogue with culture itself, in terms of education, social progress and political development, of an appreciation of social communications seen as a vital presence, such as the explicit proposal of a meeting with the Lord Jesus and of faith journeys. We believe that we have a particular charism for approaching the young for being present among them, for making ourselves their companions on the journey, for helping them in their development, for proclaiming to them the Gospel and an encounter with Christ, for a vocational proposal. The challenge we are faced with is that of transmitting the faith to the new generations.

2.3 The task of inclusion

Faced with the new forms of poverty, material and spiritual, which afflict the young especially in Europe, and with the growing risk of social exclusion, we Salesians feel involved in overcoming

the different forms of marginalisation of the young, in fostering inclusion, in finding opportunities for integration. In fact the situation of young people is changing, and various phenomena are emerging such as poverty, migration, marginalisation, lack of an experience of God, consumerism, ethical relativism, a search for values, internal mobility within Europe as an attempt to find better places to live, family conflicts or breakdown etc... We believe that Don Bosco's commitment to poor young people and our Salesian history demand that we make more evident our commitment to poor young people, to immigrants, to youngsters of other religions, employing the means of integration, of inter-religious dialogue, of intercultural experiences, of help for the families.

3. A new presence and new presences in Europe

In Europe we have to renew the presences we already have, and at the same time think about new ones to respond better to young peoples' needs. In order to do this, the first thing to be renewed in our presences will be ourselves, Provincials, Rectors,

individual confreres, Salesian communities, if we succeed in living like Don Bosco. He was a man with a single ambition and a great passion: he was everything for the young, for whom he gave his life totally and exclusively; his passion was "for souls" Then we shall be able to live in all those places where we are present Don Bosco's Valdocco experience, which "is still the lasting criterion for discernment and renewal in all our activities and works (C.40).

3.1 A new presence

To renew the official works we have such as Schools, Vocational Training Centres, Parishes, Oratories and Youth Centres, University Hostels.. it is a question of

- concentrating the role of the Salesian community not so much on the management and the organisation of the work as on the guidance and formation of the staff and youngsters, on the running of a graduated programme of education and evangelisation including a consideration of committed Christian life choices, in involving a extensive movement of people around a Salesian educative and pastoral project that is open and shared;

- giving very special attention to youngsters at risk and in a particular way to the situation of immigration.

3.2 New presences

However, we also have to commit ourselves to new forms of presences

- presences with a strong emphasis on *evangelisation* and education to the faith, on the *Salesian formation of collaborators* with teams that run Salesian houses of spirituality, catechetical centres, centres for the formation of lay collaborators;
- presences with a *strong and explicitly vocational character*: vocational guidance, welcoming communities, specifically vocational community, aspirantate;
- presences devoted to *the animation and guidance of youth associations and movements* with an evangelisation or commitment character: various groups and associations that make up the SYM, the social and missionary volunteer movement...;
- presence with the *Friends of Don Bosco* a movement that brings together, coordinates, guides young and adult collaborators, volunteers and leaders and encourages their forma-

tion, commitment and experience in the Salesian spirit and mission.

3.3. *Requirements for the new quality of these presences*

To make these presences new certain requirements are necessary

- To give importance to *formation*
 - putting confreres in a state of ongoing formation; considering the community and daily life as the ideal place for formation; continuing to provide the community day, *lectio divina*, the good night, days of recollection and retreats; ensuring a positive attitude towards youth culture and towards the educational and pastoral challenges; being able to understand them thoroughly and respond to them efficiently and effectively;
 - ensuring a pastoral and spiritual formation for the lay collaborators and thus ensuring the Salesian identity of the presences;
 - finding the opportunity to have formation for Salesians and lay people together.
- To make *social communion* a strategic resource to reach the young people through educom-

munication, provision for young people through internet etc...

- To be in tune *with the Church*: living and working in communion with the local Churches offering them the treasures of our charism.

4. *Forms of collaboration in Europe*

Conscious that we have already taken some steps forward, we have considered the question of collaboration at the level of the Departments in the animation and government of the Congregation, considering the types of experience that are already in progress in the European Regions and the prospects for the future. We spent some time looking at the fact that it is necessary to create a collaborative mentality that goes beyond the limits of the Province and of the Provincial Conferences and even of the three Salesian Regions in Europe: it is a question of thinking and planning with Europe as a single entity.

Formation. Advantage should be taken of the "European" novitiates at Pinerolo and Genzano, by harmonising the prenovitiate programmes, expanding the Cu-

ratorium, improving the knowledge of Italian and with the possible presence of other formation personnel. The setting up of a community for the specific formation of Salesian Brothers in Turin or Rome should be encouraged. There needs to be an examination of how the formation community and study centre at Benediktbeuern can be made available for the whole of Europe. There should be more language study for young confreres especially Italian and English. The possibility is to be examined of some shared experience for the formation of Salesians and lay people together. European strategies and common structures for formation are being studied.

Youth Ministry Work will continue on the present form of European coordination in progress in schools, vocational training, marginalisation, associations for free time activities, the SYM with the opening up of new possibilities in the field of evangelisation and catechesis and in the area of culture. Support is being given to the various European youth initiatives organised by different Provinces and Salesian Centres. Various effective means of information and sharing of experi-

ences and projects are being used, taking advantage of modern means of communication. *Don Bosco International* as a mean of communication and coordination between various Salesian activities, organisations and projects at European level is being promoted.

Missions The Provinces and Regions are being helped to rediscover the missionary ideal within Europe itself, and to appreciate the exchange of knowledge of the cultural and religious values of all the countries.

Social Communications. Provision needs to be made for the formation of Salesians and lay people in social communications. The exchange of information about activities and events taking place in our Provinces can be valuable. It would be good to build up our Agency ANS by having someone responsible for providing Salesian news items and keeping people informed of what is happening inside and outside the Province, and to distribute the Salesian Bulletin, looking into the matter of providing material in different languages. There could be collaboration in creating programmes and training production teams for social communications, and en-

couraging the expansion of existing interprovincial collaboration between publishing houses.

Salesian Family. The Provincial Consultative Body for the Salesian Family can make a positive contribution to the spirit of communion and sharing and should be encouraged to develop this in the areas of formation, Salesian spirituality and youth work. The Salesian Family could also make its presence felt more in cultural, social, political and religious issues dealing with young people and with education.

Economy. Certain lines of approach are to be recommended: seeing the economy at Provincial and local level in terms of the organisation of solidarity: encouraging transparency in administration and in communicating information, especially making use of budgets and final accounts; giving a witness to religious poverty; conducting administration in a professional manner making use of the advice of competent experts; helping the confreres to appreciate the advantages of appropriate centralisation of general aspects without depriving local communities of their responsibilities; develop the skills required for

economic and administrative management; re-define the roles of the provincial and local economists.

5. Difficulties and choices for Salesian Europe

5.1 Difficulties and choices at Province level

With regard to these goals some difficulties are met with in the Provinces

- There is a great imbalance between the number of Salesians and the number of works and activities to organise; on account of this the confreres have to assume a variety of roles; as a consequence, community life is not always easy, the confreres do not have the opportunity for formation, the animation of the works is not always sufficiently safeguarded.
- The preservation of the identity of the works suffers, through the lack of an animating community, or on account of lay people who have not been given formation, through the absence of a structure of government that is capable of making decisions, through the excess burden of work on confreres in management and organisation.

This means that the Salesian community has not yet fully taken on board the new model of animation by the educative pastoral community.

- There is a lack of Salesians sufficiently well prepared for the animation of the works and the new foundations. Sometimes there is a lack of Rectors who are prepared. The complexity of the skills required for the economic and administrative management of communities and works creates management problems for the local and provincial economies.
- The aging of the confreres and the lack of vocations make every attempt at renewal difficult.

On account of this, *the following proposals are suggested:*

- Attend to the formation of the Salesians so that they know how to provide community and pastoral animation for lay people and youngsters, how to develop their own community role within the EPC, how to work with youngsters at risk, how to be a positive influence among them without fear or prejudice. Attend also to the selection and preparation of lay people in view of their management and

animation of the works in a Salesian way.

- Involve all the communities and prepare some confreres for the promotion of vocations to the Salesian life.
- Foster the Salesian identity of the works, creating sound pastoral teams, also giving young people roles of co-responsibility, actively seeking ways of responding to the new forms of poverty among the young and taking care of vocations. Build up the provincial team for animation and government to help the animation of the confreres and of the EPC.
- Simplify the works and establish priorities so that the input of the confreres and the communities really is educative and pastoral, through the re-structuring, de-centralising, delegating and harmonious distribution of roles between confreres and lay people.

5.2 Difficulties and choices at Regional and at European level

In the Regions and in Europe the following difficulties are met with.

- A European mentality which helps to overcome a merely pro-

vincial, national or regional view is missing, and consequently there are no effective ways to ensure interprovincial mutual support, collaboration in the building of a united Europe and the injection of Don Bosco's charism in the new Europe.

- The division of Salesian Europe into three Regions does not help the processes of communication, coordination, interprovincial collaboration; some kinds of regional coordination do not help to overcome fragmentation.
- The presence of different languages which is a richness is also a challenge to the communication of information and ideas between the Provinces, between the Regions, between the Centre of the Congregation and the various Provinces and Regions.

On account of this, *the following proposals are suggested:*

- Creation of a European mentality among all the confreres but especially among the young Salesians, providing some practical opportunities, as for example meetings of young confreres in the various stages of initial formation, retreats for Provincials, youth exchanges within Europe,

- Reconsideration within the three European Regions of the structuring of the Provinces, encouraging processes of amalgamation.
- Coordination, within Europe on the part of the Departmental Councillors of the various Provincial Delegates for Formation, Youth Ministry, Missions etc.
- Consideration of a possible model of coordination of the Regions which will promote European strategies for the various sectors of animation and government and foster the accompaniment of the government and animation of the Provinces.
- Drawing up a strategic plan to respond in a supportive manner to the concrete needs that may arise in a European Province: responding to immigration, international Salesian communities, specific evangelisation projects,
- Reorganisation of national centres for animation and re-definition of their roles vis à vis the Provinces.

6. In conclusion

Don Bosco began his particular spiritual apostolic experience in a

dream in which he felt called to be a sign of the love of God for the young especially those who were poorest, in need, at risk.

Right from the beginning he counted on the motherly presence of Mary the Immaculate Help of Christians, at whose school he learned the mission he was to undertake on behalf of those to whom he was sent and the method to use in carrying it out. For him it was never mere coincidence that his work began on 8 December (1841) the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

In that she was Immaculate, for Don Bosco, Mary represented the divine pedagogy, the dynamism of love that has the immense power to open the hearts of men and women, and therefore of the young, that “makes them feel loved” as he would express it, that leads then to “learn to see love in those things that from a natural point of view they have little liking for, such as discipline, study, mortification and self denial, and to accept these things with love” (BM XVII, 110)

We shouldn't be surprised that Don Bosco concentrated all his educational method on love and loving kindness. This led him to

make his own the Preventive System, which puts the emphasis on going out to meet the young, of always taking the first step, of having special regard for the least, in believing in their potential for good. For Don Bosco, Mary Immaculate represented the incarnation of the preventive/anticipatory love of God.

In that she was the Help of Christians, Mary represented both the defence of those most neglected and in need, and the motherly care which takes by the hand, guides, teaches, and forms. Certainly in Don Bosco's day the title of Help of Christians had other overtones, different from those of today. The truth is that the main victims of the negative features of the current social model in Europe are the young, either because without the essentials their normal development is compromised, or because they feel themselves tempted to look for ways of living that do not lead to the fulness of life; or because, closed in on themselves and looking for comfort, they lose the meaning of life, the ability to give themselves, generosity and service, and finish up organising their lives far removed from God the source of life.

Our meeting ends at the beginning of the triduum for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception when the Church is preparing to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma. While we thank her for continuing to be present among us and guiding our steps through history, we entrust to her ourselves, our Provinces in Europe and our profound convictions that:

- *Europe is a place for Salesians* because the young people there, especially those most at risk, need Don Bosco's charism;
- *Young people are the reason for our existence* since they have been given to us as our vocation and our mission, and we have as much need of them as they have of us;
- *Education* is the most precious gift that we can offer them for their total development, even to the fullness of God, and it is our contribution to the leavening of today's European culture;
- Our task is *to speak of God to them and to give Him to them* as He has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ, the supreme manifestation of the mystery of God and of Man, through evangelisation;
- The *Oratory* is the home-land of

the Salesian charism, which more than a structure is a style of relationship between educators and youngsters.

We know that this is a long road, but in what is already being done we can see the seeds and so we commit ourselves in the next few years to give a new face to our Salesian presence in Europe.

We want to overcome our fears and reluctance, renewing our passion for God lived out in our passion for the young, keeping alive Don Bosco, his heart, his mind, his openness and his apostolic creativity.

Fr Pascual CHAVEZ VILLANUEVA
Salesianum - 5 December 2004

5.3 New Salesian Bishops

1. PRATHAN Sridarunsil Joseph, Bishop of SURAT THANI (Thailand)

On 9 October 2004 the appointment by the Holy Father of the Salesian priest *Joseph Sridarun-*

sil PRATHAN, Superior of the "St Paul" Province of Thailand, as Bishop of the Diocese of SURAT THANI (Thailand) was published.

Here are some biographical details.

Joseph Prathan was born on 9 February 1946 at Nam Deng, Wat Phleng, Thailand, and became a Salesian on 2 October 1965, when he made his first profession at Hua Hin, where he had made his novitiate. After studies of philosophy and practical training in Thailand, he was sent to Cremisan in the Holy Land for theological studies. He was ordained priest in Rome on 29 June 1975, by His Holiness Pope Paul VI. In Rome at the Salesian Pontifical University, he then attended a course in spirituality, and obtained a Licence.

Having returned to Thailand, he was soon entrusted with offices of responsibility: he was in fact successively Rector at Haad Yai (1979-1980), Suratthani (1980-1983), Hua Hin (1983-1986). In 1986 he was appointed Vice Provincial and in 1992 Provincial. At the end of his term of office, he was once again Rector in two houses successively: Udonthani (1998-2001) and Sampran (2001-2003). In December 2003 the Rec-

tor Major again for a second time entrusted him with the role of Provincial of Thailand, an office he took up in February 2004.

Now the Holy Father has called him to carry out his episcopal ministry in a Diocese formerly guided by Salesian Bishops. Mgr. Prathan was ordained Bishop at Ban Seang Arun (Thailand) on 28-11-2004 by Card. Crescenzo Sepe, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

2. MARTÍNEZ ÁLVAREZ Segismundo, Bishop of Corumbá (Brazil)

On 7 December 2004 news of the appointment by the Holy Father of the Salesian priest Segismundo MARTÍNEZ ÁLVAREZ as Bishop of the Diocese of CORUMBÁ (Brazil) was published.

Here are some biographical details.

Born at Acebes del Paramo (Spain) on 23 February 1943, Segismundo Martínez made his first Salesian profession on 16-08-1961 in the novitiate of Astudillo, in the "St James the Great" Province in Spain (with head-

quarters, then at Zamora). After studies of philosophy and medicine at Campo (Valladolid), in 1965 he left for the Campo Grande Province in Brazil, where he did practical training. He made his perpetual profession on 02-07-1967 at Cuiabá. Then for theological studies he was sent to Italy, to the Salesian studentate at Verona-Saval. He was ordained priest on 2 July 1972 at Acebes del Paramo, his birth place.

After priestly ordination he returned to Brazil, where he carried out his ministry, with various roles in different Salesian houses: Coordinator of Pastoral work, teacher, and Economist at Araçatuba, in the State of São Paulo (1973-1978); Rector and teacher at Alto Araguaia, in the State of Mato Grosso (1979-1982); Rector of the College of St Teresa in Corumbá (between 1985 and 1988 and again between 1998 and 2000); Economist of the "Dom Bosco" community and of the Catholic University of Campo Grande (1992-1998); Provincial Economist in Campo Grande (2000-2002). Since July 2002 he has been Economist in the house of Coxipó da Ponte and parish Curate of *Nossa Senhora da Guia*, in the Archdiocese of Campo Grande.

5.4 The Rector Major appointed a member of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

On 11 December 2004 the Press Office of the Holy See published the appointment by the Holy Father, of some Religious Superiors as Members of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. Among these is the Rector Major of our Society Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva.

This is the Vatican Press Office statement.

«The Pope has appointed Members of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Rev.: D. Wolf Notker, Abbot Primate of the Confederation of Benedictine Monks; Fr. José Rodríguez Carballo, Minister General of the Order of the Franciscan Friars Minor; Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva, Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco; Fr. Teresino Serra, Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus; Br. Seán Dominic Sammon, Superior General of the Marist Brothers; Fr. Jacques Hazebroucq, General Superior of the *Notre-Dame de Vie* Priestly Secular Institute.

5.5 Our dead confreres (4th list 2004)

"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." (C. 94).

NOME	LUOGO E DATA della morte	ETÀ	ISP
P ÁDÁM Antal	Budapest (Ungheria)	01-10-2004	91 UNG
P AHERN Patrick	Cape Town (Sud Africa)	11-10-2004	84 AFM
L ARAMBARRI ALTUNA Benito	Logroño (Spagna)	18-09-2004	91 SBI
P ARCHER Charles	Dublin (Irlanda)	12-12-2004	85 IRL
P ARONICA Paul	Marrero, Louisiana (USA)	16-11-2004	86 SUE
P BASAGNI Attilio	Savona	30-11-2004	79 ILT
P BERLOFFA Umberto	Savona	17-11-2004	90 ILT
P BIANCHINI Giulio	Roma	29-09-2004	90 IRO
P BŁAŻKOWSKI Stanisław	Wrocław (Polonia)	07-10-2004	67 PLO
P BONATO Natale	El Housoun (Libano)	02-12-2004	77 MOR
P BORDOGNI Giuseppe	Caracas (Venezuela)	21-10-2004	76 VEN
P BORGO Giovanni	Castelfranco Veneto (TV)	03-10-2004	74 INE
P BOZZA Luigi	Sucúa (Ecuador)	08-12-2004	91 ECU
P BULLIAN Giovanni	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	09-07-2004	69 ABB
L CELY Rafael	Rionegro (Antioquia, Colombia)	21-10-2004	84 COM
P COLINET CASTAGNO Angel	Montevideo (Uruguay)	09-12-2004	87 URU
P D'AVINO Giuseppe	Castellammare di Stabia (NA)	02-12-2004	85 IME
L DE PLANO Salvatore	Torino	12-10-2004	91 ICP
P DI VICO Luigi	Castellammare di Stabia (NA)	21-11-2004	90 IME
L ESCRIG MIRALLES Francisco	Barcelona (Spagna)	30-10-2004	84 SBA
L FABRIS Severino	Torino	02-10-2004	81 ICP
P GALLIANO Emilio	Torino	25-10-2004	77 ICP
P GONZÁLEZ Borjas	Córdoba (Argentina)	20-11-2004	83 ACO
P GRIECO Nicola	Bologna	27-11-2004	73 ILE
P GUILLERM François	Caen (Francia)	03-12-2004	94 FRA
P HALTON George	Horwich, Bolton (Gran Bretagna)	27-09-2004	93 GBR
P IGLESIAS RODRÍGUEZ Cándido	Madrid (Spagna)	08-10-2004	82 SMA
L IRUIN GARMENDIA Iñaki	Donostia, San Sebastián	12-11-2004	54 SBI
P KHIN SEIN Lorenzo	Latina	12-12-2004	68 IRO
P KIZHAKKEKARA Joseph Cherian	Calcutta (India)	18-10-2004	73 INC
P KOLLENKUNNEL Devasia	Zubza, Kohima (India)	20-09-2004	66 IND
P LAMBORGHINI Mario	Bologna	24-10-2004	87 ILE
P LIPKENS Jan	Bocholt (Limburg, Belgio)	13-09-2004	84 BEN
N LÓPEZ MESA José Darío	Medellín (Colombia)	09-11-2004	17 COM
P MARTÍN BOLADO Fidel	Barcelona (Spagna)	14-10-2004	97 SBA
P MARTINEZ AZCONA Antonio	Barcelona (Spagna)	24-09-2004	84 SBA
L MIDALI Silvio	Treviglio (BG)	30-11-2004	90 ILE
P MORENO Luiz Amadeo	Niterói (Brasile)	17-11-2004	82 BBH
P MORONI Carlo	Gerusalemme (Israele)	15-10-2004	89 MOR
P MOSCA Mario	Castello di Godego (TV)	23-10-2004	92 INE
P OJCZYK Józef	Kabwe (Zambia)	26-10-2004	67 ZMB

NOME	LUOGO E DATA della morte	ETÀ	ISP	
P PÁZMANY Béla	Budapest (Ungheria)	25-11-2004	89 UNG	
P PETERLIN Joze	Trstenik (Slovenia)	23-10-2004	90 SLO	
P PIKUTO Jan	Boleszkowice (Polonia)	22-09-2004	67 PLN	
P PISCHEDDA Aurelio	Guayaquil (Ecuador)	21-11-2004	95 ECU	
Fu Ispettore per 6 anni				
L PLESNIAK Antoni	Łąd (Polonia)	29-10-2004	91 PLN	
P PORTER John	Quito (Ecuador)	11-11-2004	87 ECU	
P RENCKENS Rik	Hoboken (Antwerpen, Belgio)	23-10-2004	82 BEN	
P REYES TEJERA Víctor	Montevideo (Uruguay)	06-10-2004	79 URU	
Fu Ispettore per 12 anni				
P RIGLER Andrej	Trstenik (Slovenia)	04-10-2004	69 SLO	
P RIVERA PÉREZ Guillermo Pascual	Medellín (Colombia)	30-11-2004	80 COM	
L RIVERO Edmundo Enrique	Medellín (Colombia)	30-11-2004	80 COM	
L ROBINO Pietro	Genova	13-12-2004	56 ILT	
P ROSSETTI Annibale	Como	11-11-2004	85 ILE	
P SALGUERO Carlos Julio	Córdoba (Argentina)	24-09-2004	85 ACO	
P SANGALLI Giovanni	Torino	29-10-2004	82 ICP	
P SANTORO Aurelio	Mar del Plata (Argentina)	22-09-2004	88 ALP	
P SAULA Pedro	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	04-05-2004	73 ABB	
P SCARALE Matteo	L'Aquila	08-10-2004	84 IAD	
P SOLCIA Emilio	Sesto San Giovanni (MI)	12-10-2004	67 ILE	
P SOUDAY Louis	Bayeux (Francia)	10-10-2004	61 FRA	
P SOUZA Irineu	Americana (SP) - Brasile	28-09-2004	83 BSP	
P SURIANO Agostino	Castellammare di Stabia (NA)	30-09-2004	88 IME	
P TORIANO Giuseppe	Napoli	30-10-2004	76 IME	
P TYLAWSKYI Ivan (*)	Parma (Ohio, USA)	18-10-2003	84 IRO	
P VALLA Celso José	General Acha (Argentina)	08-12-2004	85 ALP	
P Van der VELDEN Louis	Rotterdam (Olanda)	16-10-2004	81 OLA	

(*) Died in 2003