



# acts

**of the general council**

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year LXXXVI

july-september 2005

**N. 390**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale  
Opere don Bosco  
Roma





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

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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## **“WITH THE COURAGE OF DON BOSCO ON THE NEW FRONTIERS OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION”**

**Introduction.** 1. **Historical approach.** A commitment of fidelity. Appreciation of our past history. A new mentality. A cultural conversion. Salesians' urgent need of formation. Organizational and institutional response. Further incentives for our future activity. 2. **Challenges thrown up by social communication.** Development in technology. Innovations in the media at technical and structural levels. Characteristics of the digital culture. Challenges from the standpoint of education. Challenges from the institutional point of view. 3. **Practical guidelines.** 3.1. Change of strategy. 3.2. Working tools. 3.2.1. Fr Vecchi's letter on social communication. 3.2.2. Salesian social communication system. 3.2.3. Guidelines for formation of Salesians in social communication. 4. **Conclusion.**

Rome, 24 June 2005  
*Birthday of St John the Baptist*

My dear confreres,

I am writing to you after the experience of the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians at Valdocco, where together with numerous participants I inaugurated with a concelebrated Eucharist, followed by a cultural event, the parts of the restoration of the Basilica so far completed. Those parts now glow with light and colour; many of us had never been able to see such beauty in the structure and decoration which had become hidden by the dust of years. As I have done already during the celebrations at Turin, this letter gives me the opportunity to express my gratitude to all the Provinces, the Salesian Family and civic institutions, together with the communities, the many devotees and benefactors, who have shown their love of Mary through their financial contributions.

Since my last circular letter I have had numerous engagements, including several Team Visits. In particular we have witnessed some events of worldwide importance that merit a com-

ment: the sickness, death and funeral ceremonies of John Paul II and the conclave, election and inauguration of the pontificate of Benedict XVI.

In the declaration I wrote on the day before the death of *John Paul II*. I pointed with gratitude and admiration to some traits which, in my opinion, made of Pope Wojtyła an outstanding figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and one of the greatest pontiffs, to such an extent that he was already being called “the Great”. His death had an effect on so many people that exceeded all expectations. The responsibility for such a phenomenon did not lie with the media – they merely reported it. Immense crowds of men and women, young and old, from all parts of the world and all religious beliefs and social classes filled St Peter’s Square and the neighbouring streets in an unimaginable expression of amazement and gratitude, of faith and of Church. And to these must be added the millions of people in all parts of the world who joined together for the celebrations and followed the various events through the media.

It is paradoxical that it took the death of John Paul II to manifest his greatness as a man, as a believer, as a shepherd. What he said at the end of his life, according to his personal secretary who had just told him that St Peter’s Square was full to overflowing with young people, could be applied to everyone: “I went to meet you in every part of the world. Now you have come to visit me, and I am grateful to you for doing so”.

It seemed that physical frailty and sickness had deprived him of the power of speech, but they had not bent his iron will to finish the mission the Lord had entrusted to him; rather did it make him more amiable, more attractive, more eloquent. It brings to my mind what Paul said to the Corinthians: “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”; “for while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life” (2 Cor 5,1.4).

Now he is living close to God in the fullness of life. We are left not only with a host of memories, but with a spiritual testament, a testament of a love that endured to the end for the Lord Jesus, for the Church and for mankind. To us and to our young people in particular he leaves that message which we made our programme of animation and government for the present six-year period: "My dear Salesians, make yourselves holy!"

In the days that followed his death, the Church intensified her prayer. As usual the Conclave gave rise to much speculation. That is only natural, but this time expectations were greater than ever, not least because of the massive media interest, and the influence they were able to bring to bear through newspapers, magazines, television programmes and the internet. The media even went so far as to indicate the programme and priorities of the new Pope and what he should do. In an atmosphere of prayer and discernment the participating Cardinals elected the one whom the Lord had already chosen, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who took the significant name of *Benedict XVI*.

His first actions, and in particular his homily at the inauguration of his pontificate, have shown us a Pope with a clear mind, a deep humanistic formation a vast theological and cultural preparation, who prefers the essential to the rhetorical, but above all they have shown us the man and the believer. No wonder therefore that he has not felt "the need to present a programme of government" and that his fundamental choice is to "listen to the word and will of the Lord", and let himself be guided by him "so that it is God himself who is guiding the Church at this point in time".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, by explaining the signs that characterize the Petrine ministry, the pallium and ring, he gave a clear outline of the challenges: "to lead men out of the desert – the desert of poverty, of hunger and thirst, of abandonment and solitude, of destructive love, of ignorance of God, of the emptiness of souls that have

<sup>1</sup> BENEDICT XVI, *Homily for solemn inauguration of Petrine Ministry*, OR, 25.04.2005.



lost the awareness of the dignity and purpose of man – towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, to him who gives us life and life in all its fullness”; and “to use the net of the Gospel to lift mankind out of the sea contaminated by every estrangement into the land of life and the light of God”. It is the ministry of the shepherd and the fisherman. If this is the task to which the Pope feels himself called to carry out in the Church, he reminded everyone of the appeal of John Paul II 26 years ago: “Throw open the gates to Christ!”; and he added: “He who lets Christ in, loses nothing, absolutely nothing, of what it takes to make life free, great and beautiful”.

Today as we welcome Pope Benedict XVI we embrace him with affection, we accompany his ministry with our prayer as Don Bosco would do, and we promise him our fidelity and collaboration.

And now I turn to the theme of the present letter: **“With the courage of Don Bosco on the new frontiers of social communication”**. Some will wonder what a circular on social communication has got to do with the reflections and incentives contained in my previous letters. Various reasons have led me to make this choice. The main and most substantial reason is that social communication is one of the priority fields for the Salesian mission (cf. C 6); it is of so great importance that the last General Chapter finally decided to elect a General Councillor for this sector alone. The second, less immediate, reason was the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Don Bosco’s letter of 19 March 1885 on “*Spreading good books*”,<sup>2</sup> a true programme of social communication for the Congregation. And the final and more programmatic reason was the Apostolic Letter of John Paul II *The Rapid Development*, published on 24 January 2005, to recall the Decree of Vatican II *Inter Mirifica*, promulgated by Paul VI just over forty years ago. This series of factors convinced me that a letter on this theme would be opportune.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Letters of St John Bosco* (ed. E. CERIA), vol. IV, pp. 318-321.

Using what I have written in previous letters as a starting point, I could also add: holiness would be of little use if it did not provide visible and intelligible witness. A consecrated Salesian life would be well nigh useless if it could not be communicated and proposed to others. Even Don Bosco's experience of contact with Christ would become irrelevant were it not known and made public. And finally, hearing God's word is authentic only if it becomes transformed into witness, because every proclamation brings with it a vocation to be lived and a mission to be fulfilled.

By reminding the Salesians of Don Bosco's letter on good books, we want to recall and make re-echo in our hearts the heartfelt appeal by which our Father entrusts us with "a most important part of our mission", "one of the principal purposes of our congregation", "one of the greatest enterprises" entrusted to him by divine Providence, one of the best means – and even a "divine" means – of ensuring the fruitfulness of our ministry.

In this genuine "testament" prompted by his pastoral spirit, Don Bosco wants to make us fully aware of how indispensable this duty of social communication is for the fulfilment of the Salesian mission. The language he uses leaves us in no doubt; it cannot be played down. He speaks of a "most important part", of a "principal purpose", of a "main enterprise". But the most surprising aspect, nevertheless, is precisely the clear conception he has of the contribution of social communication to the processes of social renewal taking place in his time, and his inspired decision to be part of that renewal process. In this way he could provide cultural nourishment for young people and the working classes, who more than any others ran the risk of being overcome by the new developments. To carry out a work of culture, to provide valid means of knowledge and formation, to provide opportunities for healthy relaxation, these are all means for realising at the same time an effective process of education and evangelisation, and for involving young people themselves as apostles in the spreading of good books.

## 1. HISTORICAL APPROACH

### *A commitment of fidelity*

In line with the spirit of what he was writing about, the passion for the salvation of youngsters which always drove him on, one hundred years ago Don Bosco not only entrusted us with the “spreading of good books” but also called us to a “fidelity” which we must be able to interpret and make “coordinated” and “complete in all its parts” and in every context of our time for the effective implementation of the Salesian mission. We cannot educate, we cannot cooperate in the realisation of God’s kingdom without a serious commitment to the *spreading of a culture of Christian inspiration* among youngsters and people in general. Effective methods must be found to sow and develop a “thought of God” among those assailed by “godlessness and heresy”.

His talented commitment to the printed word was expressed in the strategy of forming an “well-ordered system” of publications. For Don Bosco this meant not overlooking anyone or any aspect of life: fostering virtue with edifying reading matter, instilling a spirit of devotion, preserving from error, providing material for quiet times, and making youngsters saviours of their own companions.

In the letter we find set out in detail the practical decisions Don Bosco made in the publishing field, and we know how he wanted to be “always in the vanguard of progress” in this area. Of us he asks that we commit ourselves to the “coordination” of his project so as to make it “complete in all its parts”. It is a demanding task that we must be able to interpret with ingenuity and make effective according to the requirements of the times and places in which we are working.

This is what the Congregation has tried to do in fidelity to our Father, and it is what we too are called upon to realise today with creativity and practical skill, precisely in the light of the circular of 1885 which has always been the guide for Salesian educative

and pastoral work and was defined by the SGC as the *Magna Carta* of Salesian activity in this field" (SGC 450).

Sometimes our attitude has been rather defensive; we tried to ward off the harm that could arise from the media; it was more a struggle against such means rather than an effort to make use of them for a good purpose. But this, nevertheless, did not prevent farsighted and courageous Rector Majors from setting up publishing houses which were able to give continuity to Don Bosco's work; we may recall the foundation of the SEI by Don Rinaldi and that of the LDC by Don Ricaldone. Their concern was not only to launch publishing houses, but also "to prepare writers, train technicians, improve our printing establishments and bookshops"; and this happened not only in Italy but in all the Congregation.

### ***Appreciation of our past history***

The springtime that followed Vatican II, and the incentives of the decree *Inter Mirifica*, approved on 4 December 1963, led to a reflection in the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of 1965 on the instruments of social communication, their importance in our apostolate, and their use and functioning. The need was recognised to prepare Salesian and lay specialists to make the best use of productions in this field, to carry out a more effective pastoral work among young people and the working classes, and to be able to collaborate with institutions, associations and other bodies engaged in social communication (cf. GC19, 171). In the 1965 Chapter, forty years ago, it became evident that we were not fully aware of the commitment implied by the use of such means and that there was an evident lack of qualified personnel. In the wake of the conciliar decree there was an acknowledgement of the enormous importance of the instruments of social communication and of the need for qualified personnel to employ them at an educational and pastoral level. Since then a great deal has been accomplished, even though at times we were inclined to bite off more than we could chew.

The *Special 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter* of 1971-72, in the light of the new suggestions from the Church given in *Communio et Progressio*

which offered a positive vision of the new era of the media, emphasised the importance of the extraordinary phenomenon of the mass media and pointed out the great influence they had on history and human life. To avoid giving way in the face of the inordinate pressure they exerted on individuals, the Chapter asked that significant work be done at a cultural and educational level. Young people had to be helped to be aware and avoid becoming conditioned, so as to be able to make free and responsible choices. It was a question of accompanying youngsters so as to enable them to grow in the making of mature decisions by the development of individual talents, not least in reference to the mass media (SGC 458).

The new perspective of interpretation and understanding, careful reflection on the Church's teaching, and the experience and recommendations of Don Bosco in the circular of 1885 form the basis of the guidelines in the renewed Constitutions which received definitive approval in the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter of 1984. According to the new constitutional text, social communication becomes a privileged path for our mission as "educators of the faith for the working classes" (C 6). Then art. 43, taking up the considered reflection of GC21, points to social communication as "a significant field of activity which constitutes one of the apostolic priorities of the Salesian mission".

The 21<sup>st</sup> *General Chapter* of 1978 had already recognised and emphasised the implications of social communication (n. 148). In the renewed Constitutions, drawing inspiration also from the ecclesial reflection of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (n. 45), the heartfelt appeal of Don Bosco is reaffirmed in an effective and faithful manner, and they restore to the Congregation "a field of action" of extraordinary efficacy in the service of education and evangelisation. It is no longer merely a "vehicle" or "collection of instruments", no longer a particular apostolic activity or branch of it, but rather a "main road to the full realisation of our task as educators and pastors who are also communicators".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Project of Life of the Salesians of Don Bosco*, p. 400.



In this process carried out by the Congregation towards the reaffirmation of what our Father Don Bosco had prophetically proclaimed and achieved, we cannot forget two documents which have made a notable contribution to the enrichment and positive realisation of the course that has been followed: they are two contributions on social communication by Fr Viganò and by Fr Vecchi.

On the occasion of the centenary of the foundation of the Salesian Bulletin in 1977, the then Rector Major Fr Luigi Ricceri had written a letter on the significance and importance of Salesian information: *Family news*. In it he recalled the need for commitment in the field of information and in everything connected with social communication. Assiduity about spreading family news serves to foster the sense of belonging, of “feeling the joy of being sons of Don Bosco”, and of making known things that are done in order to create a positive image and, as Don Bosco expressed it, increase the number of the benefactors of humanity. But it is especially the letter of Fr Viganò and that of Fr Vecchi on social communication which have given impetus, depth and structural unity to reflection and implementation in this field. In the meantime the GC23 and GC24 have also made significant contributions in this connection.

### ***A new mentality***

Fr Egidio Viganò's letter of 1981, *Social communication challenges us*,<sup>4</sup> interprets the significance of the long reflection made by the GC21 and is a strong recommendation to Salesian activity in the field of social communication. Fr Viganò invites the Salesians to *change their mentality* in this regard. We cannot give it its true value unless we fully accept the new reality; we cannot consider it only as something from which we must defend ourselves; we must know it, and moreover assign to it its proper importance. We must become ever more knowledgeable about it; we have to recognise social communication as a massive educative factor that moulds mentalities and creates culture. Our mission of education

<sup>4</sup> Published in AGC 302, 1 October 1981.

and evangelisation is necessarily rooted in the area of culture and consequently we must be alive to the cultural transformation now in progress, so as to be able to provide a significant presence that allows us to spread our ideals and values.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> *General Chapter* of 1990 showed itself fully aware of the new social and cultural conditions in which Salesian communities were carrying out their mission. Having entered a world in which distances had been nullified by the ease of transport and communications, and in which new cultural trends and ways of life were being established, we had to prove ourselves capable of facing different contexts; it was a matter of grasping the problems and making them our own, so as to be in tune with the youth situation (n. 17). Young people in particular were much influenced by the language and life models proposed by the mass media. They are the natural users of such instruments, even though their use is marked by ambivalence (n. 63).

To remain alongside young people in their development and journey of faith, to enter into harmony with them, new and effective ways of communication have to be found. Like Don Bosco we must be capable of "great originality in the apostolic undertakings to defend and sustain the faith" (C 43; GC23, 256). Starting from these circumstances and requirements, the Chapter made clear the need for a new commitment to exploit social communication for the education of young people to the faith. Different things were necessary: at local level the ability of the community in the use of the mass media should be fostered; at provincial level someone needed to be in charge of this sector to follow up the individual communities; at central level animation by the Councillor for Social Communication was important for the formation of the Salesians and the launching of projects to meet the prevailing demands.

### ***A cultural conversion***

The emphasis and insistence on the importance of communication in the 24<sup>th</sup> *General Chapter* of 1996 were closely linked with the

new perspective of charismatic sharing between Salesians and lay people. The involvement of the laity in the spirit and mission of Don Bosco calls for a particular commitment in communication to foster the capacity for relationships, an active presence among the young, and the cultural and spiritual attitudes indispensable for effective communication. But it is not just a matter of functional reflection. It includes a deep awareness of the changing social and cultural situation and of the innovations and incidence of the means of communication; in this field lay people can make a notable contribution.

For the full and effective use of social communication, initiatives were suggested at different levels for the coordination of the demands of formation, of organisation and of the use of the media. There was insistence in particular that every Province, with the assistance of the Councillor General for SC, should draw up a plan for social communication. The Rector Major himself with his Council were asked to study "a practical plan for the promotion, coordination and exploitation of social communication, as a significant field of action which has a place among the apostolic priorities of the salesian mission (C 43)".<sup>5</sup>

The letter of the Rector Major Fr Juan E. Vecchi of 8 December 1999: *Communication in the salesian mission*<sup>6</sup> asks for a true *cultural conversion*. Social communication is pervasive; it covers all salesian activity; we must be able to adopt new points of view, paying particular attention "to the communicative and involving ability of the context to affect typical values of the Salesian spirituality and mission" (p. 16). The possibilities offered by modern communication techniques must find us ready to adopt them and appreciate the extent to which they make possible instantaneous information all over the world.

Fr Vecchi asks us to consider how much the new points of view can enrich our commitment to social communication through collaboration with the laity and attention to local circumstances.

<sup>5</sup> GC24 137.

<sup>6</sup> Published in AGC 370, 8 December 1999.

Collaboration with lay people stimulates, in fact, the integration of views and experiences, which become effective to the extent to which they are the result of true mutual concern and synergy. Attention to local circumstances, moreover, requires the ability to communicate outside the religious community and collaborators; it makes us ask ourselves how we can make our Salesian presence more effective in our locality as regards what we can do for young people and the marginalised; it challenges us as to how we can make the pastoral and educative community a significant presence, able to involve others and radiate new sensitivities.

### ***Salesians' urgent need of formation***

This progressive understanding of the implications and significance of social communication has also made us aware of the need for an adequate formation on the part of the Salesians.

The document of the GC21, after the enlightening clarification concerning the relevance and manner of exploiting social communication, presents an unequivocal assessment of the situation regarding the formation of Salesians; it speaks of lack of professionalism and of a pioneering spirit among individuals and of the "distressing lack of confreres or teams of Salesians who can utilise the mass media both in substance and style for the adequate evangelisation of modern man. Teams who can plan, research, try pilot programmes and develop the mass media on a serious scientific basis are either insufficient or totally lacking" (GC21, 151).

Fr Viganò too, in his own letter, insists on the need for formation, study, research and structural planning to ensure that the confreres have at least a minimum of competence. In this specific field of formation the Congregation has made commitments resulting in the present Faculty of the Sciences of Social Communication at the UPS. Structures of animation have been set up at central and provincial levels; initiatives have been multiplied; new instruments and channels of communication have been installed, but we are not yet capable of building a new areopagus in the actual contexts where we are living and working.

We have still to find an effective method of facing the facts and entering into the new culture, of successfully integrating our thought and activity in the language and styles of communication, of helping to develop a critical and creative mentality with regard to the messages, languages, approach and attitudes etc. of the media.

As Fr Viganò had done before him, Fr Vecchi emphasised in his letter the need for an adequate formation process; if our skills do not keep pace with the changes, sooner or later we shall be left behind. What is required therefore is:

- *a basic formation*: this is a matter of learning to read and appreciate what we are all using, that is, to train ourselves to be able to make good use of the new media and to be able to do so in a discerning manner;
- *a second level of formation for animators and workers in the education and pastoral fields*: they must be able to integrate into their educational and pastoral plans the criteria of social communication; this is not merely the ability to use the media skillfully; it is a question of inculturation, of education and pastoral action within the new culture of the media (AGC 370, p. 24);
- *a third level of formation for specialists*: some confreres must be prepared in the field of social communication, with a formal invitation to take advantage of our university faculty for the purpose.

In view of an adequate formation of this kind, Fr Vecchi offered some practical guidelines which are very significant and enlightening at the level of community (pp. 29-37) and at provincial level (pp. 37-43).

### ***Organisational and institutional response***

These decisions about social communication, made by General Chapters or by Rector Majors, must obviously not be reduced to reflections or declarations of intent, even with some practical applications; they have been given concrete expression in a response that has become ever more structured and institutional.



So in the GC22 of 1984 the Department of Social Communication was set up, and the sector was entrusted to a member of the General Council. Then on 8 December 1989 the Institute of Social Communication was inaugurated at the Salesian Pontifical University, as a commitment linked with the centenary of Don Bosco's death and as an implementation of the charism of our Father, who was a great educator and communicator. In his inaugural address Fr Egidio Viganò emphasized this point: "We are convinced that with the creation of the ISCOS – alongside other well-deserving Catholic Institutions or new ones coming into being – we are making an important gesture, albeit in a humble way, for the evangelisation and education of young people and of the working class: to help them to mature in their ability to communicate in the modern world, and dialogue effectively with men and women of today".<sup>7</sup>

The Congregation is looking to this new foundation for the formation of educators and communicators of the Salesian Family at a high level, and for courageous research across the whole field of social communication, with special attention to theological and pastoral aspects of the sector, to the study of the social theories of the media, to the trying out of methods of education in the media, to the new languages of catechesis and religious communication, and to the production of religious and educational programmes.

Today ISCOS has become a faculty – an indication of the commitment of the Congregation and the Salesian Family to the preparation of personnel suited to the new task. It is evident that for the sustaining of so important a faculty the collaboration and shared responsibility of the whole Congregation is needed, and for this I make appeal.

In the GC23 the need for a provincial delegate for social communication was pointed out, and the GC24 emphasised the need for a provincial plan for this sector together with the need to

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. F. LEVER, (ed), *I programmi religiosi alla radio e televisione*, LDC, Torino 1991, p. 138.

strengthen provincial animation through the assiduous activity of the delegate. In some Provinces these two guidelines have been well and successfully applied; for others, on the other hand, implementation is still on the back burner.

After considering the growing importance of the social communications sector in the context of the activities of the Salesian Congregation, and in the spirit of arts. 6 and 43 of the Constitutions already referred to, our recent GC25 made the decision that there should be a General Councillor dedicated exclusively to social communication. Following the Chapter, in the Project of animation and government of the Rector Major with his Council, particular attention was given to this sector with the provision of objectives, procedures and interventions in four areas: the overall view, animation and formation, information and business enterprises.

### ***Further incentives for our future activity***

A reminder about the “new mentality” and “cultural conversion”, to which previous Rector Majors have urged us, has come to us more recently from the Holy Father John Paul II who, in the Apostolic Letter already referred to of 24 January 2005, *The Rapid Development*, has emphasised that the Church at the present day is not only committed to the use of the media, but is called upon to “integrate the message of salvation into the ‘new culture’ that these powerful means of communication create and amplify” (RS 2).

This means without any doubt that the use of current technology and techniques of social communication form part of the Church’s mission at the present day, and such use involves various fields of activity: religious information, evangelisation, catechesis, the formation of workers for this sector, and education.

We are aware nevertheless that today social communication cannot be reduced to the use of the media; it has already become, in fact, a very powerful agent promoting and spreading ways of life and of personal, family and social behaviour. Because of this, the Pope tell us, we cannot ignore the fact that “the culture itself,

prescinding from its content, arises from the very existence of new ways to communicate with hitherto unknown techniques and vocabulary” (RS 3). In our “age of global communication” humanity is called upon to face up to “the different processes of the mass media”. From this confrontation are born convergences for “the formation of personality and conscience, the interpretation and structuring of affective relationships, the coming together of the educative and formative phases, the elaboration and diffusion of cultural phenomena, and the development of social, political and economic life” (n. 3).

All this represents a real challenge, especially for those responsible for the formation of children and young people (n. 7). For this reason too we must be aware of our responsibility in the field of social communication for a sort of “pastoral and cultural revision, so as to deal adequately with the times in which we live” (n. 8).

To be capable of accepting responsibility in the present media culture, the Pope invites us to a “*vast work of formation* to assure that the mass media be known and used intelligently and appropriately” (n. 11); to a “*co-responsible participation* in their administration”, appealing to a “culture of shared responsibility” (n. 11); to take advantage of “the great possibilities of mass media in promoting dialogue, becoming vehicles for reciprocal knowledge, of solidarity and of peace” (n. 11).

This church document, as was the case in preceding decades, is for us an incentive to accept the new elements of our time and to make decisions at the present day with the strength and spirit of Don Bosco.

## **2. CHALLENGES THROWN UP BY SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

In the desire to live in fidelity to Don Bosco and his charism, and to take up this last appeal of John Paul II on social communi-

cation which appeared in the Apostolic Letter *The Rapid Development*, I would like to share with you the challenges which the media culture presents to us today. This will enable us to better define what practical measures we should take, in view of the carrying out of our Salesian mission.

### ***Development in technology***<sup>8</sup>

Looking at communication as a complex system, it can be said that the birth of new technology never takes place independently of the social context, in which political, economic and cultural factors play a decisive part. But it is also true that when a new technology becomes part of everyday social life, it provides a new language for the interpretation of life. In this sense the different media help to interpret human existence in a new way and at the same time reveal the kind of understanding that man has of himself and of the world.

For example, the *book* has given origin and impulse to individuality, favouring the logical and linear approach and emphasising rationality. Within the written text one can move forwards and backwards; but the material it contains is set out in a sequential manner and presupposes a link between what went before and what comes afterwards. The power of the written word confers on the text the primacy of precision in the transmission of literary, poetic, philosophic, theological or political material. This is something that cannot easily be substituted by purely visual language.

*Television* prefers to use repetition rather than analysis, myths rather than facts. It concentrates on turning events into a spectacle; it therefore plays the role of the bass-drum, for the purpose of attracting the attention of many people in the great television piazza, where choral consent is called for rather than any personal approval. It is the constant chatter and image-changing that produces the lasting spell. The synchronisation of the viewers

<sup>8</sup> Cf. F. PASQUALETTI, *New Media e cultura digitale. Una sfida all'educazione*, in *Orientamenti pedagogici*, vol. 51, Jan-Feb 2004.

generates groups with commonly shared emotions; youngsters meet each other, discuss their preferred programmes, repeat expressions and catchphrases; adults exchange ideas on the basis of their preferences for one programme or another. The force of television lies in the magic of seeing images and movement; no matter how much one is used to it, the magic box keeps all viewers spellbound.

There are other *technologies related to television*, which have developed a process of ever greater and independent interaction, introducing practices that could be grouped under the word *control*.

The *analogue video-recorder*, for example, has given the user the possibility of changing the time and place for viewing a programme, and in addition has fostered the spreading of video material to contexts different from that of production.

The *remote control* has developed the style of *zapping*, which is not just the simple changing from one channel to another but can become a montage of clips from different programmes and is often just a way of escaping the advertisements.

The *video-camera*, from the now defunct VHS to today's digital model, has transformed the user into a small-scale producer of scenes from daily life.

The *computer* has gathered to itself the various languages of the classical media: written text, image, sound, animation, video, graphics etc., thus giving rise to a form of communication which has developed into the combined use of different media, interaction, interface, non-linearity, navigation, hypertext, access, etc. Nowadays at no great expense a user can set up an audio or video station and become a producer.

*Internet*, also defined as the network of networks, is the metaphor for the new communication. Like the telephone, it has annihilated space and time; but while the telephone carries only the voice, the internet has become the means for a new way of



living and thinking. Nonlinear, bidirectional, unconfined, interactive, mutant and floating, the network is a place, a language, a way of using and thinking communication, which arouses considerable interest and also concern.

Every day, by means of the network, hundreds of millions of users exchange all kinds of messages, gain access to documents, participate in telematic groups, meet each other in electronic chatrooms and discuss every kind of argument. The internet is becoming ever more a space for personal development or for that of a business or institutional group.<sup>9</sup>

With the internet all human activities have been made virtual, but in particular, a process of decentralisation of power and control over communication has been launched that never existed in previous history. From a positive point of view the internet can be seen as a great opportunity for the intellectual growth of humanity. Unless economic reasons totally prevail, the network is like a flowing sea of knowledge on which all can draw for their own political and economic purposes.

Two specialists in this field<sup>10</sup> assert that if you really want to understand *virtual reality* it is important to appreciate how we perceive the daily reality that surrounds us. Virtual reality is a way of visualising, manipulating and interacting with the computer and with extremely complex information. The method concerned with the interaction between man and machine is commonly called interface.

Virtual reality is nothing else but the newest method in a long chain of interfaces. In a certain sense it would seem as though it were intended to make the computer invisible by transforming the complexity of data into three-dimensional representations with

<sup>9</sup> Cf. G.S. JONES (ed), *Virtual culture: Identity & communication in cybersociety*, London, Sage, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> S. AUKSTAKALNIS - D. BLATNER, *Silicon mirage. The art and science of virtual reality*, Berkeley (CA), Peachpit Press, 1992.

which one can interact, giving greater space to the freedom and creativity of the user. This does not mean that the freedom and creativity of the user are guaranteed or augmented by the virtual reality. One might say that the latter is in an indirect way the recognition of the complexity with which man acts and interacts in an environment, to know, communicate and represent himself and the world. Perhaps the greatest service that virtual reality can give to today's culture is the recovery of reality.

### ***Innovations in the media at technical and structural levels***

Radio and television had already introduced the cultural model of mass consumption. Digitalisation leads to a form of personal consumption and, in the opinion of some people, to a true and proper digital culture. In this connection it will be of use to look at some transitions of a technical and structural nature, that have been fostered by the spread of digitalisation.

1. *From 'one to many' to 'many to many'.* The transmission of the mass media was a flow-type of one-to-many, unidirectional, intransitive, and tending to be receptive if not exactly passive. That of the digitalised media, on the other hand, is of the kind many-to-many, one-to-one, all-to-all. The flow is transitive, interactive, bidirectional, even reticular (or netlike). Reciprocity and exchange is possible: one can receive and give at the same time.

2. *From centralisation to decentralisation.* Europe and the USA have developed in two different ways as regards the mass media, and especially with regard to radio and television. Europe has a history of state monopoly, while the USA has always had market monopoly. Nevertheless the seventies in Europe saw the birth of independent radio and television stations, and within a few years voices and images had multiplied on the air, with the progressive passing from a media culture controlled and managed by a few to a culture managed and controlled by many. There was a progressive movement towards more pluralistic forms of communication with more participants. With the coming of digitalisation decentralisation is now the *status vivendi* of the form of

communication. On the radio, for example, it is now possible to listen to hundreds of radio networks from all over the world.

3. *From local to international communication.* The substitution of the older forms of aerials by parabolic antennas is an indication of the large and growing number of television stations no longer limited by national and cultural boundaries. Digitalisation through the network has merely amplified the tendency to globalisation.

4. *From mass-media to personal-media.* The production of media instruments of small dimensions and the progressive fall in prices have greatly increased the number of users of *personal media*. Personal computers, mobile phones, electronic notebooks, credit cards, identity cards, all function by the use of *bits* and ensure personal control of our options and actions. The other side of the coin is that digitalisation also allows control by hidden powers, such as secret services, or by big central commercial enterprises to keep tabs on the profile of their customers. The result is that the conscience must always be awake to the citizens' right to privacy and to the defence of democracy.

5. *From mass programming to personal programming.* The multiplication of media channels and offerings, in particular through the internet, is leading to the development of new styles of consumerism and new cultural habits. The network is providing a new way of exchanging information and of managing cultural elements such as films and music; this gives rise to more than a few problems at a juridical and moral level. About this aspect a great debate has been in progress for some time about the encrypting of languages, the defence of copyrights, proprietary culture, and the privacy of the user.

6. *From proprietary software to Open Source.* With regard to software there are two different concepts. The concept of a "closed source" or proprietary software is based prevalently on business and economic criteria; it claims professional rights and gives a guarantee to the user that it will function properly. The other con-

cept is that of the *Open Source*; it means that the software code should be known, so as to leave the user free not only to use it and adapt it to his needs, but also to improve it by adding his own contribution and making it available to others. It is a vision of shared knowledge that would be of benefit to all. The overcoming of the “digital divide” between the north and south of the world depends also on the choice of a technology permitting access to information as the right of everyone and not only of those who can afford it. The Open Source is a way of moving towards the democratisation of information and culture.

### ***Characteristics of the new digital culture***

The use of the new media has produced a culture which presents some characteristics deserving of attention, because they point to some tasks for education and formation.

1. We are living in a *high-speed* culture, Today communication travels very fast. We need think only of emails. Even when paradoxically we say the internet is slow, it still operates at a speed unthought-of until comparatively recently The magic of a technology such as the internet lies in experiencing in a few simple actions the extending of our body around the world. I click on an address and I am in the Vatican. I click on another and download updates for a programme or documents. It all happens instantaneously. Speed is a characteristic of many other things: motor vehicles, aircraft, sport, medicine, economics etc. But there are also associated problems: those who are slow tend to become marginalised. Categories like the aged, the disabled, the poor, or those who do not fit into the prevailing social model, become similarly marginalised.

2. Secondly, the *interface* method is creating new attitudes and mentalities. The interface is the means of action between man and machine. The development of the interface has accentuated the need for the person to act – an attitude which is then carried over also into the social sphere. Everyone wants to be the active subject of his own personal and social life. The interface becomes therefore a metaphor for the environment, for design, for educa-

tion, for social life etc. Linked with the concept of interface is that of the communicative model. It must be said that we still live within pseudo-democratic models which provide an illusion of participation; in reality today's citizen has a prevalently consumer potential. We are free to decide what we want to buy, but not nearly so free to decide what we want to produce.

3. Thirdly, the new culture presents a *polyphonic vision* of reality. It is more difficult today to attain to certainty or truth because we are immersed in a sea of all the truths claimed to be absolute. An institution which at the present day wants to maintain its unique position finds itself confronted by a thousand others. Alongside a church site are found a host of other churches, religions and sects, from the most traditional to the most way out. It is the culture of co-presence, potentially a culture of dialogue, but also of hatred. An easy consequence of this culture is relativism. The network shows how one can live today in the simultaneous presence of contradictions. The different cultures show us that there are different ways of seeing the same things, but today the indiscriminate offering of anything and its contrary is only a click away. It is a culture that presupposes everyone is an adult; it does not respect the evolving development of the person, and leaves to the individual the responsibility for his choices.

4. Closely linked with the preceding point is the attitude of *nomadism*, which the network can develop. On the internet one browses or navigates. This passing from one point to another on the network is sometimes reflected in one's lifestyle as passing from one experience to another. In its positive form this is a culture of detachment, of research, of offering, but on the network it can also lead to abuse and dishonesty. From this point of view experience of the network highlights the need for forming persons of responsibility. Control systems are not enough; today the need is to educate to maturity and the ability to make choices consistent with one's own faith vision and one's personal projects of life.

5. The network itself can be an *instrument of education and formation*. The new techniques of electronic learning offer to geographically remote places the possibility of following educational programmes difficult to access without the network. The latter, moreover, makes possible contact, knowledge and the reporting of things that happen in the world such as wars, environmental abuses, racial hatred, etc. Even the scientific community collaborates more rapidly at the present day through the network. The *Open Source* is made possible only through the network, and only in the same way is it possible to get to know more about associations such as NGOs, Doctors without Frontiers, Amnesty International, Institutions such as FAO, UNESCO and the innumerable volunteer organisations.

6. We need to recognise that this environment, so highly influenced by the media, is driving us ever more into an almost total *dependence on technology*. A less obvious but more interesting aspect of this is that the computer is becoming ever more an item of furniture everywhere. Offices are becoming more and more computerised, and even homes are following suit with everything from microwave ovens in the kitchen to voice-operated light switches. Mobile phones are steadily becoming more like hand-held computers. The commercial world depends electronically on the internet, as also do all innovations in technology. From many points of view, the need to communicate creates in us the further need for an ever more sophisticated technology.

7. Precisely because the internet is becoming the place where the future will be shaped, it is generating within itself what is known as the *digital divide*. A glance at some statistics shows how the internet has penetrated the world revealing the following figures: Africa 1.5%, Middle East 7.5%, Asia 8.4%, Latin America and the Caribbean 10.3%, Europe 35.5%, Australia and Oceania 48.6%, USA 64.7%. In New York city alone there are more access points than in the whole of Africa. 15% of the world's population, living in the developed countries, use more than half of the fixed telephone lines and 70% of the mobile phones. 60% of the world

population, those living in developing countries, use only 5% of the internet connections. As well as the "south" of the world, there are various "souths" in countries, regions, towns and smaller areas. All this makes us reflect once again on the importance of not separating the problem of digital culture from the economy, politics and justice, at both local and international level. In this sense the new situation in both culture and technology challenges us with regard to exclusion and marginalisation.

8. The electronic media have an influence on the way control is exerted on social life; this brings into question the concept of *authority* in a media dominated society. In a social model based on the printed word there are two requisites needed for entry to public life and the exercise of authority: the ability to read and write; unless you have these you cannot take part in public discussion. But nowadays the electronic media make it possible for all to access the world of information; in this way any hierarchical control of information becomes destabilised, and this in turn leads to situations difficult to control. On the one hand the institutions that formerly had control of information are now easily set aside, and the very concept of truth and authority are going into crisis. And on the other hand, because of the provisional nature of the situation, institutions are rushing into spectacular presentations, typical of the language of the mass media, in a frantic search for audiences, and so forging a dangerous link between the truth and numbers.

### ***Some challenges from an educational point of view***

This new cultural environment is the result of mutations of a social, cultural, technological, political and economic nature. It has a basic characteristic that is very important: the ability to bring into convergence the use of different languages and to create an ever evolving culture with a certain tension between order and chaos or, if you want to put it in another way, between what we already have and what is yet to come. The characteristics of this new culture could give rise to some interesting approaches

and methods for those working in the field of education, as far as the planning of personal contributions and their actual presentation are concerned.

The culture of the media is a *culture of action*, of participation, of interaction, of the building of reality and of life. For this reason it makes more use of verbs than of nouns. What is urgently needed is communication itself, rather than more talk about it.

It is a *culture of processes*, based certainly on structures and even complex structures, but which must be able to persuade the individual or the community to do something, to act, to communicate, to build. More important than the actual result of the process is that people have become personally involved in it.

It is a *culture of encounter*. The concept of deterritorialisation indicates that a physical place is unnecessary; what is important is the activity established between those taking part in the encounter. What needs to be considered is the context for educational encounters, but prior to this, the method of communication to be used and the reason why there should be an encounter at all between those concerned.

Ideally it is a *culture of sharing* and of putting aside one's own intellectual rights in view of a sharing process and the common access of all to cultural benefits. These, in their many historical and geographical forms and expressions, should be strongly shared, interpreted, discussed, criticised and built up through the dynamic processes of intercultural participation.

We must face up to the accusation of promoting a culture of information that is so abundant that it begins to lose its value. Nevertheless, the technology of the internet generates of its nature a *culture of interchange*, rather than of the passing of information from centre to periphery. Because of the nature of political and economic structures it can also be a technology giving rise to a culture of division, the "digital divide", but in itself it remains a technology that can foster encounters, dialogue and communi-



cation beyond territorial, cultural, religious, political and economic boundaries.

Today's culture is striving with difficulty to harmonise logic and rational principles developed through the course of centuries, with those of the new electronic media. It is a *culture of the senses*, What we are experiencing is the travail inherent in every cultural metamorphosis which requires a great deal of rethinking, not only at the individual level but at the collective level as well.

It is no accident that we are living the paradox of globalisation while at the same time witnessing the rise of extreme and exaggerated nationalistic movements. All changes are accompanied by conflicts, though sincere efforts at dialogue may soften them to some extent and open the way to a mutually acceptable solution. This is why it is important to see all aspects of a problem and the various claims expressed. The media can help to develop a culture of pluralism precisely because of their plurality of languages.

This is why "democracy of the senses"<sup>11</sup> is spoken of as a condition for overcoming a culture much inclined to the visual and the rational. The arts and the media are perhaps the two areas which make possible a greater perception of the urgent need to harmonise and integrate the complementary elements of the senses and hence of languages.

Here then, dear confreres, we have an immense field of work and, at the same time, a huge resource to the extent that the challenges we face from the media culture influence our pedagogy and become part of our educational method. Otherwise we shall merely suffer their consequences, without being moved to introduce any changes that could make our educational activity more effective. We can never forget that our Congregation "evangelises by educating and educates by evangelising".

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. J.E. BERENDT, *The third ear. On listening to the world*, New York, Henry Holt & Company, 1992.

### ***Some challenges from an institutional point of view***

Social communication naturally poses challenges to the Congregation, to its life and to formation. We have to rethink our life within this media culture, but we must be careful also about what we communicate. Through the new technologies we can transmit a great deal of information and knowledge, but it remains true that we communicate especially what we are. We can be specialists and professionally trained, but at the same time pass on either our coherence and uprightness or our small-mindedness and mediocrity.

**The challenge of the communication of the charism.** We should all ask ourselves what we are communicating as a Congregation by our style of life and by our institutional options: are we communicating a radical option for God and the Lord Jesus, the fellowship of community life, our priority choice for poor and abandoned youngsters, the meaning of life and hope, unconditional dedication and the beauty of a gift freely given? It is not just a matter of paying attention to how we communicate, what means we make use of, what kind of language we adopt, what culture our communication displays; we must also be careful that we are communicating our own charism as well.

An element that characterises a lifestyle is the tenor with which it is lived. Today's challenge is the essential nature of the choices made. To the image of the gratuitous nature of the religious life should correspond a style of life that testifies that God is sufficient and that the young people, to whom we are sent, are more important to us than are many other things. In a culture of the superfluous we should bear witness to the culture of the essential. Our community and our charism must be visible, but what makes us visible is the witness we give to being "signs and bearers of the love of God for young people" (C 2). This is a challenge to the whole process of holiness, to the primacy of the religious life, to the application of the GC25, which must also find expression in social communication. In this sense all my preceding letters, when translated into life, find expression in social communication.

We must have the courage to make a serious revision of our lifestyle. We should bear witness to the gratuitous nature of God's kingdom, be advocates through our life and options that the most important things are God and our fellow-men. From the standpoint of communication this is more important than all the web-sites, radio, television programmes or newspapers that could ever be, because, in fact, if our mentality remains unchanged, even what we produce by the instruments of communication will do no more than reflect what we are. Communication is not made up only of words and images, but also of choices and behaviour that imply consistency between what we preach and what we practise.

Innovation will not be made through a face-lift, but in a renewed determination to apply ourselves one hundred per cent to the concrete problems of the young and of the newly emerging forms of poverty. We are putting on the line the credibility of the Church and of our Congregation through a process of acquiring consistency and evangelical radicalism. Social communication can help young people to discover the attractiveness of the Salesian vocation and be a form of vocational promotion.

**The challenge of technology.** This is a field of great importance. At the level of the mass media we should meditate on the metaphor of David and Goliath. Our Congregation, like the Church itself, in the face of the gigantic empire of the media must select different terrains and strategies so as to present an alternative to the dominant culture. In other words we need structures of communication that are light and strongly motivated but extremely flexible. The internet certainly offers possibilities more easily accessible, but instruments like the radio, especially in developing areas, can make an excellent contribution, as witness the radio stations in some of our missions.

We must not forget, and indeed we need to give new weight to the whole tradition of Salesian communication which covers active leadership from the level of the street to the playground, to the theatre, to music and to the liturgy. The most urgent problem is

to foster the desire to remain with the young and the poor. The force of the forms of communication at personal and group level cannot be replaced by any kind of technical application through the media, no matter how sophisticated it may be; both are forms of communication that need to be developed, but the primacy lies with personal relationships and personal contact.

**The challenge of the effective use of time.** Nowadays it is essential to be educated to the effective use of the time we have available. Statistics show that the time spent by young people before or with the media is growing through the very fact that we are living in a media culture, and I think that the same is probably true also for us Salesians. The challenge is one of formation, not only in the sense of education to the media itself but rather from the point of view of formation to responsibility in the proper management of one's personal life. The years of formation are vitally important and should be the time for a serious cultural and professional preparation. The communities themselves should be training grounds for communication and encounter rather than places for the sharing of information and its use. An excess of information makes us live fragmented lives; by concentrating on formation we must give back to our lives unity and harmony.

**The challenge of the means of social communication.** From what we have said so far it is evident that in the means of social communication we use we show what we are. The Congregation must be present in this world of the media. It is a question of our becoming accustomed to the use of the instruments; but also of reflecting on the sort of communication model we are using to bring about growth in the Congregation itself and its communication.

The risk at present is that we may focus our attention too much on the use of the instruments and their effectiveness and not concentrate sufficiently on our ability to communicate and create communication, and on what we actually communicate. It is our zeal for the mission that reveals what we are and what we are

communicating. It seems to me that Don Bosco, with all the zeal he had for needy youngsters, succeeded in inventing and working out ways of gathering people together and of communication that worked well. Where is our own zeal at the present day? Where is our heart focused? What are our real interests? What are we putting all our efforts into?

**The challenge of formation.** The means of social communication and the culture they spread call for a notable commitment to formation. A first task, without any doubt, is the formation to a critical use of the means of social communication and hence the formation of conscience. On the one hand one must learn to appreciate this "means of mass education" (C 43) as a gift of God which offers great possibilities for education and evangelisation. But on the other hand we must be aware of how the media are being used for purposes of exploitation, manipulation, domination and corruption. What is required therefore is formation to a sound spirit of discernment and, more broadly, to a proper understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques they use and the effect they have on those at whom they are aimed. A fundamental ethical principle needs to be inculcated, that is, that the human person and the human community are the end and measure of the use of the means of social communication. Communication should be made by persons for the benefit of the integral development of other persons.

It is not enough to be just good "consumers" of the means of social communication. We must know how to use them for educative and pastoral purposes. This requires competence in the use of the various instruments; it needs also the skill to integrate the educative gospel message with the media culture itself, and this in turn presupposes not only a sound technical knowledge, but the ability to read in depth the prevailing social and cultural situation.

The field of social communication is not exhausted by the media alone. It produces, and indeed is itself, a culture, and this makes it a great challenge to be faced especially in the field of

formation, which is not simply concerned with knowledge and skills, but essentially with helping to bring about in the individual a deep transformation at the level of his affections, convictions and motivations. Some aspects of the modern social communication culture create problems for formation, while there are other aspects that promote it.

The culture of social communication, for instance, tends to ignore the interior and transcendent dimension of the person and tries to build his identity in terms of his response to the situation in which he is living. Being a culture of the image, this is ephemeral and does not lead to true introspection; indeed it tends towards superficiality. Moreover, the culture of social communication tends also to a relativism, substituting opinion for truth and providing information and views of all kinds, leaving the recipient to freely choose what he wants; clarity then becomes obscured and the truth is often blurred by opinion polls. And given the reaction speed cultivated by social communication culture, this does not help formation which is a slow and patient process requiring much effort and hard work.

On the other hand, there are aspects of the culture of social communication that help to improve methods, especially in the area of formation. For example, it is typical of the culture of social communication to think always in terms of the reactions of receivers. There is great sensitivity about their background and capacity, their needs and interests. And this is a necessary aspect in the work of formation. It is a question of making the starting point not the curriculum to be followed but the individual subject with his capacities and abilities and his potential responses.

Again, the culture of social communication is intuitive rather than analytical and systematic; it is not inclined to long and abstract statements that appeal to the head, but uses brief, simple and clear messages that also appeal to the emotions, that is, to the whole person. And here, once more, there would be an enormous field on which to reflect when we think of the methods of teaching

commonly used in the houses of formation. Moreover the culture of social communication is based more on images than on words. The image of the face of a suffering Pope John Paul II is more eloquent than a torrent of words describing his suffering.

### 3. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

#### 3.1. A change of strategy

And so, in the final part of the letter we come to the making of some practical choices, that is, to the moment when we follow Don Bosco's example and put to good use the richness and fruitfulness of the Salesian charism; we shall try to give a new creative and apostolic response to the challenges of the social communication culture and to the new needs of the young, *that part of human society that is most precious and most vulnerable*.<sup>12</sup>

In drawing up some guidelines from our preceding reflections, I think it important to make a *change of strategy*, which can help us to improve our reflections and actions. The strategy arises from a double observation. On the one hand we have before us the production of documents of the Congregation of all kinds – including the theme of social communication; they are rich and potentially fruitful; they constitute a wise tradition of analysis and interpretation of reality, a criteriology based on our charismatic sources and a true programme of apostolic action in the renewed Salesian mission. And on the other hand we find ourselves faced with difficulties, hard work and the risk of not being sufficiently creative, productive and effective in our ability to convert this doctrine into a reality of life and action.

What is written is unfortunately not read; what is read is not always followed by productive reflection; and when reflection is made it often fails to lead to any change in the actual situation.

<sup>12</sup> MB II, 45. Cf. Cost. 1.

How can we break this chain which keeps so much apostolic energy locked up? How can we remove this block in communication? How can we make our documents more significant and practical? And how can we do this in particular for the present letter of the Rector Major ?

In a certain rural environment of peasants, simple people but wise enough, hard-working and with a sense of humour, I heard a popular saying that made me smile and then led me to think a little more deeply. I pass it on to you as some light relief and to suggest a strategy. An old peasant remarked: *You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs*. Most of the nutritional value of an omelette lies in the egg – that is quite clear. But if it is left there it never becomes the pleasant food we know and moreover sooner or later it goes bad, loses its nutritional value and eventually reaches a point when it becomes unpleasant and can actually be harmful.

The strategy I propose, therefore, consists in not creating new guidelines, but rather in taking practical steps to release the life lying dormant in the doctrinal patrimony of the Congregation, and in finding ways of embodying it in our educative and pastoral communities and in our localities. There is so much light, so much charismatic inspiration, so much apostolic energy in our documents! But they run the risk of never becoming nourishment for our life and activity. And so I invite you to find time to read them again and study more deeply the situation of contemporary culture; to reflect on them personally, in community, and in the educative and pastoral communities; to compare ideas about the real situation of the young; and to have the courage to draw up a *plan of action* to be translated into the daily life of pastoral activity.

Some Provinces have already done a great deal in this sector of our mission; others are in the process of making courageous and creative decisions; and still others are only at the very beginning. With the intention of being not only generous but practical and realistic, we have to make some choices. Let the Provincial with



his council, and the provincial delegate for social communication with his team, together with the provincial delegates for youth ministry and for formation, the Rector with the Salesian community and the educative and pastoral community, commit themselves to finding the practical ways most appropriate for their own situation.

And so, as a strategy I put to you that of improving and putting into practice the **provincial plan for social communication**, which forms part of the provincial educative and pastoral project. I invite you to work creatively and effectively on the following three documents: the letter of Fr Vecchi *Communication in the Salesian mission* (AGC 370); the practical guidebook provided at the beginning of this year by the Department for Social Communication, entitled *The Salesian Social Communication System*; and the *Guidelines for the Formation of Salesians in Social Communication*, drawn up in synergy by the Departments of Social Communication, of Formation, and of Youth Ministry, to be published during this present year. Stimulated by these documents, we shall have a diagnosis of the situation, we shall decide on concrete steps to be taken through the provincial plan, and we shall be able to implement them in synergy and periodically verify how far we have reached.

In the paragraphs that follow, I have presented these documents, emphasising certain points (especially about practical aspects) and inviting you to give effect to this strategy in the service of the young. I feel sure of your willingness to correspond with the urgency of this work.

## 3.2. Working tools

### 3.2.1 Fr Vecchi's letter on social communication

In his letter *Communication in the Salesian mission*. "He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak" (AGC 370), Fr Vecchi has left us a collection of reflections and a series of practical guidelines which can and must enlighten and stimulate our Salesian mission. Every Salesian, each com-

munity and all the Provinces are called upon to recognise the importance of communication and to keep it constantly in the forefront of their apostolic agenda. I emphasize two ideas and the practical guidelines of this document, while at the same time encouraging you to go back to the original text of the letter and transform it into life.

Social communication, with its various means and new techniques – wrote Fr Vecchi, following the Church’s magisterium – is important in our life and mission not only because it offers the possibility of extending education and evangelisation to millions of people, but especially because it constitutes a **“cultural centre”**, a school of model behaviour, of perception of the meaning of life, of ethics which reinterpret values, of the use of power and economy. This is a significant and decisive innovation: as I have said repeatedly in this letter it is not enough just to use the new languages and new means of communication; above all the message must be integrated into the new culture.

This cultural innovation challenges us to change our mentality, to make a real **“cultural conversion”**. It is not enough to do good within our own houses. We are called upon to extend our activities outside, listening to the expectations and demands of society, and interacting so as to give to that society a positive transformation. We have to foster dialogue, integration and mutual relationships with the laity and the whole of the educative community; we must be animators of the locality and involve other social institutions in synergy for the benefit of the young; we must use the new media, including the internet, to create opportunities for contacts and to be a leaven in this new areopagus.

Fr Vecchi then proposed a twofold series of guidelines: the first, linked more with the local community and the urgent need of education to communication in our own houses; and the second entrusted to the whole Province and linked with the need for a transformation of the social situation and culture for the benefit of the young.

*Every community* is called upon to improve institutional communication; to plan and bring about in the educative and pastoral communities education to communication and education through the media, “*educommunication*”, which includes education to the use of languages and of the media; the use of the media for education and evangelisation in schools, parishes, oratories, etc.; the promotion of dialogue with communicators, artists and publishers, especially if they are young; helping those afflicted by the new forms of poverty and those excluded by the new communication techniques; and improving the standard of media skills.

And at the same time *every Province* is called upon to plan and exercise its rights of citizenship, getting to know the laws and duties of citizens, and making them respected; by developing, for example, a watching brief over the rights of families and of young people, etc., and opening up to other institutions working for the common good. From this standpoint social communication provides a great opportunity for educating to and creating opportunities for *active citizenship*. For the animation of these activities our General Chapters have already created the role of the provincial delegate for social communication (cf. GC23) and his team and of the provincial plan for social communication (cf. GC24).

This is not a work for specialists alone, but a *work for all*; experts are welcome because they help others to join in, but all have their own part to play. If we speak of new means and technologies it is because we are concerned with culture and the quality of life, and the building of a more just and fraternal society. The means become mediations of the Kingdom. The reflections and practical proposals stemming from a re-reading of this letter in the local communities should be shared with the animation and government bodies of the Province, so that they may become part of the provincial plan for social communication at the service of education and pastoral work.

### **3.2.2. Salesian System of Social Communication**

We all know the *Preventive System*: we learned it from our experience lived with the Salesians who educated and formed us; we

went into it more deeply through scientific study; we practise it and continually communicate it by our witness, by sharing our lives, by educative practice in word and teaching. We also know that the preventive system, dreamed of and lived by Don Bosco, clearly cannot be reduced to the classical pages written in 1877, but is rather – as Fr Egidio Viganò expressed it – “an organic collection of convictions, attitudes, actions, interventions, means, methods and structures which have progressively constituted a *characteristic general way of being and acting, both personally and as a community*, of Don Bosco, of individual Salesians and of the Family” (AGC 290, p. 10).

A similar dream – and it was not just by chance that the term ‘system’ was chosen – is made concrete in the pages of the “*Salesian social communication system*” (SSCS), which presents the guidelines for the Salesian Congregation. The Department for Social Communication has gathered together the traditional teaching of this sector of the Salesian life and mission and, after a fruitful process of consultation, has produced this working tool. I hope that these pages will become both enlightening and fruitful. It is a *working tool*, with a historical and doctrinal frame of reference and Congregational policies for the functioning of social communication. It is entrusted particularly to the Provincial and his Council, to the provincial delegate for social communication and his team, so that they may study it.

The General Councillor for social communication presents the document as a “a unified and integrated project with a shared vision of values and mission which is distinctly Salesian, with planned policies and actions in the areas of animation, formation, information, and production and with a management of organisational structures and communication processes networked with the various sectors within the Congregation and the Salesian Family, and externally with Church organisations, with those locally and in society taken broadly” (SSCS 19). In this working tool we find set out the *identity* (those to whom our work is directed, its mission and objectives, its convictions, policies and criteria of

action, its subjects), the *manner of functioning*, and the *organisation* of the Salesian Social Communication System.

It is not my intention to go into details about this working tool; we need to go to the text itself, let ourselves be guided by it and, moved by its spirit, in this way provide responses to the real needs of our educative and pastoral communities. I would just like to point out certain pages which, because of their simplicity and ease of application, may escape our attention. In the document we find two appendices: the first is a list summarising the main *Congregational sources*: Constitutions, Regulations, General Chapters, Acts of the General Council, etc. which present social communication to us in a Salesian key; and the second is an outline, a *map* for the construction of the **provincial plan of social communication**.

These appendices are at one and the same time an eloquent symbol and an urgent programme. They are a *symbol*, prompting us to return always to the sources, to our roots. For instance, reading again arts. 6 and 43 of the Constitutions and accepting the challenge of contemporary communication renews our awareness of being animated by the same Spirit that moved Don Bosco to be ahead of his time in the use of social communication for the education and evangelisation of poor youngsters and the working classes. The same Spirit moves us today to be creative, courageous and organised. These appendices also provide a *programme*; by following the points listed in the map and accepting the suggested guidelines we are led to diagnose, plan, implement and systematically verify the state of social communication in our Provinces. They help us to plan and manage animation and formation in social communication, information and public relations, and our social communication enterprises with the same pastoral charity shown by Don Bosco.

I add a further two suggestions of a methodological nature. The provincial plan for social communication should be drawn up and implemented with the greatest and best possible *participation*

at different levels; it should be constantly animated and periodically verified by the animation and government bodies of the Province. What is important is not so much a well structured plan as a shared plan that will help to make progress, to serve the young and the people in general, to leaven culture and so transform society. Some may consider this insistence excessive, but there is a great difference between reaching a goal by ourselves and reaching it together. The more we feel ourselves part of a common project, the more shall we be capable of building community and the quality of life.

A second suggestion concerns the variety of situations in our Provinces. The map proposed by the document does not imply that everything must be done at once and together; but we must choose with realism and generosity the steps we can take, according to the needs that exist and our ability to meet them. We do not have the *power of Goliath* in social communication, but in our educative communities and in our groups with our various different means we have many of *David's opportunities* for evangelising, educating, and building a more just and fraternal society. Recognition of our values, of our means and skills, our ability to be organised and create synergy, to involve others of good will from outside our house and collaborate with them, is a wise policy that enables us to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the gentleness of the dove for embodying the Kingdom in the diversity of contexts in which we may find ourselves. The provincial plan for social communication is meant to be an expression of the hope and dynamism of the gospel, which Jesus likened to the energy of leaven in the mass of dough (cf. Mt 13,33).

### ***3.2.3. Guidelines for the formation of Salesians in Social Communication***

There is no Salesian community or educative and pastoral community more communicative than one that bears witness to the following of Christ in the service of the young and the poor. And so the testimony of Christ and his gospel is the fundamental mes-

sage of all communication. If this is missing, no amount of theory, no technique or means of communication can make up for it. Don Bosco's faithfulness to poor youngsters demands of us that we communicate by our witness, sharing and total dedication to the mission "to our last breath". Precisely for this reason Don Bosco never neglected any language, means or instrument, traditional or newly discovered, that he could use to proclaim the good news to the young and people in general so that they could become upright citizens and good Christians. When we read the description Fr Egidio Viganò gives of Don Bosco as *a brilliant social communicator*, we are taken aback (cf. AGC 302, pp. 8-12). Our own fidelity to Don Bosco and to the young prompts us to be transparent witnesses, and hence good social communicators, by developing our natural gifts through the help of a good formation.

As long ago as 1981 Fr Egidio Viganò presented a synthetic proposal of formation in social communication for Salesians at three levels: a general basic level, a higher level for workers in educational and pastoral work, and a still higher level for the preparation of specialists (cf. AGC 302). In the year 2000 Fr Vecchi took up this proposal again in the letter I have already mentioned and spoke of the urgent need for qualification: "The only useful road ahead is through formation. The new literacy, that is, the ability to read and write in the culture of the media, affects everyone, and in so far as it concerns the faith it affects all believers. How much more then should it be of interest to educators and evangelisers!" (AGC 370, p. 23).

The Department for Social Communication took up the theme in a renewed form in 2004, and studied the history of the different congregational programmes for formation to social communication; it collected data regarding what was offered in this connection in initial formation throughout the Congregation; it then convoked a worldwide consultation on social communication which took place in Rome in July 2004. This consulting body reflected on the project of a formation plan and offered the Department an analysis and an interpretation of the data regarding the situation



of formation in the Congregation in this field, with some criteria for the guidance of such formation and some practical alternatives concerning the plan.

The Department for Social Communication together with the Department for Formation, on the basis of the reflection made by the consulting group, has drawn up some **Guidelines for the formation of Salesians in Social Communication**, soon to be published. It is one of the interventions foreseen in the Animation Project for the present six-year period (cf. AGC 380, p. 48). I ask those responsible for formation to willingly accept this aide which aims at ensuring an ever better formation of the Salesian as an educator and shepherd, and hence as a communicator.

The provincial delegates for formation and for communication, with their respective teams, enlightened by these Guidelines, will seek to find ways to determine the content and how to implement it, and this as regards both initial and ongoing formation. In the case of initial formation it is not only a matter of introducing a new discipline – communication – in every phase of the formative curriculum foreseen by the *Ratio*, but of paying attention to several other points as well: insistence on the communicative style; the animation of experiences and reflections on Salesian life and work, closely linked with today's youth culture and hence strongly communicative; the development of the communicative dimension of courses already foreseen by the *Ratio*; the organisation of workshops of "educommunication" for those who have not had this opportunity prior to their initial Salesian formation; the creation of formation opportunities for formation guides and for teachers of confreres in formation; the provision of work shops in languages, arts and media, in new technologies and particularly those more suitable for educative use, for the proclamation and celebration of the faith, for the spreading of values, for symbolic and ritual communication; the acquiring and improvement of communicative skills among the people, with the traditional languages and the limited means of various kinds available to them; the learning of the grammar of digital language and its many uses for



the knowledge, communication and creation of opportunities for meetings, etc.

In this case too, the more we succeed in involving the formation personnel, teachers and the confreres actually in formation in the construction of a programme made to measure for the formation community and in its implementation, the more fully will we achieve the objectives of these Guidelines. No teacher can give to a student what the student is not disposed to learn, especially in the art and wisdom of communicating, which is the sharing and communion of life. The same can be said of ongoing formation.

#### 4. Conclusion

I end this letter on the Birthday of St John the Baptist, “than whom no greater man was ever born of woman” (Mt 11, 11), the man of austerity and the essential, frank in word and open to innovation, lover of truth and authenticity, strong and transparent in his testimony. His was the “voice crying in the wilderness”, proclaiming the coming of the Word. He was the teacher who introduced to his disciples the Lamb of God present in their midst. What a wonderful icon for the communicator!

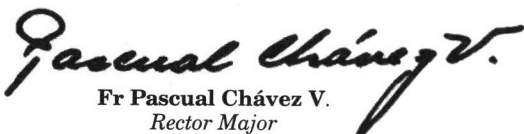
This was the day on which Don Bosco used to celebrate his name-day – a true family feast for the youngsters, the Salesians, cooperators and past-pupils who vied with one another in expressing their love and gratitude to their “father”. Here was the man who had well understood that it was not enough to do good, but that this had to be known; that education is a question of the heart, and so it is not sufficient to love, but that the others have to feel that they are loved. This is the Salesian language of communication.

And we too gather around him today as his children and thank him for what he has meant in the life of each and everyone of us; that without him our lives would have had no meaning from the

moment we made our own his experience of faith, his plan of life, and his passion for the salvation of the young. Our affection is naturally accompanied by a renewed commitment to be faithful to him, to his charism, to his mission, to his choices like that of the "spreading of good books" for the service of the Church and society; and to be faithful also to the young people of today, so strongly influenced by the modern means of social communication, so sensitive to new languages, and in such great need of competent guides and educators.

It would do no harm to read again that programmatic letter of Don Bosco to find in it the light and thrust for this twofold fidelity, and with his courage to take our place on the new frontiers of social communication.

To Mary most holy, our mother and teacher, I entrust all of you with all your intentions and your efforts to be good educators who are at the same time shepherds and communicators.

  
Fr Pascual Chávez V.  
*Rector Major*

## 2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

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### 2.1 GUIDELINES FOR SALESIAN PUBLISHING

Fr Tarcisio SCARAMUSSA

*General Councillor for Social Communication*

#### Introduction

The occasion of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Don Bosco's Letter on "*Spreading good books*" invites us to a relaunching of Salesian publishing, in fidelity to Don Bosco in the new setting of the present day.

Salesian publishing production is now quite extensive. It should be enough to consider the number of our communication and information outlets: 61 publishing houses, 17 audiovisual centres, 33 radio stations, 22 TV stations, numerous press offices, 29 printing shops, 89 bookshops, 122 theatres-cinema halls. In these enterprises, but also in many other initiatives, we are concentrating our production of messages, in printed and/or in digital form, of books, magazines, (including the Salesian Bulletin in its 55 editions in 28 languages, 29 of them *online*), periodicals, newsletters, leaflets, posters, other paper products, as well as Radio and Television programmes, and also in multimedia format on *web-sites* and audiovisuals with the use of video, CD, DVD.

In his message to the World Advisory Body for Social Communication Fr Pascual Chávez, 9th successor of Don Bosco, declared: «Our *Social Communication works* are a resource...The panorama of our publishing houses, centres for audiovisual production, printed publications is impressive. We must ask ourselves however about the quality, cultural significance, the teamwork we can achieve.» He mentioned what the basic challenges are: «If the Church is called to "integrate the Gospel and the new

culture of media" (JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris missio*, 37), we educators are equally called to "integrate" educational wisdom, received values, models of assimilated behaviour, the preventive system, with the "new world" represented and carried through the mass media».<sup>1</sup> In his last letter of June 2005, the Rector Major has reflected further on the implications of this task.

The World Advisory Body for Social Communication responded to the same question, repeating the need to give new impetus to our communications, to a commitment to culture in the different countries while safeguarding Salesian cultural tradition expressed in publishing, with the addition nowadays of the new possibilities of multimedia, information and computer technology, without forgetting those forms of communication characteristic in Salesian education, such as the theatre, music, art, literature...

In the long history of the experience of the Congregation, various guidelines have been given regarding publishing which still retain their value. In particular we may recall:

- the letter of Fr Luigi Ricceri "*Family News*" (1977), on the centenary of the Salesian Bulletin, about the importance of Salesian information;<sup>2</sup>

- the letter of Fr Egidio Viganò "*The challenge of the media*" (1981), with the section "diffusion of Salesian information";<sup>3</sup>

- the guidelines of the General Councillor Fr Giovanni Raineri (1981) who presented the thinking and practice of Don Bosco as terms of reference for a programme for Salesian publishing;<sup>4</sup>

- the intervention by Fr Juan E. Vecchi to the Directors of the Salesian Bulletin (1998), with guidelines to be applied to publishing in a wider sense especially regarding information;<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AGC 387, pp. 69, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. AGC 287, pp. 3-33.

<sup>3</sup> AGC 302, pp. 25-28.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. AGC 302, pp. 32-51.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. AGC 366, pp. 98-117.

– the letter of Fr Vecchi “*Communication in the Salesian mission*” (1999), in particular what refers to the tasks of the Provinces;<sup>6</sup>

– the norms and guidelines scattered through the Constitutions and Regulations, in the documents of General Chapters, in the Acts of the General Council, in the official publications of the Department for Social Communication<sup>7</sup> and others to be found in the extensive experience of the Provinces.

Basing ourselves on these, we now give rather more emphasis to the relaunching of a publishing enterprise that is more focused, professional and organised, which better responds to the current needs of the young and ordinary people in the world of today, and which offers a Salesian viewpoint that is coherent and shared, in pluralistic and varied situations.

## 1. References and basic criteria for Salesian publishing

Salesian publishing is an uptodate response to the requirements of the Salesian mission for the education and evangelisation of youth, giving special attention to the poor and ordinary people. It is not only a question of providing good messages. It is necessary to know in what context to develop our mission in order to dialogue and interact with and have a significant impact on society.

This requires taking up a conscious stance in the inter-related contexts of culture, the Church and the Congregation:

• ***In the society and culture of today:*** perceiving the opportunities and the challenges of the market place in the “information society,” and the signs of the times expressed in the current world agenda and interests – not in a superficial sense of

<sup>6</sup> AGC 370, pp. 37-41.

<sup>7</sup> A recent manual from the Department collects together all the basic and current guidelines regarding communication. Hence, also regarding information and publishing in general. Cf. Department for SC, “*Salesian Social Communication System*”, nn. 95-122. Rome: SDB Publishers, 2005.

what is fashionable but in terms of fundamental questions that matter, of mankind's needs, of questions about meaning, relevance and faith. On the one hand it is a question of responding to the competition by providing specifically chosen and original publications that will have an impact on society, be of service to it, and in collaboration with others who are working to change the world situation. On the other hand it is necessary to ensure that reflections and Gospel values correspond to the real world of those addressed avoiding any semblance of dogmatism and indoctrination from on high.

• ***In the Church of today:*** taking up a stance within it, in communion with the Pope, with the local Church, with consecrated life, with the ecumenical movement, with inter-religious dialogue, conscious of the Church in the present time and of the need for evangelisation that is in harmony with the guidelines, the reflections and the procedures emanating from Vatican Council II and the Bishops' Conferences.

• ***In the Congregation and Salesian Family of today:*** taking into consideration the Salesian context in which we are living today, in harmony with the ongoing life of the Congregation and the Salesian Family, with the basic criteria of Salesian youth ministry, with the recommendations of the General Chapters – in particular the more recent ones, and with the subsequent programming of the Rector Major and his Council – and of Provincial Chapters, with the reflections and updated critical studies of spirituality, pedagogy and Salesian history.

Within these parametres the policy of Social Communication of the Salesian Congregation is based on **criteria** that distinguish the specific nature of Salesian activity and which indicate the priorities and the way of acting in this area, particularly in publishing, such as: the criterion of incarnation, the criterion of witness and vocation, the criterion of evangeliser and educator, the criterion of the preventive system, the ethical and professional criterion, the interdisciplinary approach criterion, the

criterion of a system. The characteristic Salesian elements of these criteria are presented in the handbook “*Salesian Social Communication System*” (SSCS) from the Department of Social Communication (cf. nn. 50-57).

## 2. Working guidelines for the qualified promotion of Salesian publishing

The new context of an “information society,” that is globalised and interconnected, in which “the communications media have acquired such importance as to be the principal means of guidance and inspiration for many people in their personal, familial, and social behaviour,” requires a courageous commitment to the qualification and development of Salesian publishing activity. The adjective courageous is meant to refer to the encouragement provided by the Apostolic Letter “*Rapid development*”: not to be afraid of new technologies, of being opposed by the world, of our own weaknesses and inadequacy, but also to make decisions and take up initiatives of promotion and qualification consistent with the urgency of the issue.<sup>8</sup>

I also offer some suggestions regarding some **initiatives to be given priority and some strategies** to be implemented. Since the needs of the Provinces are varied, each one will need to choose those which correspond best to their own needs and requirements.

**2.1 – Promoting the Salesian Social Communication System**, in harmony with a Provincial Plan for Social Communication (PPSC) integrated with the OPP, as the indispensable basis for the steady development of social communication and for the ongoing quality-control of Salesian publishing. The SSCS sets out to implement, support and efficiently exploit to the full the

<sup>8</sup> cf. Apostolic Letter “*Rapid development*” of John Paul II, 2005 nn. 3 and 14.

processes of animation, formation, information and production that make the activity of Social Communication an effective contribution to the Salesian mission. On this account it is essential to implement what General Chapters have requested:

- ensure that the Delegate for Social Communication has the means to carry out his mission of promoting – in the name of the Provincial - Social Communication, and “assist the individual communities in promoting various communication activities, offer his services to the various sectors of activity and maintain relations with local, ecclesiastical and civil organisations”.<sup>9</sup>
- make the Social Communication team effective in providing assessments, research, studies, guidelines and handbooks for constant updating, and the Provincial and local commissions effective in planning and managing activities.<sup>10</sup>

**2.2 – Training Salesian and lay writers and educommunicators,**<sup>11</sup> to operate in a professional manner in publishing centres, in press offices, in centres for the production and broadcasting of audiovisual, radio, and television programmes, and in educational and pastoral institutions.

<sup>9</sup> GC23, 259.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. GC24, 136b.

<sup>11</sup> Educommunication facilitates the production and the diffusion of information in the educational context, promotes interaction in the teaching/learning process, and provides the theoretical and methodological terms of reference necessary for the analysis of cultural products. Educommunication also sets out to make the educative community interact with the mass media, ensuring the formation of people who are creative and attentive to a democratic use of the media to everyone's benefit. The Educommunicator can be identified with the person of the cultural animator in the specific area of the pastoral work of the Church, an new figure whose activity “on the one hand ought to gradually coincide with that of those who are already fully engaged in such pastoral work helping them to operate better within the new socio-cultural context dominated by the media; and on the other open the way to new pastoral activities within the field of communication and culture, through which to reach out to those people and situations on the fringes of, if not entirely untouched by the life of the Church and its mission” (Italian Bishops' Conference. *Comunicazione e Missione: Direttorio sulla CS nella missione della Chiesa*. Roma, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004. n. 121).



**2.3 – Improve the quality of information and exploit to the full channels of information and dialogue** within but especially outside the Congregation and the Salesian Family. The purpose of Salesian information is to foster communion and the sense of belonging, the education and the evangelisation of the young, the developing of an awareness and mobilisation on behalf of the mission of Don Bosco, and the projection of an appropriate image of the Congregation. To increase and improve the quality of information it is suggested that the following should be given priority, the responsibility for which rests with those in charge of the Social Communication Sector together with their respective teams:

- *Periodically assess the quality of the information produced at world, provincial and local level, to evaluate its relevance and effectiveness* in reference to the objectives proposed, to the requirements of those it is aimed at, to the parameters of Culture, the Church and the Congregation;
- *Keep up to date a data base* which facilitates a good and well-documented knowledge of the world of youth, and communicate this information to society so as to create public opinion and the formation of an attitude that leads to policies and action on behalf of youth;
- *Improve the quality of the ANS Agency making it more professional introducing and developing it in all the Provinces.* ANS, registered as a periodical (1973), from 1992 became an agency with the name “Agenzia Internazionale Salesiana di Informazione”. The Agency is coordinated by the SC Department, with a central editorial office in Rome and a network of correspondents in all the Provinces. In fact, in its conception the Agency is intended to function in a decentralised manner based on two structures in mutual communication, and substantially they carry out the same functions, although at different levels.. As well as improving the professional approach of the central structure it is necessary to further develop the structure in the Provinces, within the parameters of the Salesian Social Communication System.

- Set up a *Press Office* in all the Provinces as an internal service to the ANS Agency, involving the participation of professionals. Following the lines of the Provincial Plan this office is responsible for maintaining contact with news agencies, the media and the public at large, making itself the spokesperson for concerns about youth and educational issues, and for the safeguarding of the image of the Congregation and of Salesian activities;
- Continue the process of relaunching the *Salesian Bulletin*, which has already produced a considerable improvement in quality and circulation, for which the programme for this six year period envisages some structural and development projects, with a specific contribution on the part of the Department for Social Communication;
- Make the *WEB-sites* places for information, formation, sharing, at the service of the animation and government plan, as sources of information about the Salesian charism and as a means for mobilising society in the cause of youth.

**2.4 – Develop and improve the quality of the production** of books, magazines, radio and television programme, audiovisual material, **and of the businesses** concerned with Social Communication, at the service of the educative-pastoral mission for the young. To this end it is suggested that the following should be given priority, and that they should be constantly monitored by those responsible for the businesses and those responsible for the Social Communication sector with their respective teams:

- *Periodically assess the quality of what is produced and evaluate its relevance and effectiveness* with regard to the needs of the target groups, educative-pastoral objectives and the parametres of Culture, the Church and the Congregation;
- *Plan activities for the ongoing professional and Salesian development and qualification of the businesses*, fostering links and collaboration among them within the parametres of the policy of the Congregation in this regard, and especially:

- The Provincial and his council in conformity with what Reg. 31 sets out, takes practical and systematic steps for the promotion of Social Communication businesses, their integration in the OPP and their administrative and management continuity. It should not be forgotten that the opening or closing of a new work requires the authorisation of the Rector Major with his Council (C. 165, § 5). The Provincial Plan should provide for the choice of Salesian and lay personnel and their appropriate formation, so as to ensure a professional approach consistent with the Salesian charism in these works;
- The Provincial Delegate for Social Communication should assist and promote synergy among the businesses, while respecting business practices and areas of competence. He should do so in the name of the Provincial and his Council, whom he will keep fully informed and from whom he will receive the necessary guidance.

## Conclusion

Relaunching Salesian publishing of a high quality is one way of implementing Don Bosco's vision "always at the vanguard of progress", in a context in which the media are continuing to have more impact and consequently more opportunities in the educational and pastoral field. The letter of Fr Pascual Chávez "*With the courage of Don Bosco on the new frontiers of social communication*" (AGC 390) represents a programme for us also in this.

Not only those who have the special responsibility for the animation and government of the Provinces and communities and activities are called upon to be involved, but all Salesians so that they might make their contribution to Salesian publishing as writers, as publishers, as monitors of the quality of Salesian communication, as enthusiastic promoters and distributors of Salesian material.

The implementation of these guidelines requires a demanding and dedicated effort. Our appreciation of the value of this mission will become more convinced as a result of practical action. And by recalling Don Bosco, "I therefore beg and urge you not to neglect this most important part of our mission".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Don Bosco, Circular Letter on the Spreading of Good Books, 19 March 1885.

## ANTICIPATION OF PERPETUAL PROFESSION

### Interpretation and integration of the *Ratio* and the *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment*

Fr Francesco CEREDA

*General Councillor for Formation*

In implementing the *Ratio* and the *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* some Provinces have found difficulty in interpreting the texts which speak about the anticipation of perpetual profession.

#### 1. Text of the *Ratio* and of *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment*

The *Ratio* (FSDB) at number 511 states: «The perpetual profession may be made at the expiry of the time of temporary profession<sup>1</sup> or up to three months earlier<sup>2</sup>. This last possibility requires that there be a just cause, to be assessed by the Provincial with his Council ».

In *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* at number 147 it states: «According to our Constitutions<sup>3</sup>, the time of trial for us is normally six years. In special cases and for a just cause recognized as such by the Provincial and his Council, perpetual profession can be anticipated.»

In the *Ratio* it speaks of anticipating perpetual profession up to three months earlier than the expiry of six years of temporary profession; in *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* there is no distinction made between anticipating up to three months or more than three months before the expiry of the six years of temporary profession. The two texts need to be at least harmonised.

<sup>1</sup> Cfr can. 657 § 1; C 117.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr can. 657 § 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr C 117.

## **2. Interpretation of the *Ratio* and of *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment***

### *2.1 Anticipation of perpetual profession up to three months before expiry*

For a correct interpretation of the *Ratio* and the *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* it is opportune to refer to the Code of Canon Law and to our proper Law.

For the validity of perpetual profession the *Code of Canon Law* in can. 658 requires in addition to having completed the 21<sup>st</sup> year of age, the “previous temporary profession for at least three years.” In the same canon there is reference to the provision of can. 657 §3, in which it is said that “perpetual profession can for a just reason be anticipated but not by more than three months.” Therefore the concession is granted to Superiors of Institutes to anticipate perpetual profession for a just reason up to three months, with respect to the three years of temporary vows established by can. 658. The proper law of each Instituto can, obviously, determine, the manner and the competence with regard to this anticipation. It is clear that for exceptions to the norms of the Code, that is for greater anticipation, the authorisation of the Apostolic See will be necessary.

Considering *proper Salesian law*, in our Constitutions in article 117 it is laid down that “*perpetual profession takes place ordinarily six years after the first profession.*” Therefore our own criterion for validity is added to that established by universal law for admission to perpetual profession; previous temporary profession of at least six years is ordinarily required. The same article 117 of the Constitutions then indicates the possibility of prolonging this period of temporary profession, but not beyond nine years, and gives the Provincial competence for this prolongation, making specific in this way, the “competent Superior” in can. 657 §2. *Nothing is said in our Constitutions nor in the General Regulations about a possible anticipation of admission to perpetual profession.*

The possibility of an anticipation of perpetual profession was taken into consideration in the *Ratio*, which as the “directory” of formation comes within the ambit of proper law. At n. 511 of the *Ratio* the possibility is admitted of an *anticipation of up to three months* with respect to the expiry of the years of temporary profession. The “three months” of anticipation certainly refer to the three months can. 657 §3, speaks about but, as distinct from the general norm of the Code, for us the three months of anticipation *are to be applied within the context of our proper law*, that is they refer to the ordinary expiry established by the Salesian Constitutions, that is six years.

The *Ratio* retains the motivation of the *just reason* indicated by the universal law and gives to the Provincial with his Council competence to evaluate such a just reason and therefore the possibility of permitting the anticipation up to three months.

The question was taken up in *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* at n. 147; but whereas the anticipation for a just cause is still left to the judgement of the Provincial and his Council, here no distinction is made between anticipation of perpetual profession “up to three months” or “beyond three months”.

It should be observed that adding the expression “up to three months” to number 147 of *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment*, the directive remains clear and is in harmony with number 511 of the *Ratio*.

## 2.2. *Anticipation of perpetual profession beyond three months*

What has so far been considered comes under the “ordinary” praxis sanctioned by the Constitutions and the *Ratio* and *Criteria and norms*: temporary profession ordinarily for six years, with the possibility of anticipation “up to three months” for a just cause, in the judgement of the Provincial with his Council.

However, there can be extraordinary cases, “exceptional,” in which there are serious reasons to request an anticipation of perpetual profession beyond three months, in respect of the ordinary expiry of six years.

It is a question of establishing who is competent to judge the "extraordinary nature" and to permit the anticipation of perpetual profession beyond three months, after a previous temporary profession of at least three years according to the Code of Canon Law.

In this regard, excluding the disciplinary nature of article 117 of the Constitutions – in which case article 193 of the Constitutions could be applied – there is no doubt that when the Constitutions do not specify differently, "the Rector Major with his Council," "as well as the General Chapter", can give a practical decision in the interpretation of the Constitutions. (cf. C. 192). In this case, since in the *Ratio* 511 competence has been given to the Provincial to anticipate perpetual profession only up to three months, it follows that *the judgement of cases of anticipation beyond three months is reserved to the Rector Major with his Council*. In fact it is a question of an exceptional concession, for which our proper law has not established specific norms, and which therefore remains in the competence of the Rector Major with his Council.

On the basis of these observations therefore the prescriptions of the *Ratio* and the *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* can be integrated.

### **3. Integration of the *Ratio* n. 511 and of *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* n. 147**

Number 511 of the *Ratio* will be formulated in this way: «The perpetual profession may be made at the expiry of the time of temporary profession<sup>1</sup> or up to three months earlier<sup>2</sup>. This last possibility requires that there be a just cause, to be assessed by the Provincial with his Council. *In the exceptional case of anticipating perpetual profession beyond three months, before the expiry of the six years of temporary profession, the request should be addressed to the Rector Major*».

<sup>1</sup> Cfr can. 657 § 1; C 117.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr can. 657 § 3.



Number 147 of *Criteria and norms for Salesian vocation discernment* will be formulated in this way: «According to our Constitutions<sup>3</sup>, the time of trial for us is normally six years. In special cases and for a just cause recognized as such by the Provincial and his Council, perpetual profession can be anticipated *up to three months*. *To anticipate perpetual profession in exceptional cases by a period beyond three months, before the expiry of the six years of temporary profession, the request should be addressed to the Rector Major.*»

#### **4. Request to the Rector Major to anticipate perpetual profession beyond three months**

In order to anticipate perpetual profession beyond three months, the candidate will submit, through his Provincial, a written request to the Rector Major in which he will present the reasons for his request. The Provincial will send a letter of his own with the confrere's request in which he will give his favourable opinion and the consent of his Council, regarding both the acceptability of the reasons given and the moral certainty of the maturity in the spiritual life attained by the candidate.

The request to anticipate should be presented before preparation for perpetual profession, which begins "about a year before the expiry of his profession" (FSDB 515).

In the case of anticipation by more than three months the practice of the Rector Major is to permit such anticipation only in exceptional cases.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr C 117.

### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

#### – *March 2005*

The Rector Major began the month of March in *India*, where he had arrived on Thursday 24 February on a visit to the Provinces of Kolkata, Dimapur and Guwahati. In each of these he was welcomed, as all previous Successors of Don Bosco, with great signs of affection and joy. He met the confreres, the Salesian Family and the young people in our works, and visited some communities. On Monday 28 February in the evening, in New Delhi he presided at the opening Mass for the jubilee celebrations marking the *Centenary of the presence of the Salesians in India*. In his homily he praised and thanked God for all the graces with which he had blessed the Salesian presence in India, where Don Bosco's charism has developed in an extraordinary way, and he also thanked all those who had made the fulfilment of Don Bosco's dream possible. He then spoke about the challenges to our life and educational and pastoral mission, before describing his dream for the future of Salesian India.

Between 1 and 5 March in the Provincial House in Delhi, the *Team Visit* to the *South Asia Region* took place with a morning of relaxation and in the evening a great Celebration for the official opening of the Centenary of the presence of the Salesians in India.

On Sunday 6, accompanied by the Councillors taking part in the Team Visit and his private secretary, Fr Chávez left for Thailand. Welcomed at the airport by the Provincial he went at once to Hua Hin, where between Monday 7 and Friday 11 the *Team Visit* to the *East Asia-Oceania Region* took place. Here too there was a rest day.

At the end of this Team Visit the Rector Major returned to Rome, where he arrived at midday on Saturday 12 March. He at once began work in his office and the following day 13 March, he received some of the professors from the UPS.

On the evening of 14, he began the *intermediate meeting of the Council* which was to continue until Wednesday 23 March, with two sessions each day. During these

days the Rector Major had a meeting at the Congregation for Consecrated Life, he received the Councillors, confreres from the Generalate, from the UPS, and others who came to see him.

On Saturday 19 he was at San Benigno Canavese, where he had a meeting with more than 200 confreres from the Circumscription of Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta, for the Feast of St Joseph, in which he presented the topic *The Salesian Brother: a consecrated lay man - a lay consecrated person*". He presided at Mass in the abbey and returned to Rome in the evening.

On Sunday 20 the Rector Major presided at the Palm Sunday celebration; during the day he had a series of meetings. The following day in mid morning accompanied by the Economist General Fr Gianni Mazzali, he went to the Vatican for a meeting with the Secretary of State, Card. Angelo Sodano.

On Wednesday 23 he presided at Mass for the end of the intermediate session of the General Council, which had its final meeting later in the morning. For the rest of the day Fr Chávez was kept very busy with various engagements. After evening prayer he gave the "Good Night" to the confreres of the Generalate community.

In the morning of Holy Thursday the Rector Major gave the concluding conference to a group of confreres from the UPS and the Generalate who had been making their annual retreat. In the evening he presided at the Mass of the Last Supper.

On Good Friday he received some confreres from the Generalate and the following day he went to visit the Caserta community. In the evening he presided at the Easter Vigil at the Generalate where he also spent Easter Sunday. The following morning he left for Munich in Bavaria, where he preached the retreat to the Provincial Councils and Rectors of the Austrian and German Provinces (AUS, GEK and GEM).

#### – April 2005

After the retreat had finished at midday on Friday 1 April, in the evening Fr Chávez returned to Rome. Here on Saturday 2 he presided at Mass on the third anniversary of his election as Rector Major, with the General Councillors still present, the Community of the Generalate and the confreres and lay collaborators who had come to attend a Seminar on a planning mentality and the *Development Office*. During the day he

worked in his office, he received several confreres who came to greet him and then in the evening he left for the Team Visits of the two Provincial Conferences of the America South Cone Region. The death of the Holy Father John Paul II happened while he was travelling.

On Sunday 3 April at midday he arrived in Brasilia, where he was welcomed by the Provincial of Belo Horizonte. In the evening he had a meeting with confreres from the Planalto area, then with youngsters and members of the Salesian Family and presided at Mass in the Don Bosco Sanctuary.

Between 4 and 7 April the *Team Visit* to the Salesian Provincial Conference of Brazil (CISBRASIL) took place in the "Israel Piñeiro" Convention Centre. In addition to presiding at the concelebrations and the meetings of the assembly he always gave the "Good Night" and he also met all the Provincial Councils of CISBRASIL. The Visit ended on Thursday 7 April early in the afternoon with a closing address and Mass in the parish of St John Bosco at Nucleo Bandeirantes, which was followed by supper.

Early on the morning of 8 April accompanied by his secretary, by Fr Tarcisio Scaramussa and the

Provincial, the Rector Major left for Belo Horizonte. There he had a full day of meetings at Confins, with the confreres from the area of Minas Gerais; he presided at Mass for the whole Salesian Family, and in the evening continued his journey to Rio de Janeiro. After arriving at the airport he went to Niteroi, the first Salesian foundation in Brazil.

On Saturday 9 April Fr Chávez celebrated Mass with the Niteroi community and then had a meeting with the educative communities and the Salesian Family from Litorale. Everyone then went up the hill to the beautiful monument of Mary Help of Christians, to offer her a sign of thanksgiving. Afterwards he met the confreres from the Province working in that area. After dinner he had a quick trip over Rio de Janeiro in a helicopter which then took him to the airport where the Rector Major, Fr Scaramussa and Fr Juan José Bartolomé took the plane to Buenos Aires. Waiting for them there was the Provincial of Buenos Aires and some other confreres. They then went straight to San Miguel, to the FMA retreat house, location of the *Team Visit* to the Provincial Conference of the South.

This took place between Sunday morning 10 and Wednesday after-

noon 13. The Rector Major's programme was similar to that in Brasilia. Here too he met individually the Provincial Councils of the Provinces in *CISUR*. The Team Visit ended with a closing address, Mass in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Almagro in which all the Salesian Family took part and with supper.

Thursday 14 April, early in the morning, accompanied by the Provincial of Uruguay and Fr Bartolomé, Fr Chávez travelled to Montevideo, where he was kept very busy beginning with a meeting with the President of the Republic, Tabaré Ramón Vázquez Rosa, a former oratorian, in Government House. Afterwards he went to visit the Casa Mamma Margherita community for elderly and sick confreres and greeted them. In the evening he went to the "Talleres Don Bosco," where he met the confreres of the community, collaborators and a group of boarders; he also went to see the church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians recently restored, which is part of the John XXIII House, and the Social Work in Tacurú. This was followed by a meeting with the confreres of the Province in the Collegio Pio at Villa Colón, cradle of Salesian Work in Uruguay and Brazil and

Paraguay. After giving a conference followed by open discussion, the Rector Major presided at Mass in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians.

On Friday 15 he continued his visit of the Province with a day spent in various meetings: with the Management Teams, Parish Councils, and those in charge of the Social Works of the Province, in the Maturana College, for whom Fr Chávez gave a conference on Don Bosco's way of animating and governing; afterwards with all the confreres of the formation houses in the Province; with the FMA, in their Provincial House, which has the distinction of being the first House of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in America. In the evening he gave a press conference, presided at Mass for all the Salesian Family, held a meeting with young people who had come from all the SDB and FMA houses in Uruguay, and ended the day with supper at which the Salesian Archbishop of Montevideo, Mgr. Giuseppe Cotugno, and the Papal Nuncio were present.

The following day he celebrated Mass in the Provincial House with the Provincial Advisory Body of the Salesian Family. Afterwards he was taken to the airport to begin his return journey to Rome.

Having arrived home at midday on Monday 18, he immediately began working in his office and receiving confreres. On Tuesday 19 in the afternoon with the Councillors present in the house and other confreres he watched on television the announcement of the election of the new Pope Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, Benedict XVI.

He following day he continued working in his office, received confreres and bishops and had a meeting with the managers of a firm interested in reconstruction work in the area of Sri Lanka damaged by the tsunami.

On Thursday 21 he received visits from a Salesian bishop and some confreres and had a Council meeting. On Friday and Saturday he worked in the office and received a Provincial and some confreres.

On Sunday 24 April he took part in the Mass inaugurating the Pontificate of Benedict XVI and afterwards had dinner in the Poliglotta community in the Vatican with three of the Salesian Cardinals, three other Bishops and the confreres of the community.

On Tuesday 26 he received Mrs Caridad del Cobre Diego, member of the Council of State of Cuba,

who was accompanied by the Cuban Ambassador to the Holy See.

The following day accompanied by the Vicar, Fr Chávez went to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

On Thursday 28 in the morning he received a number of confreres and in the afternoon he met a group of SDB and FMA who were following a formation course for formation personnel at the UPS.

On Saturday evening he left for the Team Visit to the German-speaking area of the North Europe Region in Vienna.

#### – May 2005

Between 1 and 3 May the Rector Major presided at the *Team Visit* to the German-speaking Provinces in Europe: *AUS – GEK – GEM*, at the end of which he returned to the Generalate.

Between 4 and 6 he was at home working in his office receiving confreres and visitors.

On Saturday 7 May he went to the UPS to preside at the celebration marking the *centenary of the foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*.

The following day he took part in the meeting of the SYM of the

SDB and the FMA in the Lazio Region, at Frascati, on the occasion of the centenary of the death of Zeffirino Namuncurà. He met the young people and presided at Mass.

On Monday 9 he received the UPS authorities, Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi, Superior of the Vice Province and Fr Mario Toso, Rector Magnificus of the University. In the evening he went to Gerini, where he greeted the community of the Teresa Gerini Work and had a meeting with the formation community.

On Tuesday 10 he worked in the office and in the evening presided a Mass for the conclusion of the annual retreat for the FMA local Superiors from Piedmont - Valle d'Aosta.

Between Wednesday 11 and Monday 16 May Fr Chávez visited the *Córdoba Province, Spagna, on the occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary*. He began his visit in Tenerife, visiting the two communities that of La Cuesta and that of Orotava. He celebrated Mass in both places, in the first four Cooperators made their promise and at the second all the Salesian Family and all the confreres working in the Canary Isles were present. From Tenerife he went to Seville, where he greeted the SDB and FMA Provincials

and all the confreres in Seville. On Friday 13 most of his engagements were in the St Francis of Sales College in Córdoba: greeting the elderly and sick confreres, meeting those attending a Provincial Salesian Youth Festival, holding a meeting of Rectors and Mass. A meeting with the Provincial Council was held in the Provincial House. On Saturday 14 the Jubilee and the Provincial Community Feastday were celebrated also in the premises of the St Francis of Sales College with Mass, a commemorative event, a meeting with the confreres, the Provincial Assembly of the Salesian Cooperators and a meeting with the young people of the SYM.

On Sunday 15, the Feast of Pentecost, after a visit to Córdoba Cathedral, the celebrations were transferred to Granada. After lunch at the novitiate, there was a meeting with the young people of the SYM, with confreres in initial formation and in the quinquennium, while Mass and supper were held in St John Bosco College.

On Monday morning 16, Fr Chávez spoke to the novitiate community and then immediately after breakfast left for Pozoblanco. Here he greeted the educative community of the school and of the technical training centre, had

lunch with representatives of the Salesian Family, gave several interviews, took part in the commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the work, went to the Town Hall, met two groups of families of Spanish martyrs, celebrated Mass for the first day of the novena of Mary Help of Christians and after supper returned to Córdoba.

On Tuesday 17 May he returned to Rome, arriving in the evening.

On Wednesday he worked in the office and received some confreres and a Salesian Bishop from Brazil. The following day was one very full of meetings, and then in the evening he preached at the monthly day of recollection for the community of the Generalate and presided at the Mass.

On Friday 20 May he was in the Vatican for a meeting of the "Group of 16", representatives of the Executive Councils of the USG and UISG, with the Congregation for Consecrated Life.

On Saturday 21 he worked in the office, presided at a meeting of a small group of the Council for the approval of Rectors from various Provinces and received some confreres.

On Sunday 22, early in the morning the Rector Major ac-

companied by Fr Juan José Bartolomé, left for Venice, where he was welcomed by the Provincial Fr Claudio Filippin. After a short visit to the Island of Torcello, they had lunch with the community of Venezia-Castello, and then went on to Pordenone. Here Fr Chávez gave a conference to the Rectors and the Provincial Councillors of the INE Province, and after supper, at which the Bishop of the diocese, Mgr. Ovidio Paletto was present, went to the Duomo to take part in the procession of Mary Help of Christians. At the end of the procession, in the courtyard of the Don Bosco College, Fr Chávez gave the "Good Night" to those present.

The following day in the morning he said Mass for the youngsters of the middle and high school. Afterwards he met the students of the Sixth Forms of the Don Bosco College in Pordenone and of St Francis of Sales in Tolmezzo. In the afternoon he went to the Pordenone City Hall to receive the honorary citizenship awarded to the Work of Don Bosco on the eightieth anniversary of the presence of the Salesians there. Some hours later in the Don Bosco Theatre he attended a short performance of a play



presented by the Past Pupils, and took part in a round table discussion on "Culture, Education and Faith," with the journalist Alessandra Borghese.

Very early on the morning of 24 May the Rector Major left by car for Turin for the celebration of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians. At lunch he met and greeted the Archbishop of Turin Cardinal Severino Paletto, and his auxiliary bishops. In the afternoon he went the Provincial House of the FMA and greeted Mother Antonia Colomba, the Provincial and a large number of Sisters, to whom he spoke about the religious life starting from the last International Congress on Religious Life. Afterwards he presided at Mass for the Salesian Family in the Basilica and took part in the procession.

On Wednesday 25, Fr Chávez took part in celebrations for the *centenary of the Valsalice Sixth Form College*. He met the students from the lower school and the sixth formers. He gave a short talk to the first group and answered questions from the second. He then said a few words to the Staff. Before lunch he visited the "Andrea Beltrami" community, where he greeted all the elderly and sick confreres and those

caring for them. Afterwards he returned to Valdocco and then paid a visit to the community at Caselette.

Between 26 and 28 May the Rector Major, with Fr Antonio Domenech, Fr Tarcisio Scaramussa, and Fr Albert Van Hecke, presided at the *Team Visit* for the Provinces of the Atlantic area of the North Europe Region (*BEN, GBR, IRL/Malta, OLA*), which took place at Colle Don Bosco.

After the final session and the concluding supper of the Team Visit, Fr Chávez returned to Valdocco with the other Councillors and Fr to attend a polyphonic concert by the Interuniversity Choir from Rome, conducted by Fr Massimo Palombella, to celebrate the completion of the first stage of the restoration work on the Basilica. The concert concluded with the "Good Night" of the Rector Major.

On 29, Corpus Christi Sunday, the Rector Major returned home during the morning. He there greeted the Advisory Body of the Salesian Family.

He ended the month and this period with office work, meetings with some confreres and by taking part with the Holy Father in the prayers in the Vatican Gardens.

## 4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

### The Vicar of the Rector Major

After the end of the winter session of the General Council, the Vicar of the Rector Major Fr Adriano Bregolin went to *India* to take part in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Past Pupils of Asia and Australia. On his way he stopped off at Mumbai on 29 January. On 30 he visited the Technical School in Bombay-Kurla and the school and social work centre at Bombay-Andheri. The same day he met the Salesian Family at the Provincial House.

On 31 January, Feast of Don Bosco, he went to visit Bombay-Borivli Bosco Boys' Home (a hostel for street boys and a vocational training centre) and Bombay-Don Bosco Borivli (vocational school - elementary, middle and high schools for day boys and boarders - parish). In the evening he celebrated a solemn Mass in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians.

On 1st February he continued his visit to the Sanctuary, the Development Office, the Social Communications Centre and then to Bombay - Shelter Don Bosco, Bombay - Wadala East (parish) and

Bombay - Wadala (parish - elementary, middle, and high schools).

In the afternoon of the same day he went on to Hyderabad, to the Provincial House. He visited the parish and the Youth Centre in Hyderabad-St Teresa. The following day was spent at the Navajeevan - Don Bosco (Centre for youngsters in difficulty) and he met the novices at Manoharabad. On 3 February he was in the Post-novitiate at Karunapuram.

Leaving Hyderabad on 4 February, the next stage took him to Calcutta where between 4 and 6 of February he took part in the *Congress of the Past Pupils of Asia and Australia*. In his free time he was able to visit some of the houses in the Province: Calcutta-Ashalayam (Centre for street boys), Auxilium Parish (where he presided at the perpetual profession of two confreres), Calcutta-Liluah (school and vocational training centre), Kalyani (Teacher Training Centre for Brothers), Bandel (Sanctuary, middle and high schools and aspirantate).

Leaving Calcutta, on 7 he went to Bangalore where he visited Lourdu nagara, Visvadeep (Catechetical Centre and Youth Ministry Centre) and Kristu Jyoti College, where he met the students of Theology and the staff. He also

made a fraternal visit to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the Provincial House of Avalahalli. The following day he inaugurated the "Bosco Institute of Social Sciences"; he visited the Bosco Nilaya (Centre for street boys); he blessed the foundations of a new Centre for street boys and then went to the National Centre for Ongoing Formation at Bangalore - Don Bosco Yuva Prachodini.

On 9 February he went to Aluva where he met the postnovices.

Having returned to Italy he took part in the *World Advisory Body of the Cooperators*, held at the Pisana, for the work of revision on the "Regulations for Apostolic Life". Afterwards on 17 he began the *Canonical Visitation to the Blessed Michael Rua Community of the Generalate*.

Between 3 and 6 March he was in Sicily, at Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto, for a Retreat for the Salesian Family, which concluded with the celebrations of the Past Pupils for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Work.

On 13 March he was in Verona at the Congress of the Past Pupils of the Don Bosco Institute.

Between 14 and 23 March he took part in the *Intermediate Meeting* of the General Council.

On 21 April he left for *Poland*. Passing through Warsaw where he went to the Provincial House, he went on to the Province of Piła. His visit began in the houses in Stettino, then in the novitiate at Swobniza and afterwards in the Piła Provincial House. Here in the parish church entrusted to the Salesians, on 23 there was a solemn celebration for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Province, followed by a friendly gathering in the St John Bosco School.

Having returned to Italy, on 25 April he took part in the Salesian Family Feast day in the Adriatic Province at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Loreto.

On 29 April he left for *Spain*. After a short stop in Madrid at the Don Bosco House of Atocha, on 30 he headed for Bilbao. Here he had a meeting with representatives of the Salesian Family at the Provincial House, then went to visit the house of Bilbao-Deusto and then that of Azkoitia. In the evening he reached Santander where on Sunday 1st May he presided at a Mass for the conclusion of the *National Congress of ADMA*. On Monday 2 May he had a meeting with the Rectors of the Province and in the afternoon at Burgos the Spanish postnovices, also calling in to visit

the "St Ignatius of Loyola" Polytechnic.

On 3 May the Vicar went from Spain to *Colombia*. He visited some of the works of the Medellín Province: Provincial Centre, Postnovitiate, Novitiate at Rionegro, and had a meeting with a large representative group of the Salesian Family in the Province. The following day in Bogotá he had a meeting with the confreres in formation from the two Provinces in Colombia. Then he went to Agua de Dios, and on 7 May he took part in the celebrations for the *Centenary of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts*, the Congregation founded by Fr Luigi Variara. On this occasion he presided at the Mass for all the religious sisters who had come for the solemn event.

The next stop was Lima in *Perù*. He arrived on 8 May and visited some houses: Provincial Centre, Breña, Rimac. The following day he met the Postnovices at Magdalena del Mar, the Novices at the Provincial Centre and took part in a Provincial Council meeting.

After having arrived back in Rome on 10 May, on 12 he left for the *Democratic Republic of the Congo*. First he visited the works in Kinshasa: Kingabwa, Masina, and Lukunga. Here he had a

meeting with a large number of people representing the groups of the Salesian Family, especially the Past Pupils and Cooperators. He also made a fraternal visit to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Malueka and Sangamamba. On the 17 he had a meeting with a large group of Past Pupils from our Salesian works.

Going to Lubumbashi on 18, during the following days he had meetings there with the Rectors of the Province, the students of Theology, the postnovices and the novices from Kansebula and especially he was present at the solemn celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Technical School in Salama*, also in the city of Lubumbashi. He was also able to visit other places in the city, including the Cité des Jeunes, Bakanja-Magone, and Home Zanin.

Returning to Italy on 24, on 25 he went to Sicily, to Messina, the St Thomas Institute of Theology, where he took part in the inauguration of the new library and the new auditorium.

Between 25 and 27 at the Salesianum, he took part in the Assembly of the USG (Union of Superiors General). Between 27 and 29 he chaired the World Consultation Body of the Salesian Family.

On 2 June he went to Civitanova Marche for the Feast of Mary Help of Christians.

### **The Councillor for Formation**

On 29 January, when the session of the General Council had finished, the Councillor for Formation left for a visit to the formation communities in the Provinces of *Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany*. In Slovakia he visited the postnovitiate at Zilina, the novitiate at Poprad and the community of the students of theology in Bratislava; he also met the one in charge of the prenovitiate and the Provincial Formation Commission. In the Czech Republic he met the prenovices in Sebranice and the postnovices and students of theology at České Budejovice, as well as the Salesian professors in the Faculty of Theology; at Prague he met the core group of the new Provincial Formation Commission. Finally at Benediktbeuern, in Germany he met the ones in charge of various sectors, the professors, the Salesian students and the Provincial Formation Commission; he returned to Rome on 5 February.

Between 7 and 12 February the *Regional Coordinators of Formation* met together in the Generalsecretariate in Rome. Under the direction of the General Councillor and the collaborators of the Department, they examined the various procedures in operation in the formation field: regional coordination, provincial delegates, personal and community projects of life, the vocation of the Salesian Brother, vocational fragility; Salesian studies; the prenovitiate. In the second part of the meeting there was a reflection on the initial procedures: aspirantate, interprovincial collaboration, provincial formation plan, problem issues regarding the period of practical training, formation of formation personnel, personal guidance. At the end of the meeting a summary of the work done was made and the course of action for the next few years considered.

To complete the visits in Asia, on 13 February Fr Francesco Cereda went to *Japan*. At Chofu he met the prenovices, postnovices and the students of theology. He visited the aspirantate at Yokohama, the "Saint Anthony" seminary and the "Sophia" university in Tokyo and held a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission. He then went to *Korea*, where he

visited the novitiate at Daejon and the aspirantate and postnovitiate at Kwang-ju; here he also visited the Don Bosco school and the FMA novitiate. He went to the community in Seoul, where there were the students of theology, aspirants, prenovices and lay confreres. He also had a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission. The third stage of his journey took him to *Hong Kong*, where he met the postnovices and students of theology at Shaukeiwan; he visited the "Holy Spirit Seminary," which our students attend, and here he spoke with the academic authorities and with the bishop Mgr. Joseph Zen; there was also a visit to the aspirantate and a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission. Finally he went to India to the postnovitiate in *Dimapur*, the novitiate and the apostolic school in Zubza, and the house in Kohima; he returned a second time to the postnovitiate for Salesian Brothers at Kalyani.

Between 1 and 11 March the Councillor for Formation took part in the *Team Visit* to the South Asia Region at New Delhi and that to East Asia-Oceania at Hua Hin, Thailand, where he also held a meeting with the Provincials and Provincial Delegates for Forma-

tion of the Region; he then returned to Rome on 13 March for the intermediate session of the Council. Between 2 and 13 April he took part in the *Team Visit* to the two Conferences of the America South Cone Region: the CIS-BRASIL in Brasilia, where on 8 April there was also a meeting with the Formation Delegates of the conference; the CISUR in Buenos Aires.

Between 13 April and 5 May he began a journey that took him to the various Provinces in the American continent. Having arrived on 14 April at *Bahía Blanca* in Argentina, he held a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission, and met the aspirants, postnovices and formation staff at La Piedad. On 16 April he moved on to Asunción in *Paraguay*, where he visited the postnovices; then on to Ypacaraí for a meeting with the aspirants and postulants and then to Fernando de la Mora for a visit to the novitiate. After a visit to the Salesian study centre he met the prenovices and had the chance to speak to those in practical training and the Salesian Brothers in their period of specific formation; he examined the situation with the Provincial Formation Com-

mission. On 19 April he left for Montevideo in *Uruguay* to meet the students of theology, the postnovices and the PFC. Leaving Uruguay, he took a flight to *Chile*; there he met the novices at Macul; he visited the prenovitiate at Lo Cañas in Santiago and had a broad-ranging discussion with the students of theology from Chile, Perú, Paraguay and Santo Domingo; he also had the opportunity to visit the Faculty of Theology. He had a meeting with the postnovices and finally a meeting with the PFC.

On Sunday 24 April he arrived in *Mexico City*; after celebrating Mass in the Basilica of Guadalupe, he continued his journey to the aspirantate in Puebla and the novitiate in Coacalco; he met the prenovices the postnovices and the Provincial Formation Commission of MEM, and this was followed by a visit to the Salesian Institute of Higher Studies and the postnovitiate of MEG. On Wednesday 27 he left for Irapuatoto to see the aspirants and prenovices from MEG. On 28 April he arrived in *Guadalajara* for a meeting with the students of theology from MEM in Tlaquepaque; he visited the joint Mexican novitiate at Chulavista and then returned to

*Guadalajara* for a meeting with the community of the students of theology from MEG. The morning of Saturday 30 April was dedicated to a discussion with the PFC of Guadalajara and then he left for Los Angeles, U.S.A. In St. Joseph - Rosemead he held a meeting with the prenovices of the *West United States* and with a group of young priests from the same Province; then he arrived in San Francisco, where he met the Provincial and his Council. A full day was spent visiting the house in Berkeley; then he had a meeting with the PFC. He left for the *East United States* Province. In Orange he met the prenovices and the postnovices and their formation guides; he had the opportunity to visit the campus of the Catholic University of the city; he held a meeting with the members of the PFC. Then he went to the novitiate in New York and from there on 6 May he returned to Italy.

On 14 May he took part in the Feast of the Salesian Family in the postnovitiate in *Nave*. On 22 May he took part in the Feast of Mary Help of Christians at *Chiari*. Between 25 and 27 May in Rome he took part in the Assembly of the Superiors General.

## **The Councillor for Youth Ministry**

Following the concluding suggestions made by the Rector Major at the meeting of the Provincials of Europe, between 7 and 11 February the Department brought together in the Pisana the Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry to examine the situation of Salesian Youth Ministry in Europe and to plan for the future more effectively and with better collaboration.

José Luis Anguiano, collaborator of the Department for the sector concerning schools and vocational training, took part in a meeting of the school team for the Mesoamerica group of Provinces held in San Salvador between 25 February and 2 March. In the meantime the General Councillor was taking part in the *Team Visit* to the South Asia Region at New Delhi (India) between 1 and 5 March, and that to the East Asia - Oceania Region at Hua Hin (Thailand) between 7 and 11 March. The following day he held a meeting with the Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry in those Provinces.

On returning to Rome he took part in the *Intermediate Council meetings* between 14 and 23 March and after Holy Week, between 30 March and 2 April, he attended the

seminar on "Development Offices" organised by the Missions Department, the Economist General's Office and the Youth Ministry Department.

Between 9 and 15 April the General Councillor visited the Province of Croatia, and held various meetings with Rectors and parish priests, with the Provincial Youth Ministry Team and the Provincial Council.

In the meantime, Carlos Garulo was in Guatemala with the IUS team preparing the IUS Seminar for next year, and between 16 and 22 April took part in Brasilia in a Seminar for Tutors of the IUS Virtual Course for Salesian schools in America, and between 25 and 27 April in the executive committee of this same course.

On 25 April the Councillor gave a presentation of the Salesian Youth Movement to the Salesian Family of the Liguria-Tuscany Province on the Province Feastday. On 28 April he left for Poland to take part in the "Second European Congress of Senior Managers of Salesian Schools and Centres of Vocational Training", which was held at Kraków between 28 April and 3 May. On 1st May he left for Vienna, to take part in the *Team Visit* to the three German-speaking Provinces.



On 4 May he returned to Rome and on 10 May left again for a pastoral visit to the Central African Province (between 10 and 19 May), with various visits to communities and meetings with Provincial teams and youth leaders. Between 19 and 24 May he was in the Zambia Province for a similar pastoral visit.

At the same time between 5 and 15 May, Carlos Garulo organised in Tokyo the first meeting of the IUS group of Universities with studies in engineering.

Between 26 and 28 May the Councillor took part in the *Team Visit* to the Provinces in the Atlantic group of the North Europe Region. On 1st June he was in Brussels with the COMIDE team to organise forms of collaboration on the theme of the "Development Offices." Then on 4 and 5 June, the Department brought together at the Pisana the National Delegates for Youth Ministry in Europe to examine with them the draft of the collaboration plan, prepared according to the guidelines from the meeting of Provincial Delegates from Europe held in February.

Finally on 6 June in Messina the Councillor took part in a conference with the extended Council of the Rogationists on their planning programme.

## **The Councillor for Social Communication**

Between 27 and 29 January 2005 the Councillor for Social Communication took part in a meeting of Religious involved in multimedia production, organised by the Union of Superiors General (USG) in Rome, which drew up a **Declaration of intent**, to describe the convictions and criteria for common action.

In the months of April and May he took part in the Team Visits to the America South Cone Region (in Brasilia and Buenos Aires), and to the North Europe Region (in Vienna and Colle Don Bosco), and accompanied the Rector Major on his visit to the Belo Horizonte Province. During this same period, with the participation of the World Advisory Body, a document with guidelines for Salesian publishing was prepared, which is published in this issue of the AGC, taking its cue from the commemoration of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Don Bosco's circular on "Spreading good books."

In addition during this period the Department completed the publication of the handbook "*Salesian Social Communication Systems*" in five languages, and collaborated in the editorial work

for the first edition of "*Mission Animation Notes*", for the Missions Department. It also carried out a research project on an Italian-English Salesian Glossary/The-saurus available on the net through *sdb.org*, called, for the present, SELECT containing 1.000 terms drawn from official Salesian texts from 1965 until the present. It also provided a course on Social Communication at the Ratisbonne Institute. It opened on the site a new area "*Youth Spot*", a forum for all the participants in the groups in the reserved forum, pages with lists of some Salesian activities (volunteering, hospitality, vocations, etc.), and other technical resources to improve interaction. It has introduced on the ANS site an instrument for a continuous statistical analysis of the users and of the news production.

### **The Councillor for the Missions**

After the conclusion of the winter session of the Council, the Councillor for the Missions remained in Rome until the Feast of Don Bosco, for which he presided at Mass in the Villa Sora community at Frascati.

Leaving for Africa, between 1st and 8 February he visited Sudan, which forms part of the AFE Province. With him were Fr Pierluigi Zuffetti and a small team from the *Eurofilm Missioni Don Bosco*, for the purpose of visiting all the Salesian foundations in Sudan gathering material for an information dossier. Fr Alencherry went to visit the Salesian house in Wau in the south of the country which is under the control of the Khartoum government, where the Salesians have an extensive parish and a recently opened vocational training school. The progress of this foundation was considerably hampered by the civil war when some missionaries were expelled. Now that peace has returned there are signs of a revival.

El Obeid was the second Salesian place visited. Here there is a large vocational training school which enjoys the support of the local government. The community at El Obeid also takes care of some young refugees from the Darfur region, where even today there is still civil war. The last stage of the visit was to Khartoum the capital to the North, where the Salesians have a large vocational training school and a parish, the parishioners of which are all displaced from the south of the country.

In all three places the Councillor was able to hold meetings with the communities, to reflect on future prospects for the presence of the Salesians in Sudan. At Wau and at Khartoum the FMA also took part in these meetings. On the basis of their observations and the reflections just undertaken it is intended to prepare a plan for a renewed Salesian commitment in Sudan, after the cessation of hostilities between the north and the south. In May last year the Councillor had visited the only Salesian foundation in the south of the country at Tonj. The new plan will be aimed mainly at the south which has greater need.

After a two day break in Rome, Fr Francis Alencherry left once again for a visit to the AFO Vice Province between 12 and 23 February. Through shortage of time he was only able to visit four of the seven countries which make up this Vice Province. The first stage between 12 and 14 February was in Benin, where he visited the foundations in Paracou, Kandi and Karimama. In these last two places our confreres are carrying out a work of first evangelisation among some tribes that have not yet been evangelised.

The second stage of the visit was to the North of Togo, beginning with the foundation in Kara. From there he went to Cinkassé, 250 km further to the north where he spent a whole day visiting the mission, in which much work is being done in first evangelisation, education and human development.

Early on the morning of 17 the Councillor left for Bobo Dioulasso, where there is the only Salesian foundation in Burkina Fasso. He took more than 10 hours to travel the 650 km of road to arrive at this Salesian work full of vitality and pastoral initiatives for poor youngsters.

On the morning of 18 he began the fourth stage of his visit in Mali. First he made a short stop at the vocational training school in Sikasso, and then continued his journey to the mission at Touba, where he stayed two days in order to visit and get to know the missionary situation in this huge mission. Touba is a mission with many challenges, without roads, or electricity except the little privately produced, nor telephone connections. The confreres and the FMA sisters are sacrificing themselves a great deal to serve the faithful. On Sunday 20 February, after having assisted at Mass in the village called Makwana, Fr Francis set off again to-

wards Bamako, the capital of Mali, arriving late in the evening. Next morning he visited the vocational training school and the other works run by the Salesians; in the afternoon he took the plane to Lomé, capital of Togo.

The last stage of his visits was to the southern region of Togo, where there are the formation communities of the postnovitiate at Lomé and the novitiate at Gbodjome. In these communities he took the opportunity to speak about the Salesian missions to the novices and the young Salesians in formation. In Lomé he also visited the other Salesian houses and works.

At the end of the visit, on 23 February Fr Francis held a meeting with the Provincial and his Council in the novitiate house, to share his impressions with them. The same day he returned to Cotonou in Benin to catch the plane for Rome. Because that evening's flight was cancelled he was only able to arrive in Rome on 25 February.

On 27 February the Councillor for the Missions left for New Delhi with the Councillor for Youth Ministry to take part in the opening of the *centenary year of the presence of the Salesians in India* and for the *Team Visit* to the South Asia Region. The Team Visit ended on

5 March, and the following day with the Rector Major and the other Councillors, he moved on to Thailand for the *Team Visit* to the East Asia – Oceania Region which was being held in Hua Hin between 7 and 11 March.

On 12 March Fr Francis went to visit a new mission taken on by the Province of Thailand in the diocese of Chiangmai, returning the same evening to Bangkok. This mission is still in the early stages of being set up and the nature of the Salesian presence it still under review. 13 March was spent on a visit with Fr Tito Pedron to Laos, where even today there is a communist regime. Some years ago attempts to establish a Salesian work on behalf of needy youngsters were not successful and subsequently the Salesians were only able to accept youngsters from Laos for their education in the Don Bosco vocational training school in Bangkok. At present with these past pupils attempts are being made to open a vocational training centre in Laos, which it is hoped will be the prelude to a proper Salesian foundation, when the Lord wants it.

Between 14 and 23 March Fr Francis was in Rome for the *intermediate session* of the General Council. Between 24 and 27 he

went to the parish of Lonigo, in the diocese of Vicenza, to assist with pastoral work during holy week

Returning to Rome on 28 March, together with the team of the Department he made the final preparations for the international seminar on "*Planning and Development Offices*," which was to be held in the *Salesianum*, Rome, between 30 March and 2 April. As well as the Councillor for the Missions, the Economist General and the Councillor for Youth Ministry took part in the planning and organisation of this seminar. There were 150 people taking part, including Salesians and lay collaborators, representatives of Salesian Provinces from all the continents. The purpose of the seminar was to share experiences of the Planning and Development Office, to reflect on its role in a Province and the promotion of synergy with other Provincial organisational bodies in its functioning. It is hoped that following the seminar there will be a useful handbook on the Planning and Development Office.

Immediately after the seminar finished, Fr Francis left for Brazil to take part in the *Team Visit to CISBRASIL*, which was held in the Israel Pinheiro Centre between 4 and 7 April.

On 8 April Fr Francis visited the CISBRASIL National Mission Office called "União pela Vida", which was transferred to Brasilia in 2003 and is still being reorganised and finding permanent accommodation, in order to get to know the present situation and to offer suggestions for the future.

On 9 April he left for Buenos Aires to take part in the *Team Visit to CISUR*, which was held between 10 and 13 April in the FMA San Miguel Retreat House.

On 14 April he visited the Salesians in San Justo and also the Good Shepherd centre on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, belonging to the ABA Province. In this very poor area the Salesians have various activities for the evangelisation and education of the very poor needy youngsters and their families.

On 15 April the Councillor for the Missions was taken to Bahía Blanca, with the Provincial and his Council, and the following day left with the Provincial for Trelew in Patagonia. On the way they stopped at Fortín Mercedes and Viedma. In Trelew on 17 April he held a meeting with the confreres of the community and the FMA sisters to consider the situation of the mission in this part of Patagonia. The same afternoon with the

Provincial and other confreres he left for Gan Gan via Telsen, spending the night in that mission station. The following day he visited Gastre and from there with Fr Czeslav visiting other rural centres he arrived late in the evening at the community in Esquel.

On 19 April, after a short meeting with the confreres of the Esquel community he left with Fr Tono for Bariloche, where the Salesians have a very significant presence among the poor on the outskirts of the city providing a new style of service without concentrating everything in a single centre. After a quick visit and chatting to the confreres, the Councillor went on to Junín de los Andes, where there is a church in memory of Blessed Laura Vicuña.

On 20 and 21 April he stayed in Junín de los Andes, visiting the Salesian works and some villages of the Mapuche, meeting parish groups and the Salesian community. One notable feature of this Salesian work is the boarding section for Mapuche youngsters from the villages, to help with their education

On 22 April Fr Francis arrived at the Salesian house in Zapala and chaired a meeting of some missionaries who are working in the centres of Junín, Zapala and Chos

Malal, to reflect together on the challenges and on the prospects for the mission among the Mapuche at present. In the afternoon of the same day he went to visit the mission of Chos Malal, stopping on the way at Colipili to visit the tomb of the famous missionary among the Mapuche Fr Francisco Calendino, who at their request is buried in the cemetery of the Mapuche – an honour until today conferred only on two missionaries

In the morning of 23 April Fr Francis spent some hours taking part in the traditional “Rogativa” of the Mapuche community in Chacayco and in the afternoon he left with Fr David García, Provincial Economer, for Neuquén, the last stage of this visit to Patagonia. The following day he said the Sunday Mass in one of the communities of the parish of Neuquén and then left for the Provincial House in Buenos Aires, en route for Cuiabá in the Province of Campo Grande, Brazil, where he arrived on the evening of 25 April.

Between 26 and 30 April, accompanied by Fr Giorgio Lachnitt, Provincial delegate for missionary promotion, the Councillor visited the Salesian missions among the Bororo and the Xavante. On 26 he

visited Sangradouro, where both tribes are to be found and the hundred year old parish of Mercuri, where there is a large group of Bororo. In the morning of the following day he visited the Xavantina mission of São Marcos and from there he went to the parish of Nova Xavantina, which serves as a focal point for the parish personnel of Xavantina and as residence for the parish priest.

On 28 April, accompanied by the parish priest Fr Giaccaria Bartolomeu, he visited the Xavantine village of Santa Clara, where there is a resident group of volunteers from Operation Mato Grosso. In the afternoon of the same day he continued his journey going to the Xavantine village of São Pedro, where the Laurite Sisters have a small community, and then spending the night in the village after celebrating Mass with the faithful.

On 29 April he returned to Mercuri, via Nova Xavantina, visiting the parish. In the morning of 30 April in Mercuri he presided at a meeting of 20 SDB, FMA and lay volunteer missionaries who are at present working among the Xavante and Bororo, to reflect on missionary work among the two tribes. In the afternoon he returned to Cuiabá.

On the first of May the Councilor celebrated Sunday Mass in the sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians and then had a short meeting with the FMA Provincial of Cuiaba. In the afternoon he left for Manaus for a visit to the missions of the BMA Province.

2 May was devoted to a short visit to some houses in the city of Manaus. The following day Fr Francis arrived by air at the Salesian house in Santa Isabel, where he met the confreres of the community. Between 3 and 7 May, travelling along various rivers he visited various villages of the Yanomami tribe, beginning with Yabahana, followed by Pohoroa, where Brother Tommaso di Stefano lives in a village with the Yanomami. During the two following days, using the house in Marauia as a base, he visited the village of Ramatá, where at present there are no resident Salesians. In the afternoon of 7 May he returned to Santa Isabel and made preparations for the journey to São Gabriel a Cachoeira.

On 8 May he met Mgr. José Song, bishop of the diocese of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, and celebrated Mass in the Cathedral of São Gabriel. The following day he set out for Iauareté, to visit the

missions there. Returning from there, on 12 May he went to the mission at Taracuá, and spent the night there. On 13, after celebrating the feast of St Mary Domenica Mazzarello, he continued his journey to São Gabriel.

On 14 May he left again for the missions among the Yanomami at Maturacá. On Pentecost Sunday he presided at the parish Mass and visited the parish. On 16 May he returned to São Gabriel and the following day went to Manaus.

On 18 May Fr Francis had a meeting with the Provincial and his Council to discuss some topics regarding the Provincial missions. The same evening he was also able to meet some confreres from various communities in Manaus at the Pro Menor Don Bosco house and speak to them about the Salesian missions.

On 20 May Fr Francis returned to Rome. On the evening of 24 he went to the Rome-Gerini student community where he presided at the renewal of religious profession of two students.

On 25 May he left again this time for Maputo, to visit the Salesian foundations in Mozambique. Between 26 and 29 he visited the houses in Maputo and the sur-

roundings. 30 May was dedicated to a day of recollection for the Council of the Delegation and for the Rectors of the communities. Between 31 May and 3 June he visited the vocational training school in Matundo and especially the mission in Moatize. He went to different rural villages to get to know the situation in the mission which still presents many challenges. During these days he held a meeting for the confreres of the two communities of Matundo and Moatize together with Fr Leal, the Provincial Delegate to reflect on the challenges and on the possibilities the mission offers us.

Returning to Maputo, on the evening of June he had the opportunity to meet together almost all the confreres who are working in the communities in Maputo and round about. On 4 June he held a meeting with the Council of the Delegation to share some impressions and suggestions for the development of the Delegation. The following day, before setting out to return to Rome, he took part in the Feast of Mary Help of Christians in one of the areas of our parish at Jardim-Maputo, presiding at the special Mass. So ended the visit to the Delegation of Mozambique.



## The Economer General

When the winter session of the General Council finished, Fr Mazzali took part in the Feast of Don Bosco in the Salesian house of Sampierdarena - Genova on 29, 30 and 31 January. He then took part in the Course for Provincial Economers held at the Generalate between 2 and 7 February. During the same period he held meetings with representatives of the "Compagnia di San Paolo" Foundation, with officials of the Region of Piedmont and the City authorities of Turin to obtain financial contributions towards the cost of the restoration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin.

On 11 February in Sint Pieter's Woluwe, Brussel, he began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the St John Berchmans Province of North Belgium*. On 13 March he returned to Rome for the intermediate session of the General Council, during which he also took part, in Turin, in the Council of Administration of the SEI for the approval of the balance sheet for 2004. On 23 he returned to Belgium to resume the Extraordinary Visitation. A short break on 30 and 31 March enabled the Economer General to take part in the Seminar, held at the Pisana, on "*Development Of-*

*fices*", before returning to North Belgium for the visitation which concluded on 20 April.

Having returned to Rome, Fr Mazzali chaired the meeting of the Council of Administration of the Polaris Society, to approve the balance sheet for 2004, and then he left Rome again on 24 to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the "Mary Immaculate" Vice Province of Madagascar and Mauritius*, which ended on 4 June.

## The Councillor for the Region Africa - Madagascar

The Regional Councillor for Africa - Madagascar, Fr Valentín de Pablo, during the period February-May 2005 had the following engagements:

- *Celebration of 25th anniversary of the presence of the Salesians in Senegal*. Between 28 January and 2 February the Regional was in Senegal to preside at the jubilee celebrations commemorating the presence of the Salesians in that country. The festivities were concentrated in the two existing works, Tambkounda and Thiés, and in the new work opened in Dakar, the capital. The celebrations were the occasion to thank

God for the good done and to express gratitude to the Mother-Province providing the Salesian presence, that of León (Spain), and to some of the first missionaries who were present. The opening of the new house in Dakar is seen as the expression of a renewed commitment to the future.

■ *Consultation for the new Superior of the AFE Province (Kenya).* Between 5 and 8 February in Nairobi, the Regional Councillor met the Rectors from Kenya to introduce and encourage the consultation in view of the appointment of the new Provincial for the East Africa Province (AFE). With the same purpose, between 9 and 12 February in Dar-es-Salam he met all the Rectors from Tanzania. At the end of his visit he took part in the *Salesian Family Day* in Tanzania.

■ *Participation in the "Curatorium" for the interprovincial formation houses.* Following his programme, the Regional Councillor took part in various meetings of the "Curatorium" of the interprovincial houses of formation: between 6 and 8 February in the community of theology in Utume (Nairobi); between 9 and 11 February in the postnovitiate in Moshi (Tanzania); between 24 and 26

May in the community of the postnovitiate in Lomé (Togo) and between 28 and 31 May in the community of theology in Yaoundé (Cameroun). In Togo his presence was meant to be an expression of the affection the Rector Major has for the confreres and for the people who have suffered from the instability of the country after the general elections. The meeting with the Provincials responsible and with the confreres in formation was an opportunity to assess the formation and to offer some guidelines.

■ *Extraordinary Visitation to the Vice Province "English-speaking West Africa" (AFW).* In the name of the Rector Major, the Regional Councillor carried out the Extraordinary Visitation of the AFW Vice Province made up of the Salesian houses in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, with headquarters in Accra (Ghana). Following the programme prepared he was able to meet each one of the confreres and visit all the communities. The official opening of the Visitation took place on 15 February and it concluded on 30 March. This Vice Province, the most recent in the Africa Region, was set up on 5 January 2004 and contains 94 confreres with a aver-

age age of 38. Of these 52 are Africans mostly in formation. The novices this year are 11. The confreres are in 12 communities. The social and political situation of some of these countries in recent years has not been easy either for the people or the Salesians who suffered the consequences of social instability and civil wars. A great effort was made by the confreres to keep together and consolidate the Salesian foundations in the four countries. Overall, the path followed first as a Delegation now as a Vice Province has been very positive. At the end of his Visitation the Regional chaired the opening of the first *Provincial Chapter of the Circumscription* in the new Postnovitiate and Study Centre in Ibadan (Nigeria).

■ *Consultation for the new Superior of the Vice Province of Madagascar (MDG).* Between 30 March and 1st April the Regional Councillor met the assembled confreres in Ivato (Madagascar) to introduce and encourage the consultation in view of the appointment of the new Superior of the Vice Province. He also had the pleasure of presiding at the opening of the celebrations to mark the 25 years of the Salesians being present on the island.

■ *Visit to Mauritius.* On the following days, 2 and 3 April, the Regional went to the neighbouring island of Mauritius to greet the confreres and to get to know the situation of the Salesian presence there.

■ *Extraordinary Visitation to the "Mamá Muxima" Vice Province of Angola (ANG),* with headquarters in Luanda. In the name of the Rector Major the Regional Councillor carried out the extraordinary visitation of the Vice Province of Angola, which has now been in existence for six years. It is made up of ten communities scattered across the country. There are 60 confreres with an average age of 41 and 5 novices. Twenty five of these Salesians are Angolan, of whom 5 are already perpetually professed. The Salesian presence in Angola began in the context of the "Africa Project" entrusted to the Provinces of the Region of the time "America-Atlantic Region" under the responsibility of the Province of São Paulo (BSP), Brazil. The arrival of the first Salesian missionaries was in September 1981 in the city of Dondo. On January 1985 the communities then existing were made a "Delegation" of the São Paulo Province. On 31 January 2000 with a decree

of the Rector Major, the Delegation became an autonomous Vice Province. The Extraordinary Visitation officially began on 5 April and concluded on 22 May. Following the programme the Regional was able to meet each one of the confreres and visit all the communities. He had the joyful opportunity to take part in the opening of the new Salesian aspirantate at Viana (Luanda). During the Visitation he also carried out *the consultation for the appointment of the new Superior*.

On 1 June the Regional Councillor returned to Rome for the opening of the summer session of the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the Region Latin America - South Cone***

At the end of the winter session of the General Council, on 31 January the Regional Councillor left for Argentina, to take part in the installation of the new Provincial of Rosario, Fr Joaquín López.

Between 4 and 20 February, the Regional was in the St Pius X Province of Porto Alegre, visiting his family and some houses of the Province. He also took the opportunity to have a medical check up.

Between 23 February and 2 March the Regional was in the Córdoba Province in Argentina, for a visit, twelve months after the Extraordinary Visitation. He took part in a meeting of the Provincial Council and visited the formation houses and some other houses in the Province.

Afterwards between 3 and 10 March, still in Argentina, the Regional went to the La Plata Province, for the consultation in view of the appointment of the new Provincial. There were three discernment meetings, each lasting a day: one in the Pampas area, and the others in the area of Buenos Aires. He also met the postnovices in the interprovincial postnovitiate in Avellaneda.

After this he returned to the Generalate in Rome, to take part in the *intermediate session* of the General Council between 12 and 24 March which had on the agenda the examination of the Salesian presence in the American continent. Returning to Brazil, he took part in the Easter services in the parish of Piçarras.

On 1st April the Regional went to Brasilia to prepare for the *Team Visit* that was to be held in the "Centro de Convenções". The

Team Visit to the six Brazilian Provinces began on the morning of 4 and finished on 7 with Mass at which the Rector Major presided in the St John Bosco parish in the "Núcleo Bandeirante" in Brasilia.

Subsequently between 10 and 13 April, the Regional took part in the *Team Visit to the CISUR*, which was held in the Buenos Aires Province, in the retreat house of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians located in San Miguel. The Provincials and Councils of the eight Provinces in the conference were present. The closing Mass was celebrated in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Almagro (Buenos Aires), attended by the Salesian Family. At the end of the Team Visit, the Provincials and Councils from Argentina stayed for a further day to examine the way to put into practice the decisions taken in the meeting. In a very open atmosphere the first steps were taken to multiply forces in formation and to find the necessary strategies to re-design the Salesian presence in Argentina.

Between 15 April and 24 May the Regional carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Buenos Aires Province*. In this Province too during the visitation the Regional met with the Provincial

Council several times, with the Rectors from Patagonia and Buenos Aires, with various groups of the Salesian Family and groups of pastoral workers. Above all he had the opportunity to speak personally with all the Salesians.

During the visitation the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial of Buenos Aires was also carried out. For this purpose meetings were held in two places in Patagonia and in four areas of Buenos Aires. There was one hundred percent attendance at the meetings.

To conclude the extraordinary visitation the Regional once again met the Provincial Council, and presided at the celebration of the Past Pupil's day of pilgrimage to the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Almagro, Buenos Aires, which has been held without interruption since 1927 and brings together a huge number of Past Pupils.

### ***The Councillor for the Region Interamerica***

After the end of the winter session of the General Council the Councillor for the Interamerica Region stayed in Rome a further

week to complete his report on the Region which would be examined during the intermediate session of the Council in March.

Having left Rome, on 5 February he arrived in Venezuela to begin, in the name of the Rector Major, the *Extraordinary Visitation of the St Luke Province*, which has 34 communities and 215 confreres. On 6 he had a meeting with the Provincial Fr Jonny Reyes, and his Council, and immediately began visiting the communities.

On 12 March Fr Esteban Ortiz González returned to Rome to take part in the *intermediate session* of the General Council at which he presented the situation of the Interamerica Region.

On 24 March he returned to Venezuela to continue the Extraordinary Visitation. Between 28 April and 17 May he visited in particular the Vicariate of Puerto Ayacucho.

The Regional Councillor concluded the Extraordinary Visitation on 27 May with the presentation – in the morning – of the final report to an assembly of about a hundred confreres; in the afternoon he met with the Provincial and his Council.

On Sunday 29 May he travelled to Medellín to meet the Provincial Fr Armando Álvarez, and his

Council and to carry out an assessment of the implementation of the guidelines given by the Rector Major after the Extraordinary Visitation the previous year. He also took the opportunity while he was in the Province to visit the group of aspirants (24) in Llano Grande.

On Tuesday 31 May in Bogotá he met with Fr Nicolás Rivera, the Provincial of COB, and his Council to carry out an assessment of the Extraordinary Visitation of the previous year. In Bogotá he visited the formation houses of the Postnovitiate and the Theologate, and greeted the confreres in the houses of León XIII, 20 de Julio (Parish of the Divine Infant) and Ciudad Bolívar (John Bosco Centre).

On 1st June Fr Esteban Ortiz went to Quito, where he had a meeting with the group of Rectors from the Region who were following a course at the CSRFP. Afterwards on 3 at Cuenca he met with the Provincial, the Provincial Council, the Rectors to carry out an assessment on the implementation of the guidelines of the Rector Major after the Extraordinary Visitation carried out by Fr Filiberto Rodríguez in 2003.

On Saturday 4 June he took part in the Province Feast in which the anniversaries of religious profession and priestly ordination of sev-

eral of the confreres were celebrated.

Finally on Sunday 5 June the Regional Councillor left from Guayaquil to return to Rome to take part in the summer plenary session of the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the Region East Asia - Oceania***

Once the winter session of the General Council was completed, the Regional Councillor left for Taiwan, where he celebrated the Feast of Don Bosco with the confreres in the Tainan community.

Subsequently between 1st February and 29 April he carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Thailand, Cambodia and Laos*, which was interrupted three times. Fr Klement, in fact took part in two *Team Visits*: of the South Asia Region at New Delhi (1-5 March) and of the East Asia-Oceania Region at Hua Hin (7-11 March). This last was followed by a short meeting with the Provincials and the Delegates for Formation and Youth Ministry. Finally, the Regional presided at the installation of the new Provincial of the North Philippines (FIN), Fr Andrew Wong, at Parañaque, on 19 March.

In the course of the Extraordinary Visitation he was able to see the direct contribution made by the confreres in the places hit by the tsunami, in the dioceses of Turbat Thani, and to visit two new foundations – one in Chiang Mai, and the other at Vientiane in Laos. During his three months stay he became aware of the challenge to evangelisation in a Buddhist context and of the creativity of our confreres in this regard.

In the month of May he carried out the process of discernment for the new Provincial in Australia (AUL), meeting most of the confreres in the course of a week. He then made two short visits to the Province of Korea (8-12 May) and that of Japan (13-16 May). The Regional shared the joy of the confreres during the blessing of the new “Salesio Polytechnic” in Tokyo, took part in the funeral of the former Provincial Fr Johannes Dalkmann, and visited all the formation houses.

Since the mission in Mongolia is the subject for 2005 of the DOMISAL, Fr Klement wanted to preach the annual retreat at Darkhan for the 8 confreres of 5 different nationalities now present in the country. During his visit (17-25 May) the premises of the new Catholic Mission at Darkhan –

Don Bosco Educational Centre – were blessed and also the first statue of Don Bosco in Ulanbaatar, made in Mongolia.

His final days were spent visiting the Chinese Province - Hong Kong and Macau, to encourage the process of reorganising the houses. On 6 June Fr Klement returned to Rome.

### ***The Councillor for the Region South Asia***

After the end of the winter session of the General Council on 28 January, the following day the Regional Councillor Fr Joaquim D'Souza left for India with the Vicar of the Rector Major Fr Adriano Bregolin, and his secretary Fr Saimy Ezhanikatt, arriving in Mumbai, where he celebrated the Feast of Don Bosco. On 1st February still with Fr Adriano and Fr Saimy, he went to Hyderabad, where he visited the work for street children and the formation houses, the novitiate and the postnovitiate. From Hyderabad he went with Fr Adriano to Kolkata, where between 4-6 February he took part in the VIII Australia-Asia Congress of the Past Pupils with the theme: "*Salesian Education: a celebra-*

*tion of holiness.*" The Congress which was very successfully organised by the Central Delegate Fr Jeronimo Monteiro, had the fine number of 500 participants from all the Provinces of India as well as from the Philippines, Thailandia, Japan, Africa and Belgium. At the end of the Congress, the Vicar left with his secretary for Bangalore and Kochi, while Fr D'Souza remained in Hyderabad to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation* of the Province.

On 23 February the Regional was once again in Kolkata, this time to welcome the Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chávez and his secretary, Fr Juan José Bartolomé, who arrived on 24 February. Afterwards he accompanied the Rector Major to Dibrugarh, in the Province of Dimapur (on 26), and to Guwahati (on 27), and then to New Delhi on 28 February for *the opening of the centenary year of the presence of the Salesians in India* with a solemn Mass at which the Rector Major presided together with some General Councillors and all the Provincials and their Councils from the South Asia Region. Between 1st and 5 March the *Team Visit* took place in the Provincial House in a very fraternal atmosphere, sharing with the



Rector Major intense moments of prayer, reflection and work. On 7 March after the Team Visit at New Delhi, Fr D'Souza went with the Rector Major and the Councillors to Bangkok to take part in the *Team Visit* to the East Asia-Oceania Region (7-11 March). When this was finished the Regional returned to India to continue on 15 March the Extraordinary Visitation of the Hyderabad Province.

During the period 15 March to 28 April the Regional visited all the 27 houses and presences in the Hyderabad Province which are spread across the territory of Andhra Pradesh. When the Extraordinary Visitation of Hyderabad was finished Fr D'Souza went to Guwahati on 1st May to continue and complete the *Extraordinary Visitation* of the ING Province, begun on 30 April the previous year. Given the huge area of the Province, which covers four states of Northeast India, with 62 houses and presences and 424 confreres and novices it took almost 5 months spread over three periods to complete the visitation. This concluded with the perpetual profession of 4 confreres on 23 May and with the first profession of 17 novices which the Regional

had the joy of receiving. After this the Regional, following three days rest in his family, returned to Rome arriving on 31 May.

### ***The Councillor for the Region North Europe***

Even during the winter session, between 11 and 14 December 2004, the Regional Councillor went to Ireland and Malta for the Consultation for the new Provincial of the Irish Province.

At the end of the winter session of the General Council Fr Albert Van Hecke went to Hungary between 28 and 31 January to assist the Provincial Council which had to make some decisions about the future.

On 5 February he left for Cologne to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the North German Province*, which would end on 22 March. This Visitation revealed the great commitment of the confreres and lay people in the two sixth form colleges, in the parishes, and above all in the very particular houses of Heiligenstadt, Helenenberg and Sannerz for youngsters at risk; in the retreat house at Calhorn; in the very efficient and much appreciated work

of the "Missions Office" and of the "Jugend Dritte Welt" in Bonn. Nor is the apostolate of the non-German confreres in various Catholic missions on behalf of foreigners forgotten.

Between 23 March and 11 April Fr Van Hecke worked in his office in Rome.

Between 12 and 16 April in Holland he helped the Provincial Council draw up an agreement of collaboration with the "Samenwerkingsverband Nederland". In these days he also had the opportunity to visit the communities of Hechtel, Helchteren, Oud-Heverlee and Ghent in north Belgium.

On 18 and 19 April he was at Colle Don Bosco to prepare for the Team Visit to the Atlantic Area of the Region. In fact, the Provincials of the area had decided to link it with a visit to the holy places of our charism.

Between 21 and 24 April, with the Vicar of the Rector Major, he took part in the celebrations for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish Province of Piła (North Poland). During these days he was able to visit the Salesian 'cittadella' of Szczecin, with its 5 communities located in various parts of the city. The 6 schools, 3 parishes and 3

youth centres form a wonderful rainbow of Salesianity and of a presence among the young. He also had the opportunity to visit the 12 novices in Swobnica and greatly appreciate the welcome provided by their 'band' and the very pleasant and enthusiastic meeting with them. He paid a short visit to the confreres in Nowogródek, in this almost "hidden" land but so fruitful for our charism. Nor should be forgotten the "heavenly" celebration of the Eucharist in the church of the Holy Family in Piła, a very fitting conclusion to the jubilee, and the academy featuring memories and dreams of the future, as well as the closing celebration in the "Don Bosco" School in Piła with the confreres, members of the Salesian Family and so many "Friends of Don Bosco".

Between 30 April and 4 May Fr Van Hecke went to Vienna for the *Team Visit to the German-speaking area* of the Region. In addition to the evaluation of the implementation of GC25 and the search for future strategies, proposals made by the Rector Major in his letter to the North Europe Region were also studied. The Visit provided an opportunity to visit the community and the hostel of the "Sale-

sianum", the first Salesian house in Austria. The great spirit of welcome and hospitality by the confreres in the "Don Bosco House" in Vienna contributed to the atmosphere of study and and fraternal discussion.

From Vienna on 6 May with the Provincial, the Regional left for Benediktbeuern to chair the *annual meeting of the Provincials* from the North Europe Region. This meeting was spent almost entirely on the presentation of the formation house of 'Benediktbeuern', in response to the call by the Rector Major in his letter on the Region "to promote Benediktbeuern as a centre of formation and Salesian spirituality and as a 'Forum' for Dialogue between the two lungs of Christian Europe" (AGC 389, p. 54). During the meeting there was also the splendid opportunity to visit some of the places of outstanding Christian culture in Bavaria, such as the 'Wieskirche' and the 'Passionsspiele' Theatre of Oberammergau, and naturally the basilica and the house of Benediktbeuern itself. A visit to the 'Salesianum' in Munich provided a fraternal conclusion to this annual meeting appreciated by all concerned.

Between 15 and 21 May Fr Van Hecke paid a visit to the Province of Zagreb Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The visit included a meeting with the Provincial Council, two meetings with the confreres in the Provincial House and visits to the houses of Rijeka and Žepče in Bosnia Herzegovina.

On 24 May, with his secretary Fr Piotr Szelaĝ, the Councillor left for Turin to take part in the celebration of the Feast of Mary Help of Christians. Afterwards, between 26 and 28 May there was the *Team Visit to the Atlantic area* of the Region. The closeness to the holy places of our charism, the great hospitality of the confreres of the community of the Colle made this Team Visit too a real return to the roots of our Salesian vocation and mission.

On 29 May, before returning to Rome he visited the Pinerolo novitiate community and presided at the procession in honour of Mary Help of Christians.

Between 3 and 6 June he went to Belgium to visit his family and to celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination with confreres companions of the same year.

### ***The Councillor for the Region West Europe***

When the winter session of the Council was finished Fr Filiberto left at once for Spain to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the León Province*. Since the Provincial was in Sénégal for the celebrations of the twenty fifth anniversary of Salesians being present in the country, Fr Filiberto began visiting the community of Burgos, the postnovitiate for the Provinces of Portugal, Madrid, Córdoba, Seville and León.

In this way the Extraordinary Visitation began on 29 January at Burgos and finished 8 May at La Coruña with the Province Feast and the reading of the final report to the Rectors and Provincial Council.

The visit was interrupted:

- between 20 February and 6 March while he preached two retreats in Ecuador;
- on 10 and 11 March for the meeting of the Iberian Conference at Madrid;
- by a visit to Portugal (25-28 April) to encourage the confreres to participate in the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial;

- by taking part on the Congress of Mary Help of Christians at Santander and the centenary of the FMA presence in Salamanca (29-30 April and 1 May).

When the Extraordinary Visitation finished, Fr Filiberto went to the Canaries to accompany the Rector Major, who between 11 and 17 May was visiting the Córdoba Province.

Between 18 May and 4 June the Regional paid a short visit to his family, visited the Salesian Missions House and the Don Bosco House in Madrid, took part in the celebrations in honour of Fr Aureliano Laguna as he finished his service as manager of the CCS Publishing House (27 May). On 28 May he was in Orense for the feast of the Past Pupils and spent a week visiting communities in the Barcelona Province.

On 5 June Fr Filiberto returned to Rome to take part in the summer session of the Council.

### ***The Councillor for the Region Italy and Middle East***

After the conclusion of the winter session of the General Council, Fr Pier Fausto Frisoli took up

again the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Lombard-Emilian Province*. He celebrated the Feast of St John Bosco on 29 January in the Cathedral of Bologna with the confreres and the Salesian Family in the city and on 31 January at Arese with the youngsters and all the educative community.

In the month of February he visited the Salesian communities of Arese (Parish and Institute), Milan St Dominic Savio, Varese, Como, Nave. On 7 February he gave an address to Youth Ministry Delegates of Europe, gathered together in the Generalate, presenting the conclusions of the Rector Major after the meeting of the Provincials of Europe last December.

On 21 and 22 February Fr Frisoli had a meeting with the Provincial Youth Ministry Team and the Provincial Council of the ILE Province. On 26 in Rome-San Tarcisio he took part in a meeting of those on practical training from the central and southern Italian Provinces.

In the month of March he visited the communities in Brescia, Treviglio, Chiari, Milan St Charles. During the Easter triduum he presided at the services in the house in Latina. In the month of April, he visited the communities of Sesto San Giovanni, Milan Don

Bosco, Milan St Ambrose. Between 9 and 16 he took part in the *annual retreat for the Provincials of Italy* in Turkey. On 25 April he had a meeting with the Salesian Family in the Lombard-Emilian Province on pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Caravaggio.

In the month of May he visited the communities of Sondrio, Lugano and Pavia. On 7 in Bologna he took part in the celebrations of the Salesian Youth Movement in the Province. Between 10 and 12 he chaired the meeting of *Italian Provincials' Conference* at Solanas (Cagliari). On 22 and 23 May in Milan he concluded the Extraordinary Visitation meeting the Provincial Council and the Rectors.

He celebrated the Feast of Mary Help of Christians at Verona Don Bosco. Between 25 and 31 May he visited in turn the formation communities of Torino-Crocetta, Pinerolo and Messina.

On 1st June he returned to the Generalate.

## 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:

- in Hong Kong, for the Secretaries of the East Asia - Oceania, Region between 21-25 February;
- in Montevideo, Uruguay, for the Secretaries of the Latin America South Cone Region between 3-7 May.

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 Secre-

taries and the friendly atmosphere of the meetings and the opportunity to learn about different situations.

From Hong Kong the Secretary, on his way home, went to Seoul, Korea, where, thanks to the kindness of the Superior, he was able to visit almost all the houses in the Province, admiring their rich variety and the commitment of the confreres.

On the other hand, after the meeting in Montevideo, the Secretary was able to visit Niteroi, the first Salesian house in Brazil, and, on the journey home a good number of the communities in Buenos Aires in Argentina.

A special thanks goes to the community of the Provincial House in Hong Kong and to that in Montevideo who played hosts to the Secretaries, with a typical Salesian welcome.

### 5.1 Statement of the Rector Major, Pascual Chávez, about John Paul II.

***"I want nothing else but to give God back to the world"***

*Below is the statement the Rector Major, Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva, released on 2 April 2005 about John Paul II, a few hours before the death of the Holy Father. It is a splendid expression of the esteem and love of the Rector Major for this Pope, by many already described as "Great," as he traces the extraordinary figure of the man, the convinced Christian, the good shepherd, the Successor of Peter who guided the Church during an historic period full of world events to the end of the second millennium and the beginning of the third. It is also an act of thanksgiving in the name of the Congregation and of the Salesian Family, for the great love always shown for our Family .*

It I had to choose a phrase that encapsulates the pontificate of John Paul II, I could not find anything better than the one quoted above. I think that this was the cause he had closest to his heart, that led him to take the Gospel to the furthest corners of the world

and to proclaim it wherever he was invited to speak.

While I am writing these words the life of John Paul II is flickering out, like an Easter candle that is gradually consumed as its flame shines out, giving light to the mind and warming the heart. Perhaps only a few hours remain to him before he celebrates his Passover, his journey "from this world to the Father." But his witness remains because he has been a man, a believer, a pastor, a Vicar of Christ who has spoken through his words and through his life.

He leaves us a spiritual testament – his constant defence of Man, who only finds his full significance and reaches his true goal in Christ, true God and true Man – and a pastoral testament, that magnificent "navigation chart" for the Church at the dawn of the XXI century, which is *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.

But what is the profile I would offer of this Pope who has rightly been called "John Paul the Great?"

Even though I find it difficult in a few words to describe an exceptional figure such as his, nevertheless I shall try to offer my own personal testimony of the Pope as I knew him.

1. John Paul II was *an extraordinary man*, because of his exceptional appreciation of the human being, of his dignity and of his rights. It is enough to think of the way he has fought for the main world issues, for the recognition that "nothing that is truly human is outside his concern."
2. John Paul II was *a charismatic figure*, able to draw millions of people to him on account of his genuineness, his courage, his consistency. It is not surprising that right until the most recent polls concerning the credibility of world leaders he continued to lead the way.
3. John Paul II was *a convinced Christian* who from his youth had been able to form his extraordinary personality by finding inspiration and strength in the Lord Jesus and in His Gospel. His life, but also his "zeal" are a faithful reflection of the Lord Jesus to whom he consecrated his life, following in His footsteps and modelling himself on Him throughout his whole life.
4. John Paul II was *a citizen of the world*, who committed himself without self interest to the great issues that face humanity, which in his last speech to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See he summed up in four words: life, food, peace and freedom. From this point of view he was sometimes seen even as a great statesman.
5. John Paul II was *a Pope who* for over 26 years *guided the Church at this phase of history*, at the end of the second millennium and the beginning of the third, one characterised by the struggle against communism, against every kind of violence, of suppression and injustice, against the current unfettered neoliberalism, and not least against terrorism, with firmness, with boldness, with 'parresia', with faith.
6. John Paul II was *an extraordinary communicator*, who made use of the media to reach the greatest number of people and to proclaim the "good news" everywhere.
7. John Paul II was *a Successor of Peter*, who knew how to preserve "the deposit of faith," at a time of great relativism and confusion, without giving way to pressures or to compromises.
8. John Paul II was *a good shepherd*, who as a pilgrim travelled to the furthest ends of the world, announcing Jesus Christ with freedom and joy, always sustaining his steps with his



shepherd's staff and fixing his eyes on the cross.

With Paul, he could make his own the Apostle's words:

*«I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that Day; and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing» (2Tim 4,7-8).*

We Salesians and members of the Salesian Family, who have pledged ourselves *to make the face of the Church the Mother of our faith youthful again*, can say that John Paul II has gone before us and has left us an example to follow. In fact he loved the Church as she ought to be loved expending all his strength for her. He has made the Church youthful again because *he believed in the young*, he gathered them together from all the countries of the world, he knew how to speak to them about Jesus, and he set them high goals to reach. He invited them not to be mediocre, not to follow the trend, not to become mere consumers or spectators but to be "the heralds of the morning" and to be "the saints of the third millennium."

I take this opportunity to acknowledge publicly gratitude in my own name, in that of the General Council, of the Society of St Francis of Sales and of all the Salesian Family for the great love with which he has always honoured us.

May his call *«Salesians, be saints»*, addressed to us during the 25th General Chapter continue to be a programme for all of us!

Dear Pope Wojtyła, a thank you from the bottom of our hearts for what you have given us: an example as a man, a believer, a pastor; and for what you have been: a loving and faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus and a constant and generous son of the Church.

We shall miss you, but we know that the Lord, who has been close to you also in your suffering, will today open wide the gates of Heaven and that there you will continue to intercede for us.

Rome, 2 April 2005.

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

## **5.2 Letter of the Rector Major to Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of his election as Supreme Pontiff**

*Below is the text of the letter sent by the Rector Major to His Holiness Benedict XVI on the occasion of his election as Supreme Pontiff, as an expression of the homage and the congratulations of the Congregation and the whole Salesian Family, in the spirit of filial love for the Pope inherited from Don Bosco.*

Prot. n. 05/0269

To His Holiness  
**Pope Benedict XVI**  
VATICAN CITY

Rome, 19 April 2005

Most Holy Father,

I wish to present to you through this letter an expression of the homage and congratulations of the Congregation and of the whole Salesian Family on your election as Supreme Pontiff. As we have been convinced that in John Paul II we have had a great Pastor so now we are grateful to God for having given us another great Pastor in the person of his Successor. In you Your Holiness and Most Beloved Pope Benedict XVI.

At this moment as Christians and as Salesian religious while we wish to express our joy at your election, to you we renew our fidelity and declare our filial respect inherited from Don Bosco. He often used to speak in words full of affection and faith about the successor of Peter.

*“He who is united with the Pope is united with Christ !” (BM VIII 251).*

*“We shall be totally dedicated in all things to the Apostolic See wherever the Lord may send us at any time.” (BM XV, 205).*

*“The Pope’s request is my command (BM V 571). “The Pope’s word must be our norm in everything and at all times BM VI 282)*

In this way our Founder Don Bosco spoke and he wants to hear our hearts speak the same way today.

Your Holiness, immediately after your election, with joy we recalled spontaneously your coming to the Generalate on the occasion of the Meeting of the Salesian Provincials of Europe on December 1<sup>st</sup> last year. For all of us that day has remained memorable for the quality of your masterful contribution and for the detailed and precise analysis of the Europe of

our own days. One particular expression of yours, most Holy Father, especially struck us and has become a programme for us, when you invited us to make our contribution to giving a soul to today's Europe, offering and re-presenting, as Salesians, the "prophecy of education."

In fidelity to the Church and to our Founder Don Bosco, we accept your invitation, Your Holiness, and we promise to keep it before us in our pastoral options and in our apostolic plans.

We assure you of our prayers. May the Holy Spirit assist you in the delicate task Providence has wished to entrust to you and may the Virgin Mary be always the great Helper in your ministry.

In a spirit of filial obedience we express today and always our filial affection.

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
Rector Major of the Salesians of Don Bosco

### **5.3 Message of the Rector Major for the Centenary of the foundation of the Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

*Below is the text of the Message sent by the Rector Major, through his Vicar, to the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at Agua de Dios, Colombia, on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the foundation of the Institute.*

Rev. and Dear  
Sr. Eulalia Marín,  
Dear Daughters  
of the Sacred Hearts,

Through my Vicar who will represent me on this Solemn occasion of your Centenary, I unite myself in spirit with your Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary gathered in Agua de Dios, Colombia, for the Mass to mark the Centenary of the Foundation.

One hundred years have passed since our confrere Blessed Luigi Variara, established this religious family and we cannot but admire the development of the Institute which like all Gospel enterprises had very humble beginnings, and indeed full of obstacles, but which

like all God's works has had an unforeseeable growth.

I am convinced that when Fr Variara, under the inspiration of the Spirit, gave new life to the essential Salesian experience of giving oneself to the little ones and to the poor, according to the spirit of Valdocco, in a new way as his special field of action demanded, and he made it come to life among a group of girls who were lepers or the daughters of lepers even bringing them to religious consecration on 7 May 1905, at Agua de Dios, he never imagined that his Congregation was "The first in order of time flowering on the Salesian stock seventeen years after the death of Don Bosco"<sup>1</sup>.

The foundation immediately became the object of perplexity and controversy and the founder, just thirty years of age, described by his own Provincial as "imprudent, naive, a dreamer", was sent away from Agua de Dios on several occasions (in 1904, 1909, 1917 and definitively in 1919). Fr Variara "the subject of anonymous accusations, suspected of having leprosy (whereas he was medically

healthy), dies alone at 48 years of age," at Cúcuta, on the frontier with Venezuela, "fulfilling in himself the sacrificial offering proposed to the first Daughters of the Sacred Hearts."<sup>2</sup>

If one considers that a hundred years ago the group numbered three novices among whom Oliva Sánchez (38 years of age) who was to be the first superior, and three postulants, including Ana Maria Lozano, who would be the second superior in 1907 at 23 years of age, and that of the six four were lepers and the other two daughters of lepers, one cannot but be amazed and raise a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord who blessed this family of his with such abundant blessings.

Even more astonishing is the fact that being spiritually orphaned by their founder and father being removed from them, the idea, the request and the experience of a consecrated life living in their own special circumstances *came from the young sisters themselves*, without doubt under the influence of the Holy Spirit as can be read in a letter written

<sup>1</sup> J. Aubry, "Don Bosco e gli altri gruppi della Famiglia Salesiana", in *Don Bosco Fondatore della Famiglia Salesiana*, edited by Mario Midali, Rome, 1989, 375.

<sup>2</sup> Ivi, 376.

to the Rector Major Don Rua, three months before their first profession:

«We are poor young women affected by the terrible disease of leprosy ... convinced that it is *the will of the Sacred Heart of Jesus* and finding the way to carry it out easy, we have begun *to offer ourselves to Him as victims of expiation, following the example and the way of the Salesian Fr Andrew Beltrami*. Now we have decided to take another step forward: we want to be a single family, living the common life, tied by the three vows to God and to our Superior, practising a Rule of Life that we want to be *the same as that of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians*, with the necessary modifications suited to our state as sick persons and in his good time, dedicate ourselves to the service of our brothers and sisters especially to the children in the Michele Unia nursery, forming a *little family of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, serving God and offering ourselves to Him as freely chosen victims of expiation »<sup>3</sup>.

The key perception of these girls is that sickness with its sufferings,

far from being seen as a curse, providentially contains within it, for one who believes and loves, *precious values to be cultivated*:

- It can become a *path to personal holiness*: it is an invitation to love more, to unite oneself more closely to the One who loved even to the cross, to feel oneself closely united to those who suffer.
- It can become a *mission* and a *redemptive apostolate* that takes over the whole person and the whole of life: for someone who contemplates the mystery of the pierced Heart, sickness becomes an invitation to *offer oneself as a victim of expiation* for the reparation of sins and for the conversion of sinners, to the living of a consecration and a state of life that is "sacrificial."
- Such a vocation, far from being lived with bitterness or "self-pity", requires *serenity* and even produces a paschal joy.
- On the practical level, all of this leads to activities and works of *service and the evangelisation* of the "poor", in the first instance lepers, children and the young.

After a hundred years of lived experience, the Institute has not given up this ideal, indeed it has

<sup>3</sup> Cf. BS, agosto 1905; in BIANCO, *Luigi Variara* 90.

gone more deeply into it: in its Constitutions it expresses it with the formulas "Salesian sacrificial spirituality," "Salesian sacrificial project of life."

Today the Institute not only forms part of the Salesian Family since 1982, but is a branch that has come to make explicit one aspect of the charism of Don Bosco, that is of the *importance of the passion in a spirituality of the active life*, as Fr Viganò pointed out on the occasion of the beatification of Mgr. Versiglia and Fr Caravario.<sup>4</sup>

Like the whole Salesian Family, the Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts has always borne witness to the maternal presence of Mary Help of Christians, who always went before, accompanied and protected. To her go our filial thanks.

A thank you from the bottom of our hearts to Blessed Luigi Variara and to the Co-foundresses of the Institute, who gave an example of docility to the Holy Spirit and went ahead in spite of all the difficulties, and together with them to all the Sisters who have

known how to accept and transmit a charism throughout this hundred years of history.

It is incumbent upon us in this thanksgiving to recall all those who have accompanied and supported the Institute and all those who have made it fruitful through the Luigi Variara Secular Movement, sharing its spirit and mission.

The celebration of the centenary of any institution always has a threefold purpose: to look back to the past with gratitude, to face up to the present with trust and to dream about the future with daring.

Celebrating one hundred years means that there is already a magnificent story to tell, and we willingly do so also because this is one way of re-enforcing the memories, but it also implies the task of building the future. This is prophecy.

Today the Institute is not only three novices and three postulants, nor is it limited to the area of the town of Agua de Dios, nor does it work only in the field of healthcare. Today the social, po-

<sup>4</sup> Cf. VIGANÒ E. *Martyrdom and suffering in the Apostolic Spirit of Don Bosco*, ACS 308 (1983) 3-23.

litical, economic and religious situation is very different from what it was one hundred years ago. Today thanks to communication, the whole world has become a "village" and attitudes regarding personal dignity and personal rights have changed.

Nevertheless, the Institute, its charism and its mission are more than ever relevant and necessary. Above all because there is still much poverty and physical suffering, and there are still those with leprosy particularly in the less developed countries, but more especially because there is a need to give a meaning to suffering and to restore dignity to people especially the elderly, the bed-ridden in rich and prosperous countries. Perhaps states have the resources to meet the needs of everyone and yet it is important that consecrated life should be present in all fields of human life to bring God close to humanity.

This is who you are, dear Daughters of the Sacred Hearts: signs of God and of his love in a world that tries to get along without him. This is your mission: to love full of a passion for God and a passion for humanity. This is your future and your prophetic role!

With affection and esteem I remember you in my prayers and I ask the Lord to continue to bless the Institute of the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. May each one of you find inspiration and strength in the pierced hearts of Jesus and Mary.

7 May 2005

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

#### **5.4 Decree of canonical erection of the "St Boniface" Province of Germany**

Prot. n° 425/2004

#### **DECREE OF CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE "SAINT BONIFACE" SALESIAN PROVINCE OF GERMANY**

The undersigned,  
**Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILANUEVA**,  
*Rector Major of the Salesian Society of Saint John Bosco*,

- considering the situation of the Salesian works in Germany, divided at present between the two Provinces of "Saint Boniface" with headquarters in Köln and "Marh Help of Christians" with headquarters in München;

- after having heard the opinion of the two Provincials and their respective Councils and taking into account the results of the consultation among the confreres of the two Provinces;
- with reference to article 156 of the Constitutions;
- having obtained the consent of the General Council in the meeting of **16 July 2003**, in accordance with articles 132 §1,1 and 156 of the Constitutions;

### CANONICALLY ERECTS

By this present Decree, the **SALESIAN PROVINCE of GERMANY, with the title "SAINT BONIFACE", with headquarters in MÜNCHEN-Provinzialat, in the house of "St Francis of Sales", as a result of the unification of the two Provinces of Köln and München**, including therefore all the Communities that at present form part of the aforementioned Provinces, with the confreres assigned to them.

The Houses of the new "Saint Boniface" Province *on German soil* are the following:

ASCHAU-WALDWINKEL, "San Giovanni Bosco" - BAMBERG-Canisiusheim, "Sant'Enrico" - BAMBERG-Josefsheim, "San Giuseppe" -

BENEDIKTBEUERN, "Cristo Re" - BERLIN, "San Giovanni Bosco" - BONN, "San Vinfrido" - BUXHEIM, "Maria Patrona Bavariae" - CALHORN, "San Giovanni Bosco" - CHEMNITZ, "San Giovanni Bosco" - ENSDORF, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù" - ESSEN, "Maria SS. Ausiliatrice" - FORCHHEIM, "San Giovanni Bosco" - FURTWANGEN, "Beato Bernardo di Baden" - HANNOVER, "San Giovanni Bosco" - HEILIGENSTADT, "San Giovanni Bosco" - HELENENBERG, "San Edoardo" - JÜNKERATH, "San Domenico Savio" - KASSEL, "San Bonifacio" - KÖLN, "San Giovanni Bosco" - KONSTANZ, "San Giovanni Bosco" - MAINZ, "San Emmeran" - MÜNCHEN-Provinzialat, "San Francesco di Sales" - MÜNCHEN-Salesianum, "San Francesco di Sales" - NEUNKIRCHEN, "Sant'Antonio" - NÜRNBERG, "Angeli Custodi" - PFAFFENDORF, "San Domenico Savio" - REGENSBURG, "San Volfango" - STUTTGART, "San Giovanni Bosco" - TRIER, "San Giovanni Bosco" - WÜRZBURG, "San Giacomo"

As well as the foundation (not erected canonically) at AUGSBURG.

Belonging also to the "Saint Boniface" Province at present,

- *in Sweden*:

the house of SÖDERTÄLJE, "S. Giovanni Bosco";



- in Switzerland:  
the house of BEROMÜNSTER,  
“S. Domenico Savio”.

The following decisions have been made:

- 1° Members of the Province are all those confreres who at the date of the canonical erection are living and working in the Salesian houses listed above.
- 2° Also members of the Province are confreres in formation in the two former Provinces “St Boniface” of North Germany and “Mary Help of Christians” of South Germany and other confreres incardinated in the same Provinces who at the time of the canonical erection are outside the Province for reasons of study, health or other [just cause].

As regards everything else the norms established by the Constitutions and General Regulations prevail.

The present Decree will come into force on **15 August 2005**.

Rome, 25 December 2004.

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

sac. Marian STEMPEL  
*Segretary General*

## 5.5 Decree for the setting up of a Provincial Delegation of Holland

Prot. n. 147/2005

### THE RECTOR MAJOR OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN BOSCO

(“*Societas Sancti Francisci Salesii*”)

- having considered the situation of the Salesian presence in Holland, for the purpose of a more effective animation of the charism and mission of Don Bosco on behalf of the young people of Holland;
- having taken into account the context and the possibility of closer links with the neighbouring Province of North Belgium, having in common the language and many aspects of culture in addition to the Salesian charism;
- after a careful discernment carried out by the General Council and the consent of the same Council in the meeting of 19 January 2005, in accordance with the Constitutions,

### DECIDES

- **the canonical closure of the Salesian “Saint Willibrod” Province of HOLLAND, canonically erected on 15/05/1946;**

- **and, at the same time the setting up of the SALESIAN DELEGATION OF HOLLAND, which will juridically depend on the Salesian “Saint John Berchmans” Province of North Belgium, with headquarters in Brussels.**

The following decisions have been made:

- The Delegation is set up according to art. 159 of the Constitutions, which also determines the procedure for the appointment of the Delegate of the Provincial.
- Those communities and confreres that at present form part of the Province of Holland belong to the Delegation.
- Relationships and collaboration with the “Saint John Berchmans” Province of North Bel-

gium are defined in a Statute, drawn up jointly and approved by the Provincial of Brussels with his Council.

- The Delegation will continue to animate and develop the Salesian presence and mission in Holland, according to the aims set out in the Constitutions, with the help and the collaboration of the Province.
- The Delegation will have its headquarters in the house of Soest, Holland.
- The present decree will officially come into force on **15 August 2005.**

Rome, 19 January 2005.

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

sac. Marian STEMPEL  
*Secretary General*

## 5.6 Our dead confreres (2<sup>nd</sup> list 2005)

"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).

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P AGOSTINELLI Matteo	Cape Town (Sud Africa)	09/05/2005	64	AFM
P AINSWORTH William	Prestwich, Manchester (GBR)	05/06/2005	97	GBR
P ARCAMONE Antonio	Napoli	03/06/2005	71	IME
P BARROS Víctor	Córdoba (Argentina)	13/05/2005	87	ACO
L BELLUCCI Benedetto	São Paulo (Brasile)	04/05/2005	65	BSP
P BOCCHI Walter	Campo Grande (Brasile)	10/05/2005	84	BCG
P BRUNCLIK Andrej	Becov (Slovacchia)	09/04/2005	74	SLK
P BUTAŠ Rudolf	Žilina (Slovacchia)	23/04/2005	86	SLK
L CALUSCHI Giovanni	Santiago de Chile	02/04/2005	94	CIL
P CASTELLARO Domingo	Córdoba (Argentina)	20/04/2005	97	ACO
P CASTRO Antonio Secundino	Indápolis (MG, Brasile)	20/03/2005	85	BCG
P CHATTERJEE Anil	Krishnagar (India)	29/03/2005	73	INC
P CHIRON Gabriel	Angers (Francia)	03/06/2005	96	FRA
P CICCARELLI Nicola	Roma	15/06/2005	81	IRO
P CINCIRIPINI Mario	Roma	06/04/2005	82	IRO
P COLLADO MILLÁN Gaudencio	Ávila (Spagna)	29/05/2005	70	SMA
P COSTA Luís Augusto	Poiares da Regua (Portogallo)	25/03/2005	86	POR
P CURTO Faustino	Pedara (CT)	13/04/2005	92	ISI
P DALKMANN Johann	Tokyo (Giappone)	10/05/2005	93	GIA
<i>Fu Ispettore per 12 anni</i>				
L DĘBKOWSKI Stanisław	Szczecin (Polonia)	14/06/2005	87	PLN
L DE MARIA Raniero	Varazze (SV)	24/03/2005	85	ILT
P DI BÁRBORA José	Corrientes (Argentina)	07/06/2005	74	ARO
P DRANSFELD Karl Egon	Jünkerath (Germania)	16/04/2005	79	GEK
P ENDER Georg	Köln (Germania)	30/03/2005	75	GEK
L FERNÁNDEZ TORRES Ángel Nicanor	Madrid (Spagna)	18/05/2005	85	SMA
P GIAMBERARDINO Savino	Civitanova Marche Alta (MC)	14/04/2005	92	IAD
P GÓMEZ SANTAMARÍA Ángel	Salamanca (Spagna)	23/03/2005	81	SMA
P JOYCE William	Hong Kong (Cina)	07/05/2005	87	CIN
P KOOL Theodorus (Dirk)	Rotterdam (Olanda)	10/04/2005	81	OLA
P KUSTEC Ignac	Rihtarovci (Slovenia)	29/04/2005	82	SLO
P KYSELA Miroslav	Bratislava (Slovacchia)	14/05/2005	81	SLK
P LÁZARO REYES José	Puebla (Messico)	31/05/2005	69	MEM
P LÁZARO URRIZOLA Felipe	Santiago de Chile	10/04/2005	92	CIL
P LEGUIZAMÓN José	Bogotá (Colombia)	28/04/2005	89	COB
P LINARES ALBARRACIN Salvador	Sevilla (Spagna)	10/05/2005	80	SSE
P LITRIĆ Milan	Zadar (Croazia)	29/03/2005	70	CRO
P LORINI Giovanni	Arese (MI)	15/06/2005	77	ILE

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
L MAGLIOCCA Anacleto	Roma	05/06/2005	94	IRO
P MASCARUCCI Fernando	Roma	13/05/2005	87	IRO
L MENEHINI Giorgio	Civitanova Marche Alta (MC)	23/04/2005	89	IAD
P MIGLIAZZO Gaetano	Catania	29/04/2005	80	ISI
P MODESTI João	Araras, SP (Brasile)	21/05/2005	85	BSP
P MORANO Juan Felipe	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	01/06/2005	93	ABA
L MUSSO Fiorenzo	Castelnuovo Don Bosco (AT)	19/04/2005	77	ICP
P PAULINY Andrej	Šaštín-Stráže (Slovacchia)	02/05/2005	80	SLK
P PERSONENI Battista	Bergamo (Italia)	15/05/2005	67	THA
P PIÑA PELÁEZ Segundo Gonzalo	Quito (Ecuador)	22/03/2005	50	ECU
P ROSSO José María	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	21/05/2005	78	ABA
P SALZA Giuseppe	Guayaquil (Ecuador)	17/04/2005	87	ECU
E SANTOS HERNÁNDEZ H. Enrique	Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	10/05/2005	88	—
<i>Eletto Vescovo nel 1958, fu per 4 anni Vescovo di Santa Rosa de Copán (Honduras) e per 31 anni Arcivescovo di Tegucigalpa (Honduras)</i>				
P SARNACCHIOLI Luigi	Roma	26/04/2005	90	IRO
P SCANAGATTA Giuseppe	Oakland, CA, U.S.A.	09/05/2005	85	SUO
P SCIACCALUGA Stefano	Varazze (SV)	10/05/2005	94	ILT
P SOBESTO Marek	Pogrzebien (Polonia)	20/04/2005	31	PLS
P STRUS Andrzej	Roma	12/06/2005	67	UPS
P TEJIDO PARRA Ramiro	Logroño (Spagna)	24/04/2005	91	SBI
P TORU Bernard	Giel (Francia)	29/05/2005	44	FRA
P UGOLINI Andrea	Civitanova Marche Alta (MC)	17/04/2005	83	MOR
P VACA LUNA Guillermo	Riobamba (Ecuador)	29/05/2005	80	ECU
P VERBELEN Jan	Boortmeerbeek (Belgio)	19/04/2005	97	BEN
L VERNI Franco	Rimini	07/06/2005	72	ILE
P WADE Gabriel	Ibadan (Nigeria)	04/04/2005	81	AFW
P ZAVATTARO Gabriele	Oakland, CA, U.S.A.	21/03/2005	95	SUO



