



# acts

**of the general council**

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year LXXXVIII

april-june 2007

**N. 397**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale  
Opere don Bosco  
Roma





# acts

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

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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## 1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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**“YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH...  
YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD”**

**(Mt 5,13-14)**

### ***Presentation of the East Asia - Oceania Region***

**1. Brief general presentation of the Region.** Social situation. – Cultural context. – Presence of the Catholic Church. – Consecrated life. **2. How Don Bosco arrived and his charism has grown.** Don Bosco's missionary inclination was first towards Asia. – Some historical items, starting from Don Bosco's missionary dreams. – Don Bosco was there before the Salesians. – A missionary region. **3. Presentation of the Region from a Salesian standpoint.** The Salesians. – Community life. – Kinds of Salesian works and activity: *Youth ministry - Formation - Missionary commitment and inculturation of the charism - Social communication - Salesian Family - Financial solidarity - Salesian holiness.* **4. Charismatic experiences of greater significance (in the various Provinces).** **5. Some challenges.** **6. Conclusion - “I am always with you”.**

Rome, 25 February 2007

*Feast of the Holy Martyrs, Sts Luigi Versiglia and Callistus Caravario*

My dear Confreres,

After my letter presenting the South Asia Region, it now gives me great pleasure to speak to you about that of East Asia and Oceania. More than in other parts of the world, this is where Christians in general and Religious in particular are called upon to be the “*salt of the earth*” and the “*light of the world*”. In the face of people with very ancient and venerable religious traditions that permeate their culture to a great extent, it is only natural that Christianity is seen as a western religion and hence something external and foreign. And so followers of Jesus must demonstrate that Christianity, as well as being able to live amicably with other forms of religion strongly rooted in those people, is a religion that can harmonise with every culture in the world, but without becoming identified with any of them, because they must all be purified and raised up by Christ. Hence the need for a competent and sustained effort at inculturation, which demands in the first place that Christianity have a clear identity. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus tells us that being his disciple is a matter of being, not of doing. And this is always an expression of the extent to which

he is “salt” and “light” or, in other words, authentic disciples of Jesus, who does not hesitate to tell his followers how they will finish up if they lose their identity, the same fate as salt that loses its savour: “It can only be thrown away and people will trample on it”.

Our life must be outstanding for its high spiritual quality and be permeated by charity so that both aspects, the experience of God and mission, make of us a transfiguring presence of Christ, who gives light to all who are in the house. That is what Christ hopes for, and I make it my own desire: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (*Mt* 5,16). Speaking of the Christian life as a proclamation, John Paul II wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*: “This proclamation is a mission needing holy men and women who will make the Saviour known and loved through their lives. A fire can only be lit by something that is itself on fire” (n. 23). For us Salesians these images of salt and fire find their expression in the spiritual and apostolic zeal of *Da mihi animas*, which every confrere is called upon to reawaken in his heart.

In this part of the world, of the Church and of the Congregation there could be no greater contradiction than a Salesian Christian and religious presence that had become secularised, without a clear and appealing experience of God, a bourgeois presence without any solid commitment for the poor that would be an efficacious sign of the Kingdom.

The Region of East Asia - Oceania includes twenty countries, and though it was the final Region to be set up by the last General Chapter, it recently celebrated the centenary of the arrival of its first missionaries. These reached Macao in China on 13 February 1906 to begin the first and oldest – practically uninterrupted – foundation of the whole Region. Rightly can it be considered the cradle of Salesian work in East Asia. Salesian activity in the Region is a tree with already a hundred years of life with no lack of vitality and future promise. It can in fact boast of a considerable number of recent new foundations. Because it is a Region so

diversified in its make up, it includes areas in which the Congregation is flourishing with growing strength, and others to which the Congregation looks with interest and hope. It is a complex and dynamic reality, so much so that in the last 40 years the Provinces and Vice-Provinces that make it up have belonged successively to four different regional circumscriptions. The decision of the GC25 to create a Region on its own seemed the best response to the circumstances and needs of the Provinces, Vice-Provinces and Delegations that it now includes.

The Region embraces the following countries: Australia, Cambodia, China (Hong Kong and Macao), the Fijian Islands, Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea, Laos, Mongolia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Taiwan, Thailand, East Timor, and Vietnam.

It is made up of the following Circumscriptions: the Provinces of China, Australia, Japan, Thailand, North Philippines, South Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, the Vice-Province of Indonesia - East Timor, and finally the Delegation of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The first five years of the existence of this new Region have revealed many advantages in the possibility of following up the individual circumscriptions more closely and in coordinating them with each other. The Team Visit of 2005, which took place at Hua Hin, Thailand, reinforced the sense of being a Region, which had been the subject of discussion and experimentation as regards various sectors (Provincials, Departments, activities) for at least 18 years.<sup>1</sup> At Hua Hin, however, a true sense of Region was achieved, together with a growth of collaboration and a clear purpose of coordination, expressed in the Document "*Vision-Mission*".

Looking at the situation of the various realities of East Asia - Oceania, where Christianity is no more than an authentic mi-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Missionary Animation: First Meeting of the Provincial delegates of Missionary Animation for Asia and Australia*, Bangalore - India, 7-11 October 1992, p. 103.



nority, one is immediately aware of how the Salesians are called to be 'salt' and 'light', of the requirement they have of living the consecrated life as missionaries '*inter gentes*', and of their task of being 'missionaries of the young'. The Catholic Church, and within it consecrated life and the Salesian Congregation, live in an ocean of different peoples, of ancient religions and cultures with deep religious roots which however are not Christian.

This makes a commitment to inculturation all the more pressing, in order to root Salesian life firmly in the different contexts, making it relevant and fruitful, fostering its Christian and charismatic identity with due attention to cultural diversity. At the same time, the fact of being in the minority among the peoples demands of us that in this Region we ***commit ourselves decisively to the development of the missionary dimension of the Salesian vocation, foster a missionary outlook of confreres and communities, and give priority to evangelisation***. It is a matter of a long-term commitment which demands of the Salesian the painstaking acquiring of the ability to dialogue with local cultures and religions.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Brief general presentation of the Region

The Region is very extensive in area. The most outstanding trait is the variety of contexts and situations in which our confreres live the religious life and carry out the Salesian mission. It is not a simple matter to give a brief description of so variegated a social, political and religious situation. I will try to give a broad outline.

### The social situation

Among the countries making up the Region there are some which only recently emerged from situations of war, of a struggle for autonomy, sometimes from civil or ideological wars with

<sup>2</sup> Cf. LUCIANO ODORICO, *Evangelisation and Interreligious Dialogue*, in *Evangelisation and Interreligious Dialogue. Batulao (Philippines)* March 12-18, 1994, p. 47-64.

horrifying attempts at genocide. It can be said that the Region is now peaceful and making great efforts at economic, social and civil development, even though there still exist some areas of struggle and tension prompted by racial, religious or political considerations (East Timor, Aceh, the Fijian Islands, the Solomon Islands, South Thailand, and the Philippines).

In the area covered by the Region live almost a third part of the entire world population, and they are said to speak a third of the world's languages. 60% of the population are not yet 21 years of age. China alone, with its 1 billion 300 million inhabitants, has a specific demographic, economic and political influence superior not only to that of other countries, but even of entire continents. Its adoption of a market economy since 1979, and its recent entry into the realm of international politics make of China an element which naturally influences and will continue to influence even more the social, economic and political life of the entire world. The Region as a whole is very much involved, not to say a ring-leader, in widespread rapid and deep changes which are creating contrasting situations of light and shade, life and death, wealth and poverty, social progress and recession, conquests and defeats. In fact the Region is made up of two continents, with different cultures and religions.

In the Region live almost 40% of the world's non-Christians. Catholics are only 100 million, corresponding to 5% of the population. There is on the one hand a religious reawakening and on the other a growing subordination of religious values to economic development, especially in the big cities. One wonders whether one can really speak of "secularisation" in Asian society, since the term signifies a process developed essentially in the western Christian cultural environment. Reflecting on what has emerged from our meetings concerning missionary animation in Asia we cannot say that secularisation exists, but should speak rather of the "subordination or subjection of religious values to economic development". It could be called *practical atheism* with a smattering of social religious sentiment.

There are also pockets of fundamentalism of greater or lesser activity, as a reaction to the massive social and cultural changes that the people are unable to cope with. The financial crisis of East Asia that was overcome only in the period 1997-1998 gave rise to many questions concerning the economic model underlying the so-called "Asian miracle" and its correlation with cultural values, imbalance, increasing environmental deterioration, social disparity and exploitation of the workforce, growing demands for energy and basic materials, tensions and weaknesses laid bare by the terrible tsunami of 2004 and the terrorist attacks at Bali in 2002-2004.

Widely differing forms of government exist or are evolving: alongside ancient and new democracies (Japan, Philippines, Australia) are found socialist systems, traditional monarchies (Thailand, Cambodia, Japan), and military dictatorships. In particular China and Vietnam, with North Korea and Laos, represent the last great block of Marxist ideology and totalitarianism. All of them have to confront the common phenomena already referred to and which are still growing; the gap between rich and poor, the flight from the countryside and the increase in urbanisation with the consequent cultural dislocation, an industrialisation that pays little attention to the environment, and growing social injustice which risks upending long-time balances. A political democratic awareness is growing and is beginning to be of concern even, to some extent, to countries with a communist regime.

### **The cultural context**

Four basic systems of cultural values can be distinguished.

The first and most solidly established is the East-Asia system with its Confucian and Buddhist roots; its influence extends to much of the Region. This system relies on family and community values; it acknowledges the priority for the individual of his duty towards his family, forbears or clan and, on the other hand, to those who are governing. Study and diligent work are considered important.

The Islamic system, as practised in Asia, is in general more moderate and tolerant than the Arabic type, and is mixed in with some values of popular animism. There is also a mixed environment in the Philippines, where the culture of the Malay majority bears the marks of a long process of Spanish colonisation.

The Pacific system of Melanesia and Polynesia is centred on animism, the family and tribal nucleus, and on the sharing of goods.

Finally there is the western rationalist and libertarian system which is emerging in the Region and which bears with it the roots of the Christian vision and of the rational reaction to it. As is noted in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (cf. n. 6), this system, at present typical of Australia, is focused on happiness and success, with a growing individualism and strong secularisation.

While we identify the presence of these various systems of values and cultural contexts, we see at the same time that strong local and international migration fosters the blending of these basic cultural and religious elements.

## **The presence of the Catholic Church**

The majority of the Catholics of the East Asia Region are concentrated in the Philippines, a country with a high percentage of Catholics (81% of the 84 million inhabitants), though not without tensions. Two other countries with a sizable percentage of Catholics are East Timor (90%) and South Korea (11%), who together have 30% of the Catholics. For the remaining countries Catholicism is very much a diaspora phenomenon with a percentage of Catholics ranging from 0.4% (Thailand, China, Japan) to 6% (Vietnam).

It is a young Church, with a vitality and courage that is sometimes quite extraordinary, as in South Korea and Vietnam. Though in some places the Church is still considered a western and foreign religion, it is usually seen in a very positive light. Despite the fact that evangelisation in many parts of the Region is relatively recent, the Church has put down deep roots, thanks

also to the very large numbers of martyrs in the last three centuries, many of whom have been already canonised or at least beatified (120 from China, including our own Sts Luigi Versiglia and Callistus Caravario, 117 from Vietnam, 103 from Korea, 247 from Japan, 8 from Thailand, 2 from the Philippines and 1 from Papua New Guinea).

In line with the project of the Federation of the Episcopal Conferences of Asia (FABC) in the past thirty years, much credit is due to the commitment to deepening the guidelines for the integral evangelisation of the Asian environment. One of the main values of these cultures – harmony and accord – suggests as an inescapable requirement of missionary activity a fourfold dialogue (*dialogue of life, of action, of theological exchange of views, and of the sharing of religious experiences*), by means of which the Gospel is shared and communicated to fellow citizens of the ancient non-Christian religions. A historic event was the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Missionary Congress organized by the FABC at Chiang Mai (Thailand) in October 2006 with the theme “Telling the story of Jesus in Asia” Recounting the story of Jesus as the best way of proclaiming the Gospel in Asian Countries had been suggested by John Paul II in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (n. 20).

In the countries of *Oceania* Catholics form a quarter of the population, but live in two situations completely different one from the other. On the one hand there is Australia (with 27% Catholics), a country with a hard culture characterised by a far from indifferent presence of immigrants from Italy and from Europe in general after the second world war, and also Vietnam after the Vietnamese war, where a solid work of evangelisation is needed; and on the other hand there are the Islands of the Pacific, an area of recent evangelisation where the need is to deepen the roots and face the difficulties inherent in the formation of sound local vocations both to the priesthood and to consecrated life.

In all this area the Church is facing the challenge of fostering and inculturating a true and integral missionary spirituality, to



make of the faithful credible witnesses in the midst of the various religions and cultures. Only in this way can the Church overcome the dichotomy between life and faith, between a life centred on prayer and the sacraments and a life engaged entirely in the social area, between a Christian life closed in on itself and a life open to dialogue with non-Christians. The new converts from animist religions like the polytheists of Oceania, or those from Buddhism or from Confucianism of East Asia, have embraced the Gospel sometimes with depth and enthusiasm but sometimes only superficially. There is still a long way to go before the Catholic faith becomes deeply rooted in the soil of the ancient cultures.

### **Consecrated life**

For the majority of the Churches of East Asia the present is like a new springtime with all its promises: the foundation of new local Churches (e.g. in Mongolia, with 450 local Catholics after the first 15 years of missionary work), the birth of new local missionary institutes (Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia), a fresh proclamation of the Gospel and the flourishing of vocations despite the diaspora-like situation (Vietnam, South Korea). Within the Church of East Asia we are witnessing an impressive growth. The last 15 years has seen a fourfold increase in the number of priests, men religious have increased by 40% and women religious by 30%. Hundreds of missionaries “*ad gentes*” and “*ad vitam*” have gone out from the local Churches.

In the Pacific part of the Region many religious Congregations are still looking for expressions of consecrated life in local cultures shared by missionary members from abroad and by indigenous members. In Australia on the other hand the efforts of consecrated persons are directed towards pastoral work for vocations and the formation of lay collaborators in line with the various charisms of the Congregations concerned.

I think we can identify four main challenges for Consecrated Life in the Region:

- *mysticism*: in a Region which is in general deeply religious, it is essential to ensure in the consecrated members a strong personal experience of God;
- *prophecy*: religious communities are called upon to be courageous in living the Gospel as an alternative model for living;
- *inculturation* of the Consecrated life, which ensures that the religious do not feel themselves to be like fish out of water nor seem as foreigners in the eyes of their fellow citizens;
- *service* for the benefit of the poor, and those marginalised for economic, sexual, racial or religious reasons.

## **2. How Don Bosco arrived and his charism has grown**

### **Don Bosco's missionary inclination was first towards Asia**

Don Bosco lived the extraordinary missionary springtime of the Church of his day, and originally fostered a missionary vocation with his thoughts on Asia, in particular on China, and more generally on English-speaking countries, Australia among them. This was the missionary world he first approached as he sought his true vocation, making contact at one time with the Reformed Franciscans and at another with the Oblates of Mary, or when he read missionary magazines then beginning to circulate in Piedmont (*Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* or the *Museum of Catholic Missions*). Images conjured up in his mind of the missionary world were predominantly of Asia and especially of the persecutions in China and Vietnam, of the heroism of missionaries and martyrs, of the new era that was opening for the Church and for evangelisation in the wake of the British and French armies. The *Annals*, that Don Bosco began to read from a time soon after his ordination, gave an account almost week by week of the strength and political activity of the West, which made it possible for missionary penetration and the work of evangelisation to be resumed. In consequence, even inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, whose immense number staggered Don Bosco,

could attain salvation. He was particularly impressed by the martyrdom of the courageous young priest Gabriele Perboyre, whose picture he kept in his room and of whom he would later write in the first edition of his *Ecclesiastical History*. In this book, his first serious work which would run into several editions, he wrote about the relaunching of the missions, but especially of the events taking place in those years in China and Japan.

As the fame of Don Bosco grew, the great missionaries of Africa, Lavigerie and Comboni, came knocking at his door in search of help and collaboration. During the First Vatican Council various bishops of China too came to Valdocco seeking personnel. With Timoleone Raimondi, a missionary from the Seminary of Milan and then Prefect Apostolic of Hong Kong, Don Bosco negotiated over several months between 1873 and 1874 about the opening of a house in Hong Kong. The negotiations were unsuccessful and the draft contract remained a dead letter because – though Don Bosco was unaware of this at the time – of a veto imposed by the Superior of the Milanese Seminary. It was in this climate of uncertainty left by the suspended discussions that Don Bosco, convinced by now that it was time for his Congregation to expand to foreign parts, turned his gaze to Argentina, an environment less remote from a cultural and linguistic standpoint, and soon decided to send his first missionaries to work among the Italian emigrants in Buenos Aires and among the Indians around San Nicolás de los Arroyos (11 November 1875). Nevertheless he never stopped thinking about Asia, as witness the fact that he gave Fr John Cagliero less than two years to organise the works in Argentina before leaving for India where he had accepted a Vicariate Apostolic. But South America was to absorb energies and personnel to such an extent that Don Bosco was able to think about China again only in 1885, after obtaining the Vicariate Apostolic of Patagonia. He accepted the fact that it was now too late for him to do anything concrete about China. Later his sons would see what could be done, but for him Asia would have to remain a goal, a dream, a field of work for the future.

In the Barcelona dream Don Bosco was later to see, from the top of the hill of his earlier dream at the age of 9, that in the future a work would be opened at Peking as a fulfilment of his mission to the young that would embrace the world: just as at Valdocco so throughout the world, from Valparaiso to Peking. The vision became a constant preoccupation, an aim and prophecy which would lead him to write in his spiritual testament: "In due course our missions will reach China, and precisely Peking"<sup>3</sup> and on his deathbed he astonished Bishop Cagliero by saying to him repeatedly: "Don't forget Asia!"

### **Some historical items, starting from Don Bosco's missionary dreams**

Reading over again our Father's five missionary dreams, and especially the final two, we find that his missionary zeal was directed explicitly towards the people of China, of Mongolia (Tartaria) and of Australia;<sup>4</sup> this, together with the conclusion already quoted from his spiritual testament, indicates a fervent desire in his heart for the salvation of the young people of Asia. Generations of Salesian missionaries have grown up with the encouraging awareness that Don Bosco had dreamt about them, seen them in his missionary dreams.

The dream of 1886, his spiritual testament and his frequent references in conversations to China, had created a marked sense of anticipation in Salesian circles. Fr Arthur Conelli, to whom Don Bosco had confided his desires with regard to going to China, to such an extent that he was generally considered as the intended leader of an expedition to that country, lost no time after the Founder's death in making contact with the ecclesiastical authorities of Macao. Negotiations took place in three phases and continued until 1905 when the Salesians and the Bishop of Macao

<sup>3</sup> Cf. P. BRAIDO (a cura di), *Don Bosco Educatore, scritti e testimonianze*, LAS Rome 1992, p. 438.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. MB X,53; MB XV, 91; MB XVI,385; MB XVII,643-7; MB XVIII,72-74.

finally reached an agreement. The first six Salesians, three priests and three brothers (two of them still novices) with Fr Luigi Versiglia at their head, reached Macao on 13 February 1906 and took over the small *Oratory of the Immaculate Conception* entrusted to them by the Bishop. The six set to work at once by opening a school of arts and trades. The first years were difficult and apparently without future prospects. In 1910 in fact the Salesians were expelled from Macao after being caught up in the republican revolution. The set back proved to be only a brief one and led to new fields of work: the first mission in mainland China (at Heungshan, now Zhongshan, 1911-1928) and a return to the Orphanage with a broader contract and new confreres that enabled the Salesians to set up a true and proper school.

In the meantime the Chinese Empire fell and the Republic was born (1911); the new China was anxious to learn from the West, and the school of arts and trades was in a good position to serve as a model for similar institutions to be set up all over the vast territory. The school continued to develop, but expansion took place in another direction when in 1917 the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide entrusted to the Salesians a mission in the northern part of the province of Guangdong, detaching it from the Apostolic Vicariate of Canton (now Guangzhou). After a two-year period of preparation the new Apostolic Vicariate of Shiuchow (now Shaoguan) was erected, with Fr Luigi Versiglia as its first Vicar Apostolic. It was the least developed and most difficult of the three territories the Salesians could have hoped for: the Lord was preparing for them a road bristling with sacrifices, but one which the first missionaries, with the First World War only just behind them, were able to face with courage and self-denial. In 1918 Fr Versiglia, on receiving the gift of a chalice from Don Albera, recalled that in Don Bosco's dream of China he had seen two chalices, one filled with the sweat and fatigue of the missionaries and the other brimming over with blood.

Meanwhile efforts made to strengthen and improve the school at Macao were bearing fruit: the government of Hong Kong and



some philanthropists wanted something similar for the youngsters of the British colony, and for it to be entrusted to the Salesians; and from Shanghai insistent requests were coming for the acceptance of an orphanage. Furthermore the first missionary novices from abroad were beginning to arrive, an innovation that led to a good deal of discussion. In 1934 a considerably large group of young confreres set out for Shanghai led by Fr Sante Garelli, a veteran of China. Among them was the cleric Callistus Caravario. They settled in the Chinese quarter among the poor. In 1923 the Chinese Vice-Province came into existence, but found it difficult to take on the new commitments: a good house of formation was needed for the young confreres who continued to arrive from abroad and for the first local vocations, but there was a lack of suitable personnel, as also of financial resources.

Requests were also coming from the Holy See to accept a mission at Kyushu in Japan (1925) and one in Thailand (1925). In this way the first missionaries destined for Japan arrived, led by Fr Vincent Cimatti. With the increasing commitments, in 1926 the Vice-Province was erected as the Sino-Japanese Province. The Provincial had to look after the vast area stretching from Thailand to Japan.

Unfortunately it was not all plain sailing: civil war broke out in China, followed by Bolshevik activity. It was no longer wise to keep the house of formation at Shiuchow, and the novices and philosophy students had to make the risky journey to Macao. The Nationalist and Communist Parties, aided by Russia, joined forces to overcome the resistance of the warlords and unify the country. From Guangdong the army advanced northwards, reaching Wuhan and Shanghai. At Nanking there were violent episodes also against missionaries. The alliance was broken and the Nationalists launched a great purge of the forces of the left. The Salesian school at Shanghai was occupied by the troops and transformed into a hospital for those with infectious diseases. The Superiors decided to evacuate the Institute and send the confreres elsewhere, beginning with the youngest. In this way it was possible to begin Salesian work in Hong Kong ("St. Louis Industrial School"), in

Timor (Dili, where among others the cleric Callistus Caravario was sent) and in Thailand, to which country the Extraordinary Visitor, Fr Peter Ricaldone, transferred the novitiate with the novices, Novice Master (Fr Gaetano Pasotti) and some confreres, 28 in all! Challenges, trials and difficulties served only to foster development: it seemed almost like a return to the experience of the primitive Church, compelled by wars and persecutions to swarm in all directions. In this way two new independent missions came into existence: Japan, which was to have as its Prefect Apostolic (1935) and later its Provincial (1937) Fr Vincent Cimatti, and Siam with Fr Gaetano Pasotti first as Prefect Apostolic (1934), then Provincial (1937) and eventually Vicar Apostolic (1941).

The greatest trial, a real moment of darkness and light, was the martyrdom of Bishop Luigi Versiglia and Fr Callistus Caravario. They would not be the only ones to give their lives in the course of the mission to their flock. Three other missionaries would follow them. Various others died before they had reached 50 years of age, cut down by illness and fatigue.

In the thirties the missions of Thailand and Japan became consolidated, amidst further difficulties and challenges: personnel never sufficient, large numbers of young people to be formed and inculturated, native vocations to be fostered. For 22 years China was led by Fr Charles Braga (1930-1952), the "little Don Bosco of China", formed in Turin under Fr Cimatti and matured in Shiu-chow in the shadow of Bishop Versiglia. He became the Father of the Salesians of China. With him, and prompted by new missionary strategies China became enriched with new satellite foundations. Local vocations began to appear, at first tentatively as though from an arid soil, and then vigorously, especially during the war years when the entire studentate had to move to Shanghai soon after the completion of its residence at Hong Kong. Fr Braga it was who gave life to this period of great poverty, but of even greater Salesian fraternity and communion; he was everything to everyone, This was the golden age in the history of the Chinese Province.

The Province emerged from the war with a strong band of well-motivated confreres and of young people who promised well for the future. In 1946 the house of Peking was opened, the "House of the Madonna", as it used to be called by its first Rector, Fr Mario Acquistapace: the poorest house in the Province! Don Bosco's prophecy had been fulfilled. The Superiors thought it was time to divide the works into two Provinces, one in the north with headquarters at Shanghai, and the other in the south centred on Macao. Japan, on the other hand found that all its local vocations had been swallowed up by the war and they were compelled to begin again from scratch. Thailand, impoverished in personnel because of numerous losses was to find in new foundations the spirit of renewal.

But in fact it was China itself that bore the brunt of the storm. With the advent of Mao and the proclamation of the Peoples' Republic, the Chinese people rose up. Foreigners, imperialists and missionaries were all expelled and their property confiscated: the people reclaimed the right to manage the education of the country by themselves. Some Chinese confreres remained in the country to stay with the youngsters if possible, but before long they found themselves in prison where a number would die, sacrificing their lives through fidelity to the Pope. But also from this tragedy new life was to come. Not only did Salesian works for refugees develop in Hong Kong, Macau and subsequently also in Taiwan (1963), but new foundations were made in other countries of the East.<sup>5</sup>

In 1951 Salesian work began in the Philippines with two schools: at Victorias (Negros) in the south and at Tarlac (Luzon) in the north. In 1958 the foundations in the Philippines were detached from the Chinese Province, to form a Vice-Province which was later erected as a Province in 1963. A great increase in vocations in the seventies and eighties led in 1992 to the Province being divided into two with headquarters at Manila in the north

<sup>5</sup> On the development of Salesian work in China, see the recent study of Charles SOCOL, *Don Bosco's Missionary call and China*, in RSS n. 49, July-December 2006, pp. 215-294.

and Cebu in the south respectively. To the Philippines were entrusted also the works in East Timor (1975-1998) and in Indonesia (1985-1998). Finally the mission in Pakistan was entrusted to the southern Philippines Province (1998).

Since 1952 the mission had been growing also in Vietnam. After a first foundation at Hanoi with Fr Francis Dupont, who was killed in the war (†1945), the work was taken up again in 1952 with Fr Andrej Majcen. In 1974 a Delegation was set up, which in 1984 became a Vice-Province. The confreres followed the exodus to the south after the population split into two parts, and lived 15 years of isolation (1975-1990) from which they emerged impoverished but highly motivated. In 1999 the Vice-Province became a Province and in 2001 was entrusted with responsibility for the new mission in Mongolia.

Salesian work in South Korea began in 1954, when Fr Archimedes Martelli was sent from Japan to Korea and made a first foundation at Kwangju. In 1972 a Delegation was formed, which in 1984 was erected as a Vice-Province and in 1999 became a Province.

Salesian work in East Timor, after a first tentative attempt at foundation from Macao in the years 1927-1929 was relaunched from Portugal in 1946. Subsequently, during the difficult period of the Indonesian invasion (1975-1999), the work was entrusted to the Philippines Province, passing later to the Province of Cebu in 1992 when the subdivision of the Philippines Province took place. With the increasing number of confreres and foundations, the Vice-Province of Indonesia-East Timor was erected in 1998.

In still more recent years new foundations continued to increase with youthful vigour, spreading in various directions with the ingrafting of Don Bosco's charism in new environments and prompted by a newly found missionary vocation.

The initiative for work in Cambodia came from Thailand and began with the help given to the Khmer people in the refugee

camp. The first foundation at Phnom Penh was opened in 1991. The first Salesian work in Laos began in a similar way in 2004, managed entirely by our Laotian past-pupils, with the assistance of confreres from Bangkok.

Meanwhile Japan opened a difficult mission at Tetere in the Solomon Islands in 1995. Since April 2005 this mission has been part of the new Delegation of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

In the Pacific the Salesians arrived in Australia in 1922, and it is from the Province of Australia that two courageous initiatives have taken their origin. The first of these took the Salesian charism to Samoa in 1978 where it has given rise to many vocations, linked with the formation of local catechists; the second launched the Salesians in the Fijian Islands in 1999.

### **Don Bosco was there before the Salesians**

From the historical details it is clear that some 30 years were to pass between the first request to go to China and the arrival in that country (1874-1906). In the case of the Philippines it took 60 years (1891-1951), and in that of Korea 45 years (1909-1954). For Vietnam it took 26 years (1926-1952), and for East Timor 20 years before the definitive arrival. These delays were due in part to political and social vicissitudes, to prejudice on the part of some ecclesiastical authorities, and to the difficulty of communications between friends of Don Bosco present in local parts of the Region and the Superiors in Turin. In fact from the time of his canonisation in 1934, the holy educator was venerated by local clergy in many places before our arrival.

As is the case in other Regions, it must be said that Don Bosco was known in many countries before the arrival of the first Salesians: the first Salesian Cooperators were there and ADMA, the Association of Don Bosco Boys and schools with Don Bosco's name (Philippines). There were biographies of him in local languages (Korea - Seoul: Review *Kyoh Hyang*, 1934; Vietnam - Phat Diem:



*Luk Ly*, 1937), there were his statues in local churches and seminaries founded in his name (for example in Vietnam, the Trung Linh Seminary - 1939), there were Catholic schools and junior seminaries founded in Don Bosco's name (as in Indonesia starting from the '40s).

In recent times the response of the Congregation to requests for foundations has become much faster, and the time between the first invitation and the arrival of the Salesians has become much shorter: 3 years for Samoa (1978), 4 years for Pakistan (1998), 3 years for Mongolia (2001). Indeed, in some countries the beginning of the Salesian mission preceded our initiative, as in the case of Indonesia (from the Philippines to East Timor in 1985), in Cambodia (by Thailand in 1991), for Laos (by Thailand in 2004), and for Fiji (by Australia in 1999).

### **A Missionary Region**

The Region has been blessed by the presence of great missionaries, pioneers in some countries: Bishop Luigi Versiglia (1881-1930), Bishop Ignazio Canazei (†1946), Fr. Charles Braga (†1972), Fr. Mario Acquistapace (1916-2002) in China; Mgr. Vincent Cimatti (1883-1965) in Japan; Fr. Andrej Majcen (1905-1999) in Vietnam; Fr. Archimedes Martelli (1916-1984) in South Korea; Bishop Ernest Coppo, Bro. Celestine Acerni (the first Salesian to set foot on Australian soil at Kimberley in 1923) and Fr Joseph Ciantar (1893-1967) in Australia, and many other outstanding confreres.

I would also like to mention some pioneers in more recent years, 'founders' in the respective countries of the Region: Fr Joseph Carbonell in Indonesia, Fr Valerian Barbero in Papua New Guinea; Bro. Joseph Ribeiro in East Timor (1946); Bro. Robert Panetto and Fr. Walter Brigolin in Cambodia (Phnom Penh, 1991); Fr Peter Balcazar and Bro. Francis Tanaka in the Solomon Islands (Tetere, 1995); Fr. Peter Zago and Fr. Hans Dopheide in Pakistan (Lahore and Quetta, 1998); Fr Julian Fox in Fiji (1999); Fr Charles Villegas in Mongolia (Ulaanbatar, 2001).

### **3. The Region from a Salesian standpoint**

#### **The Salesians**

The Confreres present in the Region at the moment<sup>6</sup> are 1,257, with 60 novices and 9 Salesian Bishops. Over the last 20 years the number of confreres has risen substantially by 340 Salesians, with new foundations in more than seven countries with 50 new communities. Some Provinces show a regular growth (North and South Philippines, Korea): others are growing quite quickly (Vietnam and East Timor): still others show a reduced number of confreres as compared with twenty years ago (Australia, China, Japan, Thailand). Today missionaries from abroad form only 15% of the confreres and their average is 65 years. In the same period up to 2006 some 80 confreres born in the Region had left for the missions *ad gentes*. Vocational perseverance is in line with the world average with 46% leaving after profession; although Vietnam has something of a record in this regard with only 5% leaving the Congregation after profession. The majority of the confreres live and work in major cities, and this has an influence on their style of life, on the economy, on the kind of people they are working for and the kind of work they do. No fewer than 353 confreres, almost a third of the total, are in various phases of initial formation. The number of Brothers is increasing thanks to the commitment to vocational promotion in all the Provinces: at present the Region has 201 lay confreres, of whom 47 are in temporary vows.

#### **Community life**

Most of the Region's communities, as I have said, are situated in major towns and cities, and in some Provinces there are a considerable number that are linked with various stages of formation, all of which has an influence on the quality of life. Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong confirms that the most important contribution

<sup>6</sup> Statistics 31 December 2006.

made by the Salesian charism to the cultures of the Region has been its witness to the family spirit which makes both the person of Don Bosco and our Congregation very attractive. There is an ever-greater awareness of the importance of the community and of its witness for evangelisation and vocational growth.

The number of Salesian communities has shown a notable increase over the last twenty years. In 1986 there were in the Region 76 canonically erected communities; in 1996 the number had risen to 106 and in 2006 it had reached 130. And there are also 30 other foundations not yet canonically erected, mainly in mission areas (Pakistan, Mongolia, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam).

## **Kinds of Salesian works and activity**

### ***Youth ministry***

As everywhere in the Church of Asia and Oceania strategic importance is given to formal educational structures (academic schools and centres for vocational training). In some areas there is an emphasis on works of a social character which represent a very important help for poor youngsters.

This is one reason why the majority of the confreres are involved in the **school sector**. There are 282 schools with 100,900 pupils, 350 Salesians and 4,200 lay collaborators, the majority of the latter non-Christians. From the small parish schools of East Timor to the big Institutes with thousands of students in Thailand, formal education is a field that is given priority because of the great opportunities it presents in the world of culture in a society still far from the Gospel. In the last ten years also Salesian University Institutes have grown up in the Philippines, in Papua New Guinea, not to speak of the first polytechnic at Tokyo-Ikuei (now known as the "Salesian Polytechnical Institute").

The 106 parishes, with numerous mission stations and a Catholic population of some 876,000, are served by 200 confreres.

From the huge parishes in Catholic locations, with dozens of stations and thousands of Catholics to parishes and mission stations in places of first evangelisation with only a handful of the faithful, we are contributing our specific style of evangelisation to the local Churches.

There are 39 **centres of vocational training**, with 10,262 pupils and animated by 151 confreres. This is a matter of a privileged field in the process of development and in areas of first evangelisation, because it provides a direct response to the needs of poor youngsters, launching them into the world of employment through a solid human, Christian and professional education and training.

Various educational works are flanked by **boarding establishments** or **hostels**, a total of 38 with 3,168 youngsters who live with us 24 hours a day. Such places provide outstanding opportunities for deepening the life of faith of young Catholics, and at the same time give us a gradual and vital way of approaching young non-Catholics in matters of faith. We need only recall that it is from this kind of setting that the most affectionate of our past-pupils emerge and those committed to our mission and to the Salesian Family.

There are 60 Oratories or Youth Centres attended by 16,000 boys and girls, looked after full-time by 68 Salesians. Hundreds of youngsters in developing areas frequent our sports facilities, content with the games provided and motivated by the serene educative atmosphere they find there; there are extra-scholastic activities in developed countries in the area of media education, groups of social service and groups committed to a journey of faith.

The **Salesian Youth Movement** exists in all the Provinces in widely diverse forms, beginning from organised groups in our schools and extending to the voluntary missionary movement developed recently in some Provinces. In the mainly Catholic countries, like the Philippines and East Timor, thousands of youngsters are involved in the movement at national level; in other coun-

tries the commitment is expressed in the projects of groups which meet together for certain Salesian feasts, especially at school or parish level. The finest fruit is undoubtedly the missionary volunteer movement: the "Don Bosco Volunteer Group" in Japan (1991), the "Torch Movement" in Hong Kong (1995), the International Youth Volunteer Movement in Korea (2002), The Missionary Volunteer Movement in Manila (2003), and the early stages of the International Volunteer Movement in Australia (2006). Hundreds of young people, non-Christians among them, have taken part in the Salesian mission; some have also started on the path of Christian initiation and even that of vocational initiation. These movements, with common initiatives around the Region, form a natural link among young people from the different countries.

The Region has examples of 31 different kinds of **social work**, for the benefit of 3,378 youngsters. We are in close contact with street-children, youngsters in reformatories, children of lepers, and children without families, with a variety of educational responses. There are many house-families (Korea, Japan), entire 'Boys Towns' ("Youth off the streets" in Engadine, Australia; "Boys Town" in Taiwan, "Tuloy sa Don Bosco" at Manila, "Don Bosco Boys Town" at Cebu, "Bangsak" in Thailand founded near the island of Phuket after the terrible *tsunami* of 2004); there is also a regular service for delinquent youngsters (Provinces of Korea and South Philippines) and provision for young workers, especially for immigrants from within the country concerned or from outside it (Korea, North Philippines, Japan, Vietnam).

For **vocational promotion** there are 23 aspirantates of various kinds, with some 1,057 young people in a process of discernment. Concern for vocations is a specific trait of our pastoral work in many Provinces, where we have to face many challenges of the Church, with its shortage of clergy and strong diocesan emphasis, and where it is difficult to make male religious life clearly visible. Praiseworthy efforts are being made for this purpose in several Provinces (Korea, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam). A good number of our confreres are from mixed families, Catholic-Protestant, Bud-

dhist, Moslem, and there are indeed some confreres who asked to be baptised so that they could follow Don Bosco.

### ***Formation***

In the area of **initial formation**, in addition to the above-mentioned 23 major and minor aspirantates, there are in the Region 6 novitiates, 11 postnovitiates, 7 houses for the specific formation of priests and a house for the specific formation of Brothers. The three houses of formation in the Philippines (novitiate of Cebu-Lawaan, postnovitiate of Canlubang, specific formation for priests and brothers at Manila-Parañaque) are inter-provincial. There are only two Salesian study centres for the postnovitiate: Dalat (Vietnam) and Canlubang (North Philippines), and two for theology: Xuan Hiep (Vietnam) and Manila-Parañaque (FIN). The others in formation attend interreligious or diocesan study centres with Salesians among the teachers. At present some 70 young confreres among the 353 in initial formation are doing their studies or practical training outside their Provinces of origin.

As regards **ongoing formation**, there has been progress at a personal level in responsibility for one's own vocational growth, expressed also in the commitment to draw up a personal life-plan and put it into practice.

In the local communities greater importance continues to be given to the 'community day.' Since the GC25 neighbouring communities have frequently been coming together for the monthly or quarterly day of recollection. For the formation of Rectors some Provinces have produced monthly leaflets (North Philippines, Korea), and all the Provinces try to include this element during their meetings at provincial level. The Rectors are growing in their ability to animate the community from both spiritual and pastoral points of view. Since the '90s the opportunity of formation courses has been offered every three years with the participation of all the Provinces.

The four Regional Congresses of the East Asia - Oceania Region that have taken place since 1986, have increased sensitivity concerning the promotion and fostering of the vocation of the Salesian Brother. The recent Seminar on this theme in Cambodia (2006) was a further step forward, involving all the Provincial Councils, all the vocation promoters and all engaged in formation guidance, for a whole year.

### ***Missionary commitment and inculturation of the Salesian Charism***

Over the last hundred years the Region has received about a thousand missionaries from other countries. In the '20s of the last century there was a huge surge of young missionaries, formed in the missionary territories. Working in the Region at the present day there are still some 150 missionaries from abroad. From the '60s of the last century local confreres began to take over the management of the Provinces. Nowadays we have local confreres going into missions *ad gentes*, both within and outside the Region. So far there have been about a hundred of them. The greater number of these have gone out from the Philippines (75), then from Vietnam (25), from Korea (9), from East Timor (6), from Japan (5), and from Australia (4).

Since nearly all the confreres come from backgrounds with a Christian minority, their missionary spirit in general, and in particular the conviction of being missionaries of the young, is of great importance. We have already said that many of the families from which our confreres come, and the majority of the young people we encounter in our surroundings are of other religions. And so in the words of the FABC we can speak of the growth of missionary awareness '*inter gentes*', which well expresses the real situation of the majority of the Salesians. There are five countries still in need of a strengthening of Salesian personnel: Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Mongolia, Pakistan and Cambodia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. AGC 395, *Missionary commitment of the Salesians of Don Bosco today*, p. 64.

The Congregation looks at China with the heart and faith of Don Bosco, but at present must limit itself to continuing to offer services of assistance to the poor and the sick, services compatible with the laws and policies of the country which do not allow the presence and activity of Religious Institutes, especially in the fields of religion and education.

### ***Social communication***

From the humble beginnings of the Salesian Bulletin in the individual countries, the commitment in this field has increased to the extent that we now have several publishing houses (*Don Bosco Sha* in Tokyo, *Salesiana Publishers* in Manila, *Vox Amica* in Hong Kong, *Don Bosco Media* in Seoul), which contribute to the growth of the Salesian Family and to evangelisation. Commitment is also growing in the world of audiovisuals, of the internet, of media education in our Oratories and Youth Centres. Recently also two radio transmitters have begun to function, in Thailand and at Tetera in the Solomon Islands.

Nowadays in almost every Province the Salesian Bulletin can be found in the vernacular, and all nine Provinces have their Provincial Newsletter, some of them in digital form. Among the confreres the SMS is used for quick and economic communication.

Particularly significant is the decision by all Provinces to adopt English as the language of communication, which implies the obligation on the part of all the confreres to gradually acquire a working knowledge of the language. The Region also has a network of Salesian news, *AustraLasia Link*, begun in 1997 after a meeting of the Delegates for Social Communication. The editor resides in Rome, and is linked with dozens of correspondents in all the Provinces, and provides a daily service of news of all the Salesian Family. The network was strengthened, after the Team Visit of 2005, by the launching of the new BOSCONET website ([www.bosconet.aust.com](http://www.bosconet.aust.com)), which provides resources of Salesianity in English.



## *The Salesian Family*

Animation of the Salesian Family and synergy between its various groups is one of the strong points of the Region. As well as the 1,150 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, there are four other Congregations of Women, all of them born in a missionary context: 1,040 "Caritas Sisters of Miyazaki", founded by Mgr. Vincent Cimatti and Fr Antonio Cavoli; 96 "Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary" founded by Bishop Gaetano Pasotti; 25 "Sisters Announcers of the Lord", a Congregation born in the mind and heart of Bishop Luigi Versiglia and founded by Bishop Ignazio Canazei; and 65 "Daughters of the Queenship of Mary Immaculate", founded by Fr. Carlo della Torre.

Among other consecrated groups of the Salesian Family is the Congregation of St Michael the Archangel (6 members in Australia and Papua New Guinea), and two Secular Institutes: the Don Bosco Volunteers (VDB) with 132 members, launched in 1969 at Macao and now present in all the Provinces; and the Volunteers with Don Bosco (CDB) with 3 members, begun in 2000 in Korea.

Outstanding among the lay groups is the Association of Salesians Cooperators, which is growing in both quantity and quality, thanks to the regular Regional Congresses begun in 1993. Today there are 2,035 Cooperators in 120 Centres, with many young aspirants; they are accompanied by SDB and FMA Delegates. The Don Bosco Past-Pupils are organised in all the Provinces and meet at regional level every four years. Their contribution to the Salesian mission varies from one place to another. They are present in large numbers among our lay collaborators in schools and parishes; they are committed workers in the local Churches, and are also found among the diocesan clergy and in posts of responsibility in the social and political spheres.

Also functioning well in every Province is the Consulting Group of the Salesian Family, and the resulting synergy produces considerable apostolic fruits and growth of the Salesian spirit.

The days of spirituality in all Provinces and the family retreats (North Philippines) are occasions for becoming better acquainted with each other and more effective in working for the young.

There are also some works that are wholly or partly entrusted to particular groups of the Family such as the VDB, the Salesian Women's Association, and the Cooperators (social works in Thailand, retreat houses for young people in the Philippines, the after-school centre at Hong Kong, and the direction of some Salesian schools).

### ***Financial solidarity***

With the variety of different situations in mind, we make strong appeals to benefactors and local authorities to ensure the sound functioning of our works, even in non-Christian environments. There are many places in need of external help to which our modest missionary, planning and development offices (stationed in the Provinces of Australia, China, Japan, Korea and North Philippines) do their best to respond.

Provincial solidarity is everywhere on the increase, as also is a professional approach to administration with the regular use of budgeting and balance sheets. Regional solidarity is also growing, and not only when it is a question of meeting emergencies following natural disasters (as, for instance, in 1995 in the Philippines at Bacolor, when the eruption of a volcano buried one of our schools and the associated aspirantate, or the *tsunami* of 2004 in southern Thailand), but also for the development of certain works (e.g. the building of the new novitiate in Vietnam in 2006) or for the support of those Provinces that have many vocations but few financial resources.

### **Salesian holiness**

In some places the Salesian charism has been implanted by great Salesians of whom the holiness or heroicity of virtues has already been officially recognised: Saints Luigi Versiglia and

Callistus Caravario, protomartyrs of the Congregation in China; the Venerable Vincent Cimatti in Japan; Fr Carlo della Torre in Thailand and Fr Andrej Majcen in Vietnam, and those of whom the Causes for beatification and canonisation have been recently introduced. Among the martyrs in China following the advent of communism we recall Cleric Peter Yeh, Frs Joseph Fu and Simon Leung, and Bro Jerome Yip, who died a martyr of charity in a concentration camp. The Salesian missionary spirituality of these confreres was expressed in a deep and attractive simplicity. We may recall the motto of Peter Yeh (†1953): *All for Jesus, Jesus for all!*

I do not hesitate to mention particularly the figure of the Venerable Vincent Cimatti (1879-1965). Fr Renato Ziggiotti, 5<sup>th</sup> Successor of Don Bosco, who had been a pupil of Fr Cimatti, left us this testimony: "For me Mgr. Cimatti is the most complete Salesian I have ever known for piety, ability, fraternal spirit, fatherliness, and skill in winning over souls. More than a most versatile and likeable teacher of pedagogy, he was a real educator and a true copy of St John Bosco". Any visitor to the Cimatti Museum at Tokyo-Chofu, is immediately impressed by the rich charismatic qualities of the "Don Bosco of Japan": gathered there are more than 900 of his musical compositions, 6,150 letters, more than 10,000 original photographs, hundreds of books and articles dealing with philosophy, spirituality, agriculture and the natural sciences. All this was for spreading the Gospel in places where evangelisation was most difficult. His zeal for the application of the preventive system in schools, in seeking vocations, in personal presence among young Salesians at the times of work and recreation, has been passed on to new generations of local Salesians and lay people. The name of Jesus Christ, with that of Don Bosco, has been spread far and wide through the hundreds of musical concerts he gave in Japan, Korea and China. Whether as a formation guide in Turin, or leader of a missionary expedition, or as Rector of a house of formation or Provincial or Vicar Apostolic, he was always outstanding for his Salesian gentleness and kindness.

#### **4. Charismatic experiences of greater significance**

To implant, and make the Salesian charism take root and become inculturated in the young Churches of Asia or Oceania, a great deal of patience is needed if our spirit and activity is to be faithfully expressed in local cultures. This is a great challenge that demands knowledge and love from both the standpoint of the culture concerned and that of Don Bosco and the Congregation. In this important work, carried out with courage and optimism, efforts have been made to make available all the Salesian sources and to translate the letters of the Rector Major in the seven main languages of the Region: Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Tetum. There is the first abbreviated translation of the Biographical Memoirs in 5 volumes (Hong Kong, 2005). But the most important thing is that all the Provinces are making a special effort to get to know Don Bosco better and bring him to life in their particular environment. Some Provinces publish Salesian spirituality reviews in the vernacular (Japan, Thailand), or send confreres for courses of Salesianity in Rome or Berkeley, USA. The movement for a return to Don Bosco, to which we are invited by the letter of convocation of the GC26, was received with great enthusiasm and has given rise to interesting initiatives, such as Provincial or Regional seminars and retreats based on the theme.

Dialogue between the cultures from which our confreres come and those in which they are working, together with the witness of a Salesian living of the Gospel of Christ, is producing good results. There is no doubt that our closeness to the people, our presence among the young, and our educative and pastoral style, with its welcoming friendliness and family spirit, its religious and spiritual quality, draw people to us and make us in general esteemed by the local Church.

It is very encouraging to find expressions of “Valdocco” finding their place in local culture in various parts of the Region. Beginning from China-Macao, Salesian Institute (1906) to Thailand-Banpong

(1927) and Bangkok - Don Bosco (1946), to Japan - Tokyo, Suganami (1934), and then China - Beijing (1946-1954), Australia - Sydney, Engadine (1947), Philippines - Manila, Mandaluyong (1954), Philippines - Visayas, Victorias (1952), East Timor - Fatumaca (1964), South Korea - Seoul, Dae Rim Dong (1963), Vietnam - Saigon, GoVap (1963-1976), Papua New Guinea - Araithiri (1980), Samoa - Alafua (1980), Indonesia - Jakarta, Sunter (1992) and others.

I would now like to present some significant experiences and ways chosen to express the charism, which could provide inspiration also for confreres of other Regions.

In **Australia** our confreres with a large number of lay people have been animating eight secondary schools since 1998 through a "Salesian Schools' Charter" based on the Oratory criteria (c. 40). All planning, animation and evaluation are standardised in line with this joint vision adopted and shared effectively by all teachers in our schools. In their training process they have studied more deeply what they understand by the statement that the educational environment resembles "a home that welcomes, a parish that evangelises, a school that prepares for life and a playground where friends can meet and enjoy themselves" (C. 40).

In the **Chinese** Province the preparation for the centenary of Salesian work (2001-2006) was guided by a movement towards Salesian holiness, to rediscover Don Bosco with the 20,000 pupils and teachers of our schools. Around this animating nucleus the synergy of the Salesian Family was developed which was able to reach poor youngsters. During the centenary celebrations I was able to visit, among other places, the "Don Bosco Discovery Centre" at Hong Kong, Tang King Po College, where young people can meet Don Bosco in an interactive exhibition. And among the many works of this Province I cannot fail to mention "Youth Outreach", a great Youth Centre open 24 hours a day, especially for youngsters exposed to dangers on the streets of Hong Kong.

In the **Philippines** the golden jubilee of Salesian work in 2001 led to the courageous decision to commit ourselves to a greater ex-

tent to young people who are very poor, of whom the majority live in country areas. For this reason many rural foundations were made, especially with vocational training centres designed to meet the local needs. From 1994 the consulting body of the Salesian Family of Manila can serve as a model for other Provinces for its style of animation. Its leadership rotates among the different groups for the organisation of meetings for spiritual or formative purposes, for celebrations or for particular apostolic activities. Since 2002 in the Province of Cebu the *CLAY Don Bosco Institute* has been developed, which is still the only example in the Region of a project of Salesian formation carried out by lay people for the laity and the young. Our novices of Lawaan are also involved in weekly discussion sessions on the Memoirs of the Oratory with the formation guides and members of *Don Bosco CLAY*.

According to its recent Provincial Operational Plan, the Province of Japan is directing its activities towards young people at risk and to the working classes that Japanese society finds it difficult to assimilate. It is a question of young and migrant workers, not limited to Catholics though the latter form the majority. The two parishes of Yamato and Hamamatsu are models of a multicultural approach within the Japanese Catholic Church. In the same setting, services are offered to immigrants of no less than eight different linguistic groups. Meanwhile the zealous vocational campaign continues in the Province: this is quite exceptional in the whole of the Japanese Church when it is remembered that Christians form less than 1% of the population. Biblical school camps, introduced in 1973 at Nojiriko, have become a real focus of attention for our three aspirantates. At present we have about 50 aspirantates at Yokohama, Yokkaichi and Chofu, of whom a large number came through the experience of biblical camps.

The only Vice-Province of the Region, *Indonesia-East Timor*, has enjoyed an almost miraculous vocational growth in the last two decades, during which it has grown from 19 to 170 confreres, with the opening of many formation centres. In fact after twenty years work in Indonesia we now have more than 50 native confr-

eres, who are carrying out a delicate work in the largest Islamic country in the world. In East Timor, the poorest country in Asia and despite the very difficult situation it is experiencing, the charism is growing, thanks to the closeness and generous dedication of the confreres to the suffering people in their commitment to re-evangelisation and human advancement.

**South Korea** is a Province that since the '70s has concentrated very much on the mission to poor and abandoned youngsters, with numerous house-families, commitment to young delinquents, and some Centres for Vocational Training. Despite the very rapid social and cultural changes that are taking place in the country, the Salesians manage to adapt successfully to the new situation and carry out an effective mission for this section of poor and marginalised youngsters. All the phases of initial formation take place alongside these young people who were the objects of Don Bosco's special care, so as to be make it possible to live consecrated life in interaction with them. The Korean Salesian confreres have developed a particular method of evangelisation through Youth Centres attended by thousands of pupils from state schools during the year and by others coming from diocesan parishes of the dynamic Korean Church. Remarkable too is the vitality of the Salesians Cooperators, due to their good and inculcated formation and the apostolate they carry out alongside the Salesians in works for young people in difficulty. The Province, moreover, carries out a missionary commitment in North East Asia at the explicit request of Fr Egidio Viganò; in the last decade, 10 missionaries *ad gentes* have left Korea for different parts of the world.

The Province of **Thailand** is numerically the smallest in the Region. Despite this the Salesians are the first religious Congregation in the country. One of the best opportunities for being present among Buddhist young people are our numerous schools in which we offer an education to 21,000 students. These schools are very much appreciated and our Buddhist Past-Pupils take their affection for Don Bosco with them into society. Thanks to the

Past-Pupils the great Salesian Family is also united and well animated. The expansion that has taken place into the neighbouring countries of Laos and Cambodia is evidence of the Salesian missionary spirit with the valuable help of our past-pupils who are teachers and educators.

**Vietnam** is the most numerous and dynamic Province of the Region, with an ardent missionary spirit as regards both its own people and those of foreign countries. In the last four years the Province has sent out some 30 confreres as missionaries *ad gentes*, and is distinguished for the painstaking zeal of its vocational promotion, with well prepared weekly meetings and especially the follow up of university students in their growth in faith. The promoting of the Salesian Brother also finds its highpoint in Vietnam. Special mention is due to the exceptional testimony after 1975 to revive the Salesian charism despite the loss of all the educational institutions. In addition to the 25 parishes which have helped us to survive in the years of difficulty, there have grown up recently various vocational training centres that are highly regarded by both the government and the people. All this goes to make of this Province one of the Salesian Provinces in the world with the most charismatic vitality.

Finally there is the Delegation of **Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands**. The mission is carried out in poor areas among a population of which the majority is Christian, but in need of evangelisation and education for its young people, as well as social development.

## 5. Some challenges

In the light of the multicultural and multireligious context of Salesian life in the Region and of the specific contribution our charism and mission are called upon to offer to the countries in which we are working, the following are challenges we have to confront:



**A. In the spiritual and charismatic area** we may identify three main challenges:

- **at cultural level:** the risk of secularism and materialism in an environment which is sensitive to the religious aspect of life and requires not only social service but also the witness of a deep experience of God;

- **at personal level:** the temptation to seek social status which gives priority to a professional approach, reducing Salesian life rather to a 'state of life' than a 'project of evangelical life';

- **at institutional level:** a somewhat weak and merely formal sense of belonging to the Congregation and the fulfilment of its guidelines, which, among other things, is manifested in the weakness of initial formation as a result of precarious formation conditions and the shortage of Salesian study centres, and in the unsatisfactory adoption and application of the pastoral model of the Congregation.

What these challenges tell us is that we need a Salesian life of greater *MYSTICAL* intensity.

**B. In the evangelising and pastoral area** there are three main challenges:

- **at cultural level:** the tendency to individualism, expressed in the lack of courage in facing difficulties arising from the fact of being a minority among non-Christians, especially against the background of Confucianism and Buddhism.

- **at personal level:** exaggerated activism, which can turn us into secular professionals rather than consecrated persons, and poor preparation for interreligious and intercultural dialogue;

- **at institutional level:** resistance in responding to changes of lifestyle and of work so as to be more meaningful and effective, and come closer to poor youngsters in our service to them.

These challenges are faced through a Salesian mission lived as *SERVICE*.

**C. *In the area of religious and community life*** we may note three main challenges:

- **at cultural level:** the absence of an inculturated commonly shared model of the consecrated life, and the difficulty of expressing our religious consecration by a more visible and credible witness to the Gospel, in the awareness of being called to help the Christian faith have a strong cultural impact;
- **at personal level:** the temptation to live in a way that conceals our Christian and consecrated identity, by accepting cultural elements that have nothing to do with the project of Salesian life;
- **at institutional level:** the urgent need for reshaping the works in every Province, to ensure the experience of community life and give quality to the pastoral educative project.

These challenges tell us of the need to recover a Salesian life permeated by *PROPHECY*.

**D. *In the functioning of the Region*** we may identify two main challenges:

- **at the level of regional coordination:** the isolated nature of some works, physical distances, languages, differences of a social, cultural, ecclesial and vocational nature that make it difficult to reach a more effective, deep and practical level of sharing;
- **at the level of regional animation:** the lack of a regional centre as a contribution to the integration, coordination and boosting of the Provinces in the different areas of the Salesian life and mission: formation, youth ministry, Salesian family, social communication, missions and economy.

These are challenges that prompt us to believe in the value of *SYNERGY*.

**We can sum up all the challenges in the need to build and live a Salesian spirituality that is truly missionary and inculturated, which can help us**

- to avoid the danger of activism, of the seeking of a soft and easy life, and of the lack of charismatic identity;
- to overcome the dichotomy between life and faith, between being and doing, between the evangelical counsels - mission - community life;
- to make the living presence of Don Bosco more apparent in the Region of East Asia - Oceania.

At this point I feel I must mention, among the many confreres of outstanding qualities, two Salesians who have been able to bring Don Bosco to life again by accompanying their people and giving them sure guidance in moments of great difficulty. I am referring to Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun, Bishop of Hong Kong, who was named a Cardinal at the time the centenary of Salesian work in the East Asia – Oceania Region was being celebrated, and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his role on behalf of his sorely tried country of East Timor. The fact that God has given to the Congregation saints, martyrs, founders, wonderful educators and great bishops is the best guarantee that Don Bosco can be given an ever more Asian countenance.

## **Conclusion – “I am with you always”**

From a geographical point of view the place most distant from Rome is somewhere in the Region of East Asia – Oceania. I was able to verify this for myself during my journey to Australia and Samoa in 2004. It was the first Samoan Rector, who was absent at the time of my visit, who in May 2006 expressed as his dream: “I would like to visit the holy places of Don Bosco, and at least once in my life meet the Rector Major personally.”

Some confreres of the Region have been able to make a pilgrimage to the Salesian holy places, and others have made the effort to come close to Don Bosco in local cultures and languages.

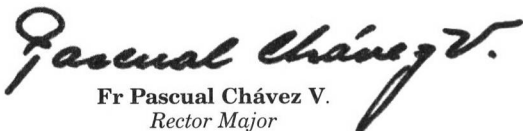
As Successor of Don Bosco I have been able to visit all the Provinces of the Region, (the last one Vietnam in April), and now I have personal knowledge of so many confreres and works. For some Provinces their last visit from a Rector Major had been as much as 24 years ago. There were also some places where no Rector Major had ever been at all, like the Solomon Islands, Pakistan, Mongolia, Laos, and Fiji. Well then, by this letter I want to express my closeness to all of you, but I also want to make each of you feel that he is close to all the Salesians throughout the world.

“Without Mary Help of Christians we Salesians are nothing” was one of the five pieces of advice given to missionaries in China by the first Salesian, Bishop Luigi Versiglia, in far off 1920.

Many local Churches in East Asia and Oceania venerate the Mother of Jesus and of the Church as the Help of Christians – she is the Patroness of Australia, of China, of Vietnam and of the Churches of Oceania. So as not to exclude anyone, many Salesian communities of the Region pray each day with the ejaculation: “Mary, our help, pray for us!” Her living presence is deeply felt. I entrust to her the future of this Region of ours, the most distant from Rome in terms of time, distance and culture, but not on that account any less loved by Don Bosco and identified with the Congregation.

May Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco’s Teacher, bless and guide the generations of confreres growing up in this Region.

Affectionately in Don Bosco,

  
Fr Pascual Chávez V.  
Rector Major

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

#### – *December 2006*

Having returned from Montecorone, where he has spent the last three days of November, on 5 December the Rector Major opened the *Winter Plenary Session* of the General Council which was to continue until Friday 26 January 2007.

On the afternoon of Sunday 3 December he went to the “Pius XI” Clinic to visit Archbishop Angelo Amato, who was recovering from an operation there. In the morning of the following day he attended a meeting in the headquarters of the Union of Superiors General.

In the evening of Tuesday 5 December, he held a meeting with the Missionaries who had been taking part in a formation course organised by the Councillor for the Missions.

In the evening of Wednesday 6, he went to the UPS, to preside at a meeting of the Academic Senate.

In the evening of Thursday 7 he again went to the UPS for the conferral of a Doctorate *honoris causa* in Communication on Mr Robert Mohlant, former Secretary General of the World Catholic Association for Communication *SIGNIS*.

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Fr Chávez inaugurated the group of confreres’ rooms recently renovated in the Generalate. In the evening he went to Grottarossa, for Mass and the Marian Procession.

He was engaged throughout the following day seeing confreres from the Generalate and elsewhere.

On Sunday 10, in the early evening he presided at Mass in honour of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, at the invitation of the Rector of the Mexican College in Rome. On his return, at supper he officially welcomed the Provincials who had come for their introductory course.

On Monday 11, in the morning he had a first meeting with all the Provincials after which he went to the Vatican, where accompanied by the Superior General of the Sons of Divine Providence, Fr Flavio Peloso he had an appointment with the Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. In the evening he went to the UPS for the traditional meeting before Christmas between the Rector Major and all the community of the Vice Province.

On Thursday 14 in the morning he preached at a day of recollection for the confreres of the Testaccio community and in the afternoon he presided at Mass.

At midday on Saturday 16 he greeted a group of Salesian Past Pupils including the Presidents and Delegates from the whole of Europe. In the evening accompanied by most of the Councillors and the Provincials who were present he took part in the celebration of the episcopal ordination of Bishop Raffaele Farina, in the Basilica of St Peters.

On Sunday 17, after the Mass at which Bishop Farina presided, the Rector Major received him and his relatives in his office, and afterwards Bishop Adriano Van Luyn and Archbishop Lillo La Piana.

On Monday 18 during the morning, he leads a day of recollection for the Provincials. On Wednesday 20 the course for the new Provincials comes to an end as all join in celebrating the Rector Major's birthday.

On Thursday morning 21, with all the General Council he goes to Genzano, to the Novitiate community, for a day of recollection in preparation for Christmas.

On Saturday 23, in the morning he presides at a meeting of the Executive Council of the USG in

its central offices. In the afternoon he takes part in the commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Salesian Historical Institute.

On Sunday 24, during the morning, he goes to the Generalate of the FMA to offer Christmas greetings to Mother Antonia Colombo and the Councillors. At Midnight in the Salesian Generalate he presides at the first Christmas Mass.

Between Wednesday 27 and Friday 29 he chairs meetings of the General Council after the Christmas break and before that for the New Year. At midday on Friday 29 receives Bishop Carlo Chenis, recently appointed the Bishop of Civitavecchia - Tarquinia.

On Saturday morning 30, he receives news of the death of Fr Paolo Natali, and in the afternoon with all the Councillors still resident he goes to the UPS to pray for his eternal repose. In the evening he goes to the Vatican to present the Strenna to the Salesian community, and stays for supper with the confreres.

On Sunday 31, in the afternoon he goes to the Generalate of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to present the Strenna for 2007 and having returned home, before evening prayer gives the same presentation to the confreres

of the community of the Generalate.

### – *January 2007*

On the first day of the New Year 2007, the Solemnity of the Divine Motherhood of Mary, early in the morning Fr Chávez leaves for Turin, where he celebrates Mass at 10.00 in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians. Afterwards, accompanied by his secretary, Fr Juan José Bartolomé, and the Provincial of the Circumscription of Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta, he leaves for Châtillon, where he is welcomed by the confreres in the community. He dines with them and then continues his journey to Les Combes, where he spends a few days rest until Saturday 6, the feast of the Epiphany when he returns to Rome.

During Sunday 7 January, the Rector Major receives the Provincials of Slovakia, of Warsaw, Poland, some Councillors and personnel from the UPS.

Between Monday 8 and Friday 12 he presides at meetings of the General Council. In the evening of Tuesday 9, there is a meeting between the two General Councils SDB-FMA. In the afternoon 10, he receives the Ambassador of Chile to the Holy See, H. E. Pablo Cabrera, and afterwards the Dean of

the Faculty of Social Communication of the UPS. In the afternoon of Thursday 11, he has a meeting with Fr Ugo De Censi. On Friday he has a very full agenda of meetings with: Fr Félix Urra, the new Provincial of Bilbao; Sr Appolinaris, Mother General of the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki, accompanied by other Sisters of the Council; Archbishop Nicola Cotugno, Salesian Archbishop of Montevideo; Fr Damásio Medeiros, Provincial of Manaus; Fr Miguel Agustín Aguilar, the new Provincial of Mexico (MEM).

On Sunday 14 Fr Chávez speaks with some of the Provincials of the CISI holding their half-yearly meeting.

Between Tuesday 16 and Thursday 18 there are meetings of the 'plenum' of the General Council. In the evening of Tuesday 16, with the Vicar, the Economist General and the Regional Councillor, Fr Václav Klement, he goes to the Embassy of Korea to the Holy See, for a dinner in honour of H. E. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone. On Thursday 18 he gives the Good Night to those taking part in the Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family

On Friday 19 in the morning he takes part in the Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family; in the

evening he receives the two candidates proposed as Dean of the Faculty of Social Communication at the UPS, Fr Franco Lever and Fr Giuseppe Costa.

On Saturday 20, in the morning he speaks with the Provincial of Rosario Argentina, Fr Joaquín López, and in the evening presides at Mass with those taking part in the Spirituality Days. The following morning, after once again presiding at Mass, he concludes the Days with his closing address.

Between Tuesday 23 and Friday 26 the final week of the plenary session of the General Council is held. In the afternoon of Tuesday 23 the Rector Major presides at a meeting at which there is consideration of a proposal regarding forms of financial management connected with the Salesian Pontifical University and the UPS Vice Province.

On Thursday 25, in the evening, he gives the Good Night to the community of the Generalate, with an account of the work undertaken during the past two months and the following day concludes the plenary session of the General Council with Mass and a final meeting. In the course of the day he then receives, in addition to the Councillors, some missionaries and the Ambassador of Korea to the Holy See.

On Monday 29, after having received the Provincial of the Wroclaw Province, in the afternoon he leaves for Turin to celebrate the feast of Don Bosco there. On his arrival at the end of evening prayers he gives the Good Night to the SDB and FMA communities of Valdocco. On 31 January he presides at two Masses. In the course of the day he also inaugurates a new printing press, makes some recordings for First Radio and takes part in a performance of the story of the *yellow umbrella* from the 2007 Strenna.

#### – February 2007

Having returned to Rome on the morning of 1 February, the Rector Major was informed of the death of the Salesian Cardinal Antonio María Javierre Ortas. After dinner he went with the Vicar and some Councillors to the Vatican to pray before the remains. The following day at midday in St Peter's Basilica he took part in the celebration of the funeral, at which the Holy Father Benedict XVI presided. In the evening he then took part in the celebration of the Day of Consecrated Life.

On Saturday 3 February he began a journey to India, starting his visit in Kerala, in the Province of Bangalore, on the occasion of the



50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presence of the Salesians in Kochi. On 4, after having been welcomed by the community in Aluva, he went to Don Bosco Vaduthala, the cradle of the most fruitful Salesian work in Kerala, for the jubilee celebrations. The following day, in Aluva, he met the Novices and the confreres in temporary vows, then those perpetually professed, followed by the Salesian Family. After lunch he visited the house in Snehabhavan for street children, managed by the Salesians in collaboration with the local authorities of Kochi. Afterwards still in Kochi, he launched the celebrations for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the house in Vennala.

After this Fr Chávez went to the Vice Province of Goa, which was celebrating the diamond jubilee of the presence of the Salesians in Panjim. Here the Rector Major had engagements on 6 and 7 February. On the first day after being welcomed at the Provincial House in Odxel, he gave a conference to the confreres of the Vice Province, after which he went to Don Bosco in Panjim. Here he presided at a solemn concelebration, attended a concert specially prepared for the occasion and met the parents of the confreres. Early in the morning of the next day he paid a visit

to the Basilica "Bom Jesus", to pray before the casket of St Francis Xavier. Then he returned to Panjim for a meeting with the Co-operators and Past Pupils, gave a press conference and took part in the "Youth Rally", in the Kala auditorium, where he responded to the two thousand youngsters from the schools of the Salesians and the FMA who filled the hall. In the evening he went first to Quepem, where he celebrated Mass and attended a concert, and then to Fatorda, where he met the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the SMI.

From Goa Fr Chávez went to the Province of Mumbai, where he stayed between 8 and 10 February. On the first day, in the morning, he was kept busy in the house at Kurla, where he had a meeting with the young people from the College of Engineering, with those from the Naval Academy, those in Vocational Formation and those from groups of parishes. The whole evening programme was held at Dominic Savio in Andheri, and included a meeting with 1,500 youngsters from our schools, another with the aspirants and prenovices, another with the Past Pupils, and Mass with the Salesian Family. On the second day the Rector Major visited the region of

Gujarat. Having arrived in Baroda, he immediately went to Vishwamitri for the blessing of the "Shelter Don Bosco"; taking part in the ceremony were street children, friends and benefactors, representatives of development agencies and Salesians. Then having arrived at the Salesian community in Baroda, he was welcomed by the youngsters from the school and the people from the parish. After lunch he left a once for Narukot, where he had a meeting with representatives of the communities which work with the tribal groups of the Gujarat region. After this he met the missionaries and other male and female religious who collaborate with the Salesians in the missions. After supper he returned to the Baroda community. The following day he returned to Mumbai, this time to the house of Matunga. After being welcomed there by the confreres, teachers and pupils he met in turn the novices and the confreres in initial formation, and the perpetually professed confreres. He then presided at Mass for the Salesians. In the afternoon he met the teachers and collaborators in the area of development. After giving a press conference, he visited "Shelter Don Bosco" for street children and took part in a concert for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the

Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, which was also attended by the Archbishop of Mumbai, Mgr. Osvaldo Gracias, and the Salesian Archbishops Mgr. Dominic Jala, of the Archdiocese of Shillong, and Mgr. Chinnappa Malayappan, of the Archdiocese of Chennai.

On 11 and 12 still in the Province of Mumbai, Fr Chávez was involved in the first meeting of all the Provincials of the South Asia Region to examine the situation regarding: religious life in the South Asia Region, the challenges today facing the Provinces and Vice Provinces of the Region, the fundamental choices to overcome these challenges, the urgent need to evangelise, missionary expansion in the Provinces, community life and prospects for the future.

In particular, in the evening of Sunday 11 February the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated of the well-known Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians, the "Don Bosco's Madonna". Taking part in the celebration were the two Salesian Archbishops Mgr. Jala and Mgr. Malayappan, the Regional Fr Joaquim D'Souza, the Provincials from the South Asia Region, a good number of confreres, members of the Salesian Family, benefactors and a large group of devotees of the Madonna.

From Mumbai the Rector Major flew to Ranchi, in the New Delhi Province where he stayed on Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 February. On the first day under the rain that made it necessary to carry out in the church what had been planned for outside, in the house of Hatia he had a meeting with the youngsters from the different works, presided at Mass and attended a concert. On the second day, at Kokar, he met the confreres from the area, blessed the foundation stone of a new building for the school paid a visit to the Archbishop, H.E. Cardinal Telesforo Toppo, had a meeting with the Salesian Family and presided at Mass. In the evening he left for Delhi, where he had a meeting with the confreres of the Province and some members of the Salesian Family.

The travels ended sooner than expected, without his being able to visit the Vice Province of Myanmar, which was celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Nazareth Aspirantate, because he was unable to obtain an entry permit. However, Fr Chávez has promised to visit on another occasion.

So on 16 February he returned to Rome where he remained until Wednesday 21, engaged in the normal office work. On the evening of Saturday 17 he had a

meeting with Bishop Luc Van Looy, and on Sunday 18 he had supper with Mother Antonia Colombo and a group of young FMA from the Italian Provinces attending a formation meeting in the Salesianum and concluded with the Good Night.

On Ash Wednesday the Rector Major presided at Mass and the imposition of the ashes with the community of the Generalate. The following day he left for Mexico to spend a few days with his family, at Saltillo, and for an annual medical check-up at Guadalajara, from where he left on 2 March for Paraguay, to preach a Retreat for the Provincials of the two Regions of America.

## 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

On 4 December 2006 the *winter plenary session* of the General Council began, and the Councillors were kept busy until 26 January 2007. In addition to the plenary sessions, 24 in all, there were other meetings of groups or commissions for the study of various topics. During this session, there was also the gathering of new Provincials – between 10 and 20 Decem-

ber 2006 – who had meetings with the Rector Major and the Council. The Councillors also made their contribution to other meetings especially those held at the Generalate. As always, in addition to the more pressing issues or problems for the animation and guidance of the Congregation, sufficient time was given to the ordinary matters of business coming from the Provinces, such as: appointments of Provincial Councillors and the approval of the appointments of Rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses and/or activities, matters regarding confreres and economic-administrative issues. The following is a summary of the more important items on the agenda.

## **1. Appointment of Provincials**

In this session the appointment was made of the Superior of three Provinces. Following a careful process of discernment, and taking special account of the results of the consultation held in the Province, the General Council made the necessary provision. This is the list in alphabetical order of the Provincials appointed in the course of the session: *Miguel Agustín Aguilar Medina*, for the Province of Mexi-

co - México; *Filiberto González Plasencia*, for the Province of Mexico - Guadalajara; *Félix Urrea Mendía*, for the Province of Spain - Bilbao.

No. 5.4 in this issue of the AGC provides some biographical details of those appointed.

## **2. Reports on Extraordinary Visitations**

The examination of the reports of the Extraordinary Visitations to the Provinces presented by the respective Visitors is always one of the more important items on the agenda of the General Council for the animation of the Congregation in its various local presences. It provides the opportunity to reflect together on the progress of each Province on the basis of the Visitor's observations and to offer suggestions for action regarding its government. This results in recommendations useful for the Rector Major's concluding letter and in proposals for initiatives and guidance on the part of the General Council.

During this session reports were considered from the following 8 Provinces: the Province of Brazil - Campo Grande; the Province of Brazil - Manaus; the Province of

India - Madras (Chennai); the Province of Korea; the Province of Italia - Liguria Tuscany; the Province of Slovakia; the Province of West United States; the Province of Hungary.

### **3. Topics studied and decisions made**

In the course of the session, as well as matters concerning the Provinces and Regions, the Council considered some issues connected more generally with the government and animation of the Congregation, paying particular attention to the Project of animation and government for the six-year period and to the life and activity of the Council itself. Some practical decisions were made regarding matters discussed. The main topics considered were as follows.

- **Questions relating to the GC26.** The General Council, following the presentation by the Moderator of the GC26, examined further the work undertaken in the intermediate plenary session of the Council in October 2006, and made some basically definitive proposals regarding issues of organisation, methodology and the Regulations of GC26.

- **Evaluation of the Government of the Congregation.** An important and demanding issue in this session has been the further study of what had been done in the intermediate Council (October 2006), regarding the evaluation of the Government of the Congregation (structure and method of animation of government, at three levels: Congregation – Province – Community). In addition to the reflection in depth in the Council, the individual Councillors gave the Rector Major their own personal contributions on the matter. The issue will be considered further in the next summer plenary session in order to define it better and present it as a contribution of the General Council to the GC26.

- **Evaluation of the progress of IUS and prospects for the future.** As the General Councillor for Youth Ministry introduced the matter the General Council noted the progress made by the IUS and prospects for the future: Report and analysis IUS 2001 (Common Programme 1 and 2); the Identity of the IUS and a policy for a Salesian presence in the field of higher education by means of three strategic measures: the formation of the personnel – basis of the institutions (plan for future progress - econo-

my) – network of the IUS. After considering the question, the General Council is of the mind to pay more attention to the capacity of the Provinces that make a request to set up a university; to give more importance to the pastoral aspect that ought to be present as an essential element of its identity and not optional; that it is necessary to consolidate what has already been done before any further steps ahead are taken and to ensure the involvement of other people in their management and animation.

- Examination of the dossier **“Salesian presence in the Islamic world”**. Starting from an awareness of the problems and challenges that our foundations in the Islamic world are facing the General Council made some observations that should serve in the future for the formulation of the policy of the Congregation in the Islamic world: the great variety of Islamic settings; the fundamental criteria to be applied everywhere; formation for a demanding dialogue with Islam; the need for a new plan for our presence in MOR; the phenomenon of the increasing Muslim presence in Europe.

- **Re-structuring of the Provinces of Italy** (ILT-IAD-IRO-ISA). After a careful study of

the progress of the four Provinces and in view of the positive response in a consultation of the confreres in the four Provinces concerned, the General Council has responded positively and has approved in general terms the setting up of a new Circumscription starting from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.

- The document of the USG on **“Pastoral approach to the problem of the sexual abuse of minors on the part of priests and religious”**. After a brief examination of the document within the Council, the Rector Major recommended that the Regional Councillors especially should present it to the Provincials and study it with them. It is a document in line with two other documents sent to the Provincials in 2002 and 2004 with guidelines regarding the abuse of minors.

- **Approval of the Budget for 2007**. During this session, following its presentation by the Economist General, the General Council examined and approved, according to the norms of the Regulations, the **Budget for 2007** of the Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco.

- **Distribution of “Mission Funds”**. The General Council

considered and approved the proposals made by the Commission for the n. 139 – December 2006, distribution of assistance from the Mission Fund. These are funds coming from the Mission Offices for the benefit of the many projects and activities of the Congregation.

- **Meeting with the team of the SC Department.** Following a request by the General Councillor for Social Communication, the General Council held a meeting with the Team of ANS and of the *sdb.org* portal in which there was a brief presentation of the work of evaluation and of the planning of the new ANS site, and consideration of possible forms of dialogue and collaboration between the Councillors and the Agency and the Portal, which are valid instruments at the service of the animation and government of the Congregation.

- Promotion of the “**Mamma Margaret Association**” which arose from the initiative of one mother to bring together the mothers of Salesians, so that they might get to know each other and share their life experiences. The Association would have this aim: to bring together the parents of Salesians so as to cultivate their

own Christian vocation; meeting periodically to get to know each other and to share all that might be relevant to the vocation of their own sons; to help and support parents who are sick, elderly or incapacitated; drawing close and listening to them, understanding and providing comfort for parents; helping and guiding them; praying for the intercession of those parents who are already in the Father’s house.

- **Strengthening of the Salesian presence in some European Provinces.** Following a presentation by the General Councillor for the Missions, the General Council considered the need to strengthen the Salesian presence in some European Provinces, establishing priorities and criteria.

- **Report on the activities of the Departments.** The General Councillors responsible for the Departments gave reports on the activities of their Departments during the period January – December 2006.

Among **significant events** in the course of the session the following should be mentioned:

• **Meeting of the General Councils SDB and FMA**, that

took place on 9 January 2007, at the SDB Generalate, with two items on the agenda: the presentation of the two General Chapters of the SDB and FMA; some points of information. Fr Francesco Cereda, as Moderator of the SDB GC XXVI, gave a clear presentation of the **theme of the Chapter**, in its essentials, with the basic structure of the theme and the use of five modules for reflection and the process of community discernment, to be undertaken in the pre-capitular phase. In their turn the General Council of the FMA presented the broad outlines of the XXII General Chapter, focused on the theme: ***Called to be, today, a sign of the anticipatory love of God.*** Moving on to some **items of interest** the Rector Major spoke about what had emerged in the evaluation process during the Executive Council Meeting of the USG and UISG. It was noted – he said – that in these meetings the various religious Institutes show a unity of spirit, but not always unity in their intentions and projects. It is necessary to move on from spiritual accord to a sharing of projects so as to make a joint contribution to solving some of the great problems in the world. (Sudan Project; Fight against AIDS; the health field). Finally the election of

the Rector Major as the new Superior of the USG was noted. On the part of the FMA there was the presentation of a report on the ***China Service*** now arrived at a second phase, which consists in a process of the FMA and the Daughters of Don Bosco becoming better acquainted, and the ***Jerusalem Project*** offered to the FMA to foster a renewal of Salesian religious life, starting from a lived experience and consideration of the Word of God in those places where Jesus lived, died and rose again.

• **A Day of Recollection at Genzano.** On Thursday 21 December, the General Council had a full Day of Recollection that was held at our novitiate in Genzano, directed by Fr Jesús Manuel García, associate professor of Spiritual Theology at the UPS, with reflections entitled “Give us the eyes to contemplate the Mystery of Your Love”.

• **The Spirituality Days of the Salesian Family** (18-21 January 2007). These were a fine experience of Salesian spirituality on the topic of the Strenna, with a very successful combination of illuminating material, good group work, friendly exchanges among those taking part and the groups of the SF, of celebration and of prayer.



### **5.1 Message of the Rector Major to the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement**

Below is the Message that the Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva, sent to the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) on the occasion of the Feast of Don Bosco 31 January 2007. The Message, written in a novel way, is meant to convey what Don Bosco himself would want to say to young people today through his Successor.

*Dear Friends,*

*As the successor of a dreamer, I too had a dream and I want to tell you about it, with the same simplicity and trust that our father Don Bosco used to confide in the young people during the Good Nights at Valdocco.*

*I dreamt that he was writing this message to you, personally himself, almost like a new letter from Rome.*

*I have just lent him my hand (and my computer).*

*So, here is Don Bosco's message to you.*

*Read it with the same simplicity and love as the young people of his time.*

*A fond wish from me too.*

Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA

My Dear Young People,

Even though far from you in time, I am thinking of you and I feel you close with your desire to live and to be happy. With my prayers I support your highest aspirations and I am close to you in your moments of difficulty.

You are my life and therefore these words are from one who loves you tenderly in Jesus Christ.

I should like to have all the gentle and strong love of Mamma Margaret in order to speak to your heart and communicate to you that great passion for life that from my infancy she passed on to me. In her mother's heart, the heart of God the lover of life was beating, and I learned to recognize it in the splendour and warm brightness of the dawn and the dusk, in the poor who knocked at the door of the house. Mamma found the right words, the right gestures in order to reveal with simplicity the love that embraced life, and a love that healed the wound opened by the death of my father.

Dear young people, I address the same tender and strong words to you. Life is the most precious gift you have received: respect, defend, love and serve life, the whole of life and the life of everyone!

God who is passionate about life does not want us to trade with human life. Human beings are not goods. There were times when human beings were bought and sold and unfortunately it is not over yet. It was happening on the streets of Valdocco, as it happens today in the squares and on the streets of your cities.

I have never forgotten what I saw in the prisons and on the streets, the horrible reality of those days. It changed my life: I decided to spend my life to free the young from all kinds of prisons, the material ones and those of loneliness, of ignorance, of delinquency, of confusion and of desperation.

My times were sad, but you too are living through dramatic events in which once again predominates contempt for human life, terrorism, abuse and the exploitation of women and children. In such a situation you cannot remain indifferent, especially as young people. From you should come a new energy, a movement that speaks of God's love for human life.

Dear young people, I want to show you a way to respond to this mission and to live a full, happy and fruitful life. The secret is your friendship with Jesus Christ. In

Him the mercy and the tenderness of a God who loves life can be seen. He entered fully in a unique a marvellous way into human events; He spent His whole life liberating, saving and giving life to all those oppressed by evil. He knew joy, friendship, but also pain, persecution and death. By giving His own life through love and rising from the dead, He gave rise to a life that is full and eternal.

His Resurrection is like the eruption of a volcano that demonstrates that within the universe there is the flame of God's fire, that the new vital forces of a transfigured earth are already at work.

Dear young people, in order to understand and to live this mystery that is in the heart of life, you need to raise your eyes.

«What do you see, Jeremiah?» the Lord asks the prophet. «I see a branch of an almond tree » (*Jer* 1,11-12). The almond tree is the first to flower and announce springtime. Being awake enables the prophet to see what is invisible in the branch that flowers. Only the eye that is attentive and awake manages to see this miracle, the miracle of life that is reborn after the winter. To understand your heart, the profound

mystery of life, you need to be awake, with your eyes attentive and enlightened by faith.

Raise your eyes from the everyday distractions that lead you to empty thoughts; begin to live the more profound and intimate side of yourselves, give yourselves to prayer that will reveal to you the depth of God's heart and that of all men and women. From the deep wells of your soul, draw up a new understanding of things, a wider vision of history, the fraternity that is born from the heart of the Risen Christ, that is manifested in the Church. She is the "sacrament" of the mercy of God in this world. She is the house of God accessible, warm and welcoming, the place where human suffering is listened to, in a special way that of the young and the poor.

Your society, at least that of the west, is very rich, but it has to take into account the new forms of poverty. And the Church cannot take its place anywhere else than close to the Cross of Jesus, the source of Resurrection. Its place is close to the little ones, to people worn out and wounded, to those who do not matter or who remain cut off from the great caravan of progress. Christ, once again, is crucified outside the city, on the

margins of history. The "Samaritan" Church needs to be there: the poor are her "holy land". And this holy land is the fertile field of your youthful commitment.

The Church must make visible, in a transparent way, the beauty and the love of God who wants to live in our midst today. And you, dear young people, need to build this Church, as Christ wants it, the face of the mercy of the God of life.

This is the path that I wanted to teach my dear young people at Valdocco and which I invite you to build in your own youth centres. Valdocco was not an anonymous space like a street, but a really welcoming house, a very human place, rich in the values and the warmth of a family. My mother Margaret gave us all the care and tenderness of a mother. I gave all the love of a father. Like a real father of a family, I gave my children a house, clothes, bread, work, education and recreation. I devoted myself with great passion to this mission and I asked the Lord to help me meet and welcome many young people, and to free me from everything that was not in their interests.

The oratory became a place of life and a place for the young to meet, where the expectations and

the initiatives of the young, their language and their direct involvement found welcome, support and space.

They were on their way to becoming mature men and Christians, enthusiastic about life, according to the spirit of the freedom of the Gospel. The strong personalities who matured at Valdocco are living proof of it: from Dominic Savio to Michael Magone, to the pioneer missionaries, Cagliero, Lasagna, Costamagna, Fagnano, and so many other outstanding personalities.

I was educating my young people in freedom and creativity: I wanted them to make enlightened decisions; I gave reason its proper place; I increased the catechism lessons and the good nights, in which I explained why and how we should believe. I wanted the young to be enthusiastic in the choices they made, without human respect. I urged them to take the initiative in every field. I didn't keep them closed up for fear of the world. We went out with courage to the parishes, to the needs of the city, of the Church and of the world. It was an incredible environment overflowing with life and enthusiasm. We believed we were capable of changing the world and the love that bound us together was the sign of it.

I dream that every work of mine can be like my first oratory and I am thinking of you making my dream a reality. My dream is to see young people meeting Christ and finding in Him the meaning and the joy of life, the answer to their expectations and ideals, their role in the Church and in the world. My dream is to see you, the young people of the Third Millennium, as the resource of the present, developing your talents and your energies for good, putting yourselves at the service of others, in order to rejuvenate society and the Church. My dream is to see you as missionaries among your friends, presenting in the day-to-day events the face of Christ in which everyone recognizes themselves.

This dream of mine becomes practical in my own commitment and in that of the Salesian family to be always clearly and explicitly promoters of the culture of life against all that can threaten and diminish it; bearers of the love of God, fathers and teachers of the spirit, intelligent guides capable of accompanying you in the search for beautiful and all-embracing projects of life.

In this task count always on the maternal help of Mary the Help of Christians, the Mother in difficult

times, who was for me a Mother and a teacher and who promised to take under her special protection all those who enter a Salesian house. Entrust yourselves to her with complete confidence and you too will see miracles in your life.

Dear young people, always feel that I am close to you. I have only one wish, and that is to see you happy now and forever, following the path of the gospel beatitudes in order to be able to take part all together in the great feast of life in heaven.

Turin, 31st January 2007.

*Affezionatissimo in G.C.*

*Luc. Gio. Bono*

## **5.2 Consecrated life, a Samaritan life**

### ***The Prophecy of consecrated life in the Church today***

*Below is a reflection written by the Rector Major on the occasion of the Day of Consecrated Life on 2 February 2007, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple. It was published in the Osservatore Romano.*

Few ecclesial institutions have made such great efforts to take seriously the invitation of the Second

Vatican Council to renewal as Consecrated Life. Nevertheless, after 40 years and after so many changes that have taken place we find ourselves once again in a process of change, without having reached the expected target set. This teaches us, I believe, that, nowadays, religious life itself has to accept, above all, that the only way to make itself relevant is to be in a constant state of transformation just as *life* itself is, and at the same time to be convinced that nothing in it must come before God for it to become indeed *consecrated*.

Rather than an identity crisis I maintain that for consecrated life one has to think of a *credibility* crisis. We find ourselves – why not admit it? – in a situation of stalemate. The International Congress of Consecrated Life, held in Rome at the end of November 2004, drew its inspiration from a twofold icon: that of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4) and that of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10), signs of the profound thirst that only God can satisfy and of the immense compassion for the human race by which consecrated men and women should be identified. The message is clear: consecrated life has a specific mission in the world, to make God closely present, to bring him close

to those who are wounded, abandoned at the side of the road; to become, therefore, a *Samaritan life*, thirsting for God and compassionate towards those in need.

### ***The notion of 'Samaritan'***

To describe consecrated life as a '*Samaritan*' life, implies not only looking at the spiritual journey undertaken by these two characters in the gospel, but, above all taking on board and making one's own the social condition of a "group", that is living "on the margins" of society and of the Church.

Becoming 'Samaritans', in this sense, means accepting rejection by the world and by society; it brings with it the renunciation of the privileges that until a few years ago we enjoyed, and not only on the social level but also the ecclesial level, where the "new movements" seem to have the better part. It means embracing poverty, understood not only as a shortage of economic means, but as a lack of power, and walking through life with greater humility, becoming also the object of prejudice.

For centuries Consecrated Life has been the flower in the cap of the Church; and its social role in the field of evangelisation and hu-

man development (agriculture, education, health, caring for the poor...) was indispensable, as it continues to be in so many parts of the world, in Latin America, Asia, Africa. So great was its presence in the social area, with a role that took the place of the State, that it ran the risk of adulterating its mission in this world, which is not simply that of doing things efficiently and freely but of becoming a metaphor for God, a sign of his tender and salvific presence in the world.

### ***Thirsty for God*** **(Jn 4,1-42)**

John's narrative shows us a Jesus, tired and thirsty, who goes to Jacob's well, where a Samaritan woman also comes, from whom he asks for a drink. It is surprising that Jesus' physical need leads him to break ethnic and cultural barriers. In this context of broken boundaries it is He who presents Himself as the 'gift of God', 'the spring of living water.'

Jesus is the gift of eternal life for whoever believes in Him. He better than anyone else knows the needs of mankind, its immense thirst for meaning, for happiness and for salvation. Jesus awakens in the Samaritan woman a 'desire' for the spring of living water that

He offered. It is precisely her longing for happiness that leads the Samaritan woman to try to satisfy it, without success, passing from one experience to another.

In the light of this text, consecrated life needs to take a serious look at itself in order to take account honestly and courageously and even with pain and humiliation of its lack of fidelity to its Lord, of its seeking for security even at the cost of losing its identity and relevance. Perhaps it would be necessary to identify the names, the faces, of the successive 'husbands' of this religious life, with whom it lost its joy, enchantment and passion. Where did it try to slake its thirst? With what waters?

Like the 'Samaritan woman' religious life can feel dissatisfied with itself and empty, without joy and without enthusiasm, without vitality and without passion. Like the 'Samaritan woman' consecrated life needs to meet Jesus the spring of living water, in order to find again the meaning of life, the joy of living and of doing which makes it credible and attractive; it needs to start again from Christ with evangelising zeal that makes it meaningful and fruitful. The new evangelisation needs new evangelisers, who speak of God

not by hearsay but because they have met Him and they cannot keep quiet about their experience of this meeting and feel the urgent need to proclaim Him.

It is not enough to work for the Kingdom or for the values of the Kingdom, it is necessary to see ourselves at the service of the King to feel ourselves as servants of the only Lord. Only Jesus can be the foundation of our life. Only Jesus deserves all our love. Only Jesus makes sense of what we are and what we do.

***At one with humanity***  
***(Lk 10,25-37)***

The 'good Samaritan' in Luke is not a real person but a character in a parable; with this story Jesus responded to a Master of the law who had put him to the test. The Scribe wanted to know whom he should love being ready to fulfil the divine commandment. Jesus, like a good teacher, replied in such a way that the Scribe himself says what he already knows; in fact, seeing that he had replied well, He says to him: "Do this and you shall live". Eternal life is not reached through revealed knowledge to which we have access, but rather through the transforming and divinising power of Love (cf. *1Cor 13*).

The same can happen to consecrated life as happened to the Scribe, that is to have a theoretical knowledge of God and of Jesus; one might think that this is sufficient to obtain salvation, without realising – or not wanting to accept – that salvation is not something outside ourselves, as though it were a prize for the choices we make or for our renunciations or the reward for our formal fulfilment of the law, but something within, that is to say, the transformation that love accomplished in us. To us too, the Lord says today: *«Do this and you shall live»*.

The parable of the ‘good Samaritan’ is disconcerting especially for us religious. It shows in a bad light the thoughtless and selfish attitude of people who by their profession ought to be more sensitive to the needs of others, and that of the ‘good Samaritan’ who decides to take care of the poor man who has been attacked, robbed, wounded and abandoned at the edge of the road. In the world ‘invented’ by Jesus, those who by vocation are consecrated to the worship of God (the priest, the levite) and ought to be closer to Him show themselves indifferent to the one in need, while the one who is socially marginalised and considered

far from true worship (the Samaritan) shows himself to be sensitive and comes to the aid of the one who by chance he finds wounded.

Today, like yesterday, consecrated life is called to be a sign of God’s closeness, of his real incarnation, of his radical solidarity with man even to death on the cross. But today, unlike yesterday, consecrated life is faced with the challenge and the opportunity of renewing itself changing the emphasis from formalism, exterior and pharisaical, to the authenticity of charity, interior and Christian, in synthesis to being like Jesus “who went about doing good to all”.

The needs of our neighbour show us where God is waiting for us and are an incentive for the imagination and the apostolic generosity of consecrated life. And this, if it is ‘Samaritan’, needs to respond to what is urgent today and pay attention to what is necessary for tomorrow: it will cure the wounds, making the effort to provide a remedy not short-term but long-term; it will take upon itself the needs of the man it finds on the street and will concern itself with his full recovery. Today consecrated life would become irrelevant, its witness invisible, were it not to take seriously the



command to be the neighbour of those in need. If consecrated life wants to survive in a world where God has been eclipsed "the eclipse of God" (Martin Buber), it needs to find God in His only living icon man (cf. *Gen* 1,26), the neighbour who is suffering and in need, that is his way in to Him.

I don't know whether sometimes the concept of mission that we have leads us to react by putting up barriers social, cultural, religious, sexual, making it a fine pretext and a good excuse for not doing anything. I don't know whether or not we ought to be more daring, more prophetic, less calculating, taking more risks. Certainly this would require a change of our mentality, it would lead us to be more flexible, to know how to respond to the unexpected, to be ready to change our plans if it would bring compassion and solidarity to all those waiting for them even though they may not ask.

### ***The Primacy of God***

Giving God the first place that is His due does not mean becoming slaves to timetables and programmes, but serving Him wherever He is waiting for us: "I was hungry, thirsty, I was in prison, or sick ..." (cf. *Mt* 25,31-46). It is nec-

essary, allow me to say this as a Salesian, to recover the passion of "*Da mihi animas cetera tolle*", the spiritual and apostolic programme of Don Bosco and the reason for his tireless activity for "the glory of God and the salvation of souls," a passion for God and for his people, that found its source in the heart of Christ and that implies the ability to suffer (passion as suffering for love) and to be enamoured with Him (passion as being in love and fascination).

"*Da mihi animas*" puts at the centre of the life of the consecrated person the sense of the fatherhood of God, the riches of the death and the resurrection of Christ and the power of the Spirit, which are given to everyone. At the same time it produces in the consecrated person the ardent desire to make these gifts known to others and to make them savour them, so that they may have a happy life, illumined by faith, in this world and save it for eternity.

"*Cetera tolle*" motivates the consecrated person to keep a distance from a certain liberal *light* model of consecrated life. Attributing the crisis of consecrated life to the predominant culture, that is to factors such as secularism, consumerism, hedonism, is not suffi-

cient. Historically, consecrated life arises as an alternative proposal, as a counter-cultural movement, as protest and the revival of faith in a stalled situation. It is the weakness of motivation and of identity in the face of the world that nowadays makes it fragile.

### ***By way of conclusion***

I am convinced that Consecrated Life represents a genuine cure for our society and a gift to the Church, on condition, however, that it be a visible and credible sign of the presence and the love of God (“*mystica*”), that it be a critical response to all that threatens the human being, understood according to God’s plan (“*prophecy*”), and that it be on the side of the human race, especially the poorest, most needy, those excluded or put to one side (“*diaconia*”).

Consecrated Life will again be luminous, radiant, attractive if it turns more decisively to God and to man as the two poles around which its life revolves: God as the source and summit of all our activity, and man who has need of us as the focus of our worship of God. It seems that today more than ever what is being asked of us is to listen to the Spirit and to let ourselves be guided by Him.

### **5.3 Message of the Rector Major for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Saint Dominic Savio**

*On the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Saint Dominic Savio, 9 March 2007, the Rector Major sent a message to Salesians, to members of the Salesian Family and to the young. Here is the text of the message.*

*My Dear Salesian Confreres,  
Brothers and Sisters  
of the Salesian Family,  
My Dear Young People,*

I want to send all of you a special message today when we recall the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Dominic Savio. For all of us he represents one of the most beautiful fruits of Salesian Spirituality. It is with great joy therefore that we want to remember him and pray to him on this special occasion.

We are still full of gratitude for what the Lord enabled us to experience in 2004, when we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his Canonisation. The pilgrimage of his relics around Italy, Spain and Lebanon was an opportunity for deep reflection: on the call to holiness, on the richness of Salesian Spirituality, on the importance of an education that aims at the all-

round development of our young people.

Today we renew our thanks to the Lord in prayer as we contemplate how much the Lord wished to accomplish in the short life of this great young saint and in our commitment to being educators according to the heart of Don Bosco, and therefore of being able to accompany our young people on their journey of life and of holiness.

*I am therefore writing to you  
Dear Salesians:*

We are on the threshold of a new General Chapter, in which we want to concentrate on renewing within ourselves Don Bosco's spiritual programme: *Da mihi animas cetera tolle*. These are words to which we want to give new life and to make our own, and that show us the urgent need there is to hand ourselves over totally to the Lord and to the mission he has entrusted to us. Offering Him all our efforts, investing all our resources, giving free rein to creativity, like Don Bosco we will be men capable of giving life, above all "the life of God." It is that fullness of life that will enable our young people not only to develop all their human talents in harmony, but also to commit themselves openly and joy-

fully to living to the full the gospel values that throw light on every human experience and give it importance.

Guided by Don Bosco, Dominic became a saint by cultivating a strong friendship with Jesus and Mary, seeing in fidelity to his everyday duties a response to God's will, being at the service of his companions with a great spirit of dedication and with a love that was able to bring joy and a readiness to do good.

For us, my dear confreres, this day is like a new "vocational call." To be for the young what Don Bosco was for Dominic Savio: guides capable of leading them to the utmost heights, towards the fullness of life, towards joy and holiness.

*I am writing to you  
Dear Sisters and Brothers  
of the Salesian Family,  
consecrated and laity:*

The great heritage that we all share is Don Bosco. He is the "foundation" of our Salesian Charism. From him there came «a vast movement of persons who in different ways work for the salvation of the young » (SDB Const. art. 5). The apostolic approach that unifies our mission is the commitment to education.

Today the challenge presented by education is becoming more difficult and more demanding. Faced with the continuing presence of situations of serious disadvantage and poverty in developing countries; in the face of terrible social conditions for great masses of children and young peoples who are living abandoned on the fringes of the rich metropolises; confronted by the spiritual poverty of millions of young people who in spite of a climate of material well-being, from the spiritual and moral point of view are living confused lives, we cannot remain indifferent. *“As he landed he saw a great throng and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd...”* (Mk 6,34). We look at these young people with the eyes of Jesus and with the eyes of Don Bosco and we hear their cry for help. We are called to work with great commitment in the field of education. We are called “to work together,” to re-discover, with a spirit that is up-to-date and full of vitality, the great “means of education” that Don Bosco has given to all of us, the “Preventive System.” They are simple things, the essentials that Don Bosco lived in his own life and

enabled him to form a generation of Saints among his boys.

My dear friends, may the memory of Dominic Savio renew in you the commitment to be educators who work “together” in a shared apostolic project. «In the face of the old and the new needs of the young, always be ready to respond without hesitation or uncertainty. Put before them a plan of life such as Don Bosco did with Dominic Savio. Help the young people to accept life as a gift and to live it with true freedom and joy. Tell them that what will give them strength and guarantee their growth is friendship with Jesus, and having experience of God. And, finally, teach them to open themselves to responsibility, to service, to solidarity, to charity».<sup>1</sup>

*I am writing to you  
my dear Young People:*

You have always been Don Bosco’s great passion. He spent himself to his last breath for you. Today, more than ever, you are in my heart and you are “the reason to live” for those who have chosen to commit themselves to the Salesian mission. I am writing to you

<sup>1</sup> From the homily of Card. Tettamanzi, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonisation of Saint Dominic Savio, at the Mass in the Duomo of Milan, in the presence of the Saint’s casket, 9 March 2004.

because I know “your hunger” for genuine life projects. I am writing to you because I know “your thirst” for deep joy. On this day when we remember the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Dominic Savio I invite you to look to this young person who in his way of life can be a real model for each one of you. May he teach you his secrets.

The first is that of being open to great ideals. Above all, let yourselves be taken up by a great desire for a Christian life of the highest quality. This means having very clearly in your plan of life the aim and the real desire to become “saints”. This was Dominic Savio’s great desire; may it also be a desire that is cultivated in the heart of each one of you.

The second secret that Dominic teaches us is that our Christian life needs to be constantly “healed and renewed” by the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to become strong by being nourished by “the Bread of Life” in the Eucharist. In spite of all the difficulties, we can be strong by living a real relationship of friendship with Our Lord Jesus, through the sacraments. In this journey of the Christian life, Mary, as the Immaculate Conception is by our side to show us the

beauty of what is good, just, pure, loveable, worthy of praise, and as the Help of Christians supports us and protects us in the difficulties along the way.

The third secret is that of giving our life for others starting right now. Really being those who “fight the good fight” committed to service, those who bring hope and joy. Ready for anything so that good may increase and evil be fought, just like Dominic Savio. Are you ready for all this? I am sure you are, but on one condition: that you know how to chose a guide to accompany you on your way. My dear friends, chose “your own Don Bosco”!<sup>2</sup> this is what Dominic did, and his life bore those abundant fruits that we all know about. On my part, as the Successor of Don Bosco, I am close to you, I encourage you, and every day I remember you in my prayers.

I conclude, inviting all of you, my dear friends, once again to be grateful to the Lord, who in Dominic Savio has given us a splendid example of how holiness is a universal vocation, a path that is possible for the young, a gift to be cultivated and helped to mature through the accompaniment of

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*.

people who are deeply spiritual, permeated with the educative passion of our Dear Father, Don Bosco.

To all of you on this day of Grace, my affection and my prayers.

Asunción-Paraguay, 9 March 2007.

Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

## 5.4 New Provincials

*We provide (in alphabetical order) some biographical details of the Provincials appointed by the Rector Major and his Council in the course of the plenary session December 2006 - January 2007.*

### 1. AGUILAR MEDINA Miguel, *Provincial of Province of Mexico-MÉXICO.*

*Fr Miguel AGUILAR MEDINA* is the new Provincial of the “Our Lady of Guadalupe” Province with headquarters in MÉXICO, Mexico. He succeeds Luis Rolando Valerdi. Born on 17 October 1960 at Coyoacán (D. F. Mexico), Miguel Aguilar Medina became a Salesian on 24 January 1980, the date of his first profession in the novitiate at Rionegro. Following the normal Salesian course of formation he made his perpetual profession on

28 June 1985. He then studied theology in the Salesian theologate of San Pedro Tlaquepaque. He was ordained a priest in Mexico City on 5 April 1987. After ordination he began his pastoral ministry in the Novitiate at Coacalco, where he remained for two years (1987-1989), after which he went to Rome to the Salesian Pontifical University, where he obtained a Licence in Spiritual Theology. Having returned to his Province he was assigned to the postnovitiate in Mexico City. In 1993 he was appointed Rector and Director of Novices in the Novitiate at Coacalco. He remained there until 2000. In 1993 he was also appointed a Provincial Councillor. In 2000 the Superiors assigned him the role of Vice Provincial, a position he retained until his appointment as Provincial in January 2007. In 2004 he had also been appointed Provincial Delegate for Formation and subsequently for the Salesian Family.

### 2. GONZÁLEZ PLASENCIA Filiberto, *Provincial of the Province of Mexico-GUADALAJARA*

To lead the “Christ the King and Mary Help of Christians” Province with headquarters in GUADALAJARA, Mexico, *Fr Filiberto GONZÁLEZ PLASENCIA*

has been appointed. He succeeds Héctor Guerrero Córdova. Born on 22 August 1954 at Milpillas-Tepatitlán, Mexico, Filiberto González Plasencia made his first Salesian profession on 1° October 1974 at Guadalajara. Perpetually professed on 28 September 1980, he was ordained priest on 11 December 1982 in the theological studentate of San Pedro Tlaquepaque. He then began his pastoral ministry as socius in the Novitiate at Chula Vista (while at the same time he completed his studies in the Normal Superior, specialising in Pedagogy). In 1987 he moved to the "Instituto Colón" at Zamora, where he remained for two years until 1989 when he went to Rome to the Salesian Pontifical University, where he obtained a Licence in Communications. Having returned to his Province, in 1992 he was assigned to the postnovitiate in México-Huipulco as teacher and bursar in the community. In 1993 he became a member of the Provincial Council and was appointed Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry, moving to the Provincial House in Guadalajara, where he remained until 2001, when he returned to Chula Vista as Rector and Director of Novices and then in 2004 went to México-Huipulco as Rector of the post-

novitiate. It should be mentioned that he was a member of the National Team of the Mexican Bishops, for those involved in Youth Ministry (CEMPAJ) in the three years 1995-1998 and that he took part in the 24<sup>th</sup> General Chapter a Delegate for the Province.

### 3. *URRA MENDÍA Félix, Provincial of the Province of Spain-BILBAO.*

The Rector Major with his Council has appointed *Fr Félix URRA MENDÍA* the new Provincial of the Province of "St Francis Xavier" with headquarters in *BILBAO*, Spain. He succeeds Ignacio María Lete Lizaso. Born on 20 November 1949 at Pamplona (Navarre, Spain), Félix Urra Mendía became a Salesian on 16 August 1967, when he made his first religious profession in the novitiate of Urnieta. Following the normal Salesian course of formation he made his perpetual profession on 16 July 1973. He was ordained priest on 18 April 1976 in Salamanca, where he had been completing his theological studies. After ordination he went to Rome to continue his studies, obtaining a Licence in Liturgy at the Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm. Having returned to his Province, in September 1987 he

was appointed Rector of the house of Erretereria, where in 1991 he also became parish priest. In June 1993 he was transferred as Rector and parish priest to the house of Nueva Montaña, where he remained for six years, and then in 2000 – again as Rector – he went to the house of Logroño Los Boscos. At the end of six years in 2006 he was again in Rome to attend some ongoing formation courses.

## 5.5 Salesian Bishops

### 1. ***CHENIS Carlo, Bishop of CIVITAVECCHIA-TARQUINIA (Italy)***

On 21 December 2006 the Press Office of the Vatican published the news of the appointment by Pope Benedict XVI, of the Salesian priest ***Carlo CHENIS*** as Bishop of the Diocese of ***CIVITAVECCHIA-TARQUINIA***, in Italy.

Fr Carlo Chenis was born in Turin on 20 April 1954. He made his first profession in the Salesian Society on 8 September 1971 after having made his novitiate at Pinerolo. Following the normal course of Salesian formation, he made his perpetual profession on 15 September 1977. He was ordained priest on 26 May 1984, at

Cuorgné (Turin), after having obtained a Licence in philosophy and completed his theological studies at the Salesian Pontifical University (1976-1983). In 1989 he obtained a degree in Literature at the State University of Turin. As a young priest between 1984 and 1995 he was a lecturer at the Salesian Pontifical University, where he was also a member of the Council of Administration between 1989 and 1995. In 1985 he began the University Chaplaincy at the UPS, making contacts with other University Chaplaincies in Rome. Within the University he held a number of posts both academic and religious. He exercised his pastoral ministry as an assistant chaplain and spiritual director to a number of Congregations of Sisters as well as giving help in Roman parishes, working for a number of years in the youth centre at Ponte Mammolo, and in Sardinia where he took part in a number of pastoral projects. As a lecturer, in addition to his teaching at the UPS, he also taught some post-graduate courses in architecture and cultural heritage in various Italian State Universities. He wrote over 500 articles, both regarding the subjects he taught and on the spiritual life. He was invited as a consultant in cultural her-



itage issues by a number of civil authorities.

From July 1995 he was Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, and from 2004 Member of the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archeology. During the five years of preparation for the Jubilee he was coordinator of the Artistic-Cultural Commission and Vice President of the Foundation for the artistic and cultural heritage of the Church.

He was ordained Bishop on 10 February 2007 in the Basilica of St John Bosco in Rome, by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, S.D.B., Secretary of State of the Holy Father.

## **2. GUERRERO CÓRDOVA Héctor, Bishop Prelate of MIXES, Mexico**

On 3 March 2007 the Press Office of the Holy See published the appointment by Pope Benedict XVI of the Salesian priest **Héctor GUERRERO CÓRDOVA** as Bishop of the Territorial Prelature of **MIXES**, in Mexico. He succeeds Bishop Luis Felipe Gallardo SDB.

Héctor Guerrero, was born on 14 September 1941 in Mexico City, and became a Salesian on 16 Au-

gust 1959, when he made his first religious profession at Coacalco, where he had made his Novitiate. After philosophical studies and practical training, following the normal Salesian course of formation he made his perpetual profession on 20 July 1965 and studied theology at the studentate in Coacalco, where he received the Ministries and the Diaconate. On 28 December 1968 he was ordained priest in Mexico City.

After priestly ordination he obtained his teacher's qualification in mathematics at the "Anglo Español" Teachers' Training College. He then exercised his educational and apostolic role, first in the Salesian community in Chapalita, then in Saltillo. Soon he was given roles of responsibility: in 1972 he was appointed Rector of Sahuayo until 1974, when he was transferred again as Rector to León "Ciudad del Niño". In 1983 he was entrusted with the Salesian Institute of San Luis Potosí, where he remained for nine years until 1992, when he was sent as Rector to the house of Guadalupe "Garibaldi". In 1995 he became a member of the Provincial Council and in 1996 he was entrusted with the post of Vice Provincial, to be followed by that of Provincial from December 2000

until 2006. He had just arrived in Rome at the Salesian Pontifical University, for an updating course, when the news came of his appointment as Bishop of the Mixepolitana Prelature.

**3. Mgr. EZZATI Riccardo, transferred to the Archiepiscopal See of Concepción (Chile)**

On 27 December 2006 the Press Office of the Holy See announced that the Holy Father Benedict XVI had appointed as Metropolitan Archbishop of CONCEPCIÓN (Chile) Mgr. **Riccardo EZZATI**, S.D.B., transferring him to this see from Santiago in Chile where he was Auxiliary Bishop.

Born on 9 January 1942 at Campiglia dei Berici in the province of Vicenza (Italy), Riccardo Ezzati in 1954 entered the Salesian aspirantate of Penango in Piedmont, where he began the following out of a missionary vocation, following Don Bosco. Sent to Chile immediately after his early studies, he made his novitiate at Quilpé, and there made also his first profession on 31 January 1961. After philosophy and practical training in Chile, he was sent to Rome for theology at the Pontifical Salesian University, where he gained the Licentiate in Theol-

ogy and was ordained priest on 18 March 1970. Later he obtained the Licentiate in Catechetics from the catechetical Institute of the University of Strasbourg, France.

On his return to Chile he became Delegate for Youth Pastoral Work, and at the same time obtained the Licentiate in Religious Sciences from the Catholic University of Valparaíso, with also a civilly recognized Teaching Certificate.

From 1973 to 1978 he was rector of the house of Concepción, and in 1976 became a member of the provincial council. In 1978 he was appointed rector of the studentate of philosophy and pedagogy at La Florida, Santiago, and was at the same time director of the study centre and professor of pastoral catechetics in the Catholic University of Santiago. In November 1983 he was appointed rector of the studentate of theology at La Florida, and took part as delegate of the Province in the GC22 of 1984. In the same year he was appointed Provincial of the Chilean Province. At the end of his mandate in 1991 he was called to Rome as a valued collaborator of the Congregation for Institutes of consecrated life and Societies of apostolic life.

Appointed Bishop of Valdivia on 28 June 1996, he was ordained

8 September of that year. In July 2001 he was transferred as Auxiliary Bishop to the Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile.

## 5.6 Salesian personnel at 31 December 2006

Prov.	Tot. 2005	Temp. Professed				Perp. Professed				Tot. Professed	Novices	Tot. 2006
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
AET	118	9	31	0	0	19	10	0	37	106	8	114
AFC	286	7	60	0	0	28	18	0	99	212	13	225
AFE	179	1	43	0	1	17	18	0	86	166	8	174
AFM	56	3	12	0	0	7	1	0	35	58	1	59
AFO	135	3	37	0	0	15	10	0	69	134	12	146
AFW	109	9	43	0	0	8	8	0	37	105	12	117
AGL	0	2	21	0	0	8	3	0	39	73	9	82
ANG	64	4	13	0	0	8	3	0	34	62	7	69
ATE	123	8	39	0	0	7	5	0	59	118	11	129
ANT	182	4	24	0	0	13	14	0	116	171	6	177
ABA	123	1	6	0	0	13	4	0	94	118	1	119
ABB	105	2	7	0	0	8	3	0	76	96	0	96
ACO	132	4	16	0	0	14	4	0	88	126	4	130
ALP	74	0	3	0	0	9	3	0	50	65	0	65
ARO	118	5	13	0	0	12	3	0	68	101	1	102
AUL	115	2	6	0	0	15	6	0	81	110	0	110
AUS	85	0	2	0	0	8	1	0	73	84	0	84
BEN	233	0	1	0	0	35	0	1	183	220	1	221
BES	68	0	1	0	0	11	0	0	55	67	0	67
BOL	159	4	38	0	0	17	4	0	93	156	14	170
BBH	169	4	26	0	0	28	6	0	98	162	3	165
BCG	153	7	28	0	0	19	5	0	90	149	10	159
BMA	116	6	25	0	0	12	0	0	65	108	6	114
BPA	100	1	9	0	0	9	2	0	77	98	3	101
BRE	109	5	29	0	0	13	4	0	56	107	6	113
BSP	176	5	25	0	0	18	3	0	110	161	10	171
CAM	203	3	15	0	0	26	4	0	148	196	7	203
CAN	37	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	28	35	0	35
CEP	183	1	12	0	1	13	3	1	148	179	1	180
CIL	199	5	22	0	0	14	8	0	140	189	3	192
CIN	131	1	8	0	0	30	1	1	88	129	3	132
COB	174	2	32	0	1	17	5	0	106	163	9	172
COM	165	4	30	0	0	16	4	0	105	159	0	159
CRO	78	0	6	0	0	3	1	0	65	75	3	78
ECU	209	4	20	0	0	19	6	0	149	198	7	205
EST	106	0	22	0	0	1	4	0	79	106	3	109
FIN	227	4	38	0	0	20	7	0	157	226	1	227
FIS	100	2	14	0	0	11	4	0	64	95	1	96
FRA	228	1	3	0	0	35	2	0	177	218	1	219
GBR	88	0	2	0	0	9	0	0	74	85	0	85
GER	361	1	6	0	0	81	2	2	258	350	3	353
GIA	121	1	6	0	0	15	5	0	93	120	0	120
HAI	63	2	12	0	0	3	6	0	38	61	3	64
INB	213	1	48	0	0	12	6	0	127	194	17	211
INC	235	3	41	0	0	16	14	0	144	218	9	227
IND	224	3	38	0	0	7	12	0	146	206	15	221
ING	412	10	116	0	0	28	34	0	206	394	28	422
INH	185	2	54	0	0	7	15	0	99	177	13	190
INK	329	2	86	0	0	9	31	0	189	317	20	337
INM	350	9	69	0	0	16	18	0	229	341	15	356
INN	157	4	47	0	0	14	17	0	69	151	10	161
INP	91	0	21	0	0	8	4	0	57	90	6	96

Prov.	Tot. 2005	Temp. Professed				Perp. Professed				Tot. Professed	Novices	Tot. 2006
		L	S	D	P	L	S	D	P			
INT	212	3	92	0	0	6	21	0	78	200	11	211
IRL	97	0	5	0	0	6	1	0	84	96	1	97
IAD	106	0	6	0	0	16	3	0	75	100	2	102
ICP	609	1	13	0	0	151	6	2	416	589	4	593
ILE	378	5	21	0	0	49	7	0	289	371	5	376
ILT	181	0	18	0	0	17	12	1	130	178	0	178
IME	271	1	26	0	0	31	5	0	202	265	1	266
INE	434	0	23	0	0	83	6	1	303	416	3	419
IRO	225	2	7	0	0	37	2	1	171	220	2	222
ISA	64	0	2	0	0	4	3	0	53	62	0	62
ISI	262	1	13	0	0	21	5	1	214	255	2	257
ITM	174	18	63	0	0	7	17	1	46	152	16	168
KOR	120	3	28	0	0	20	4	0	60	115	7	122
LKC	70	2	22	0	0	1	11	0	27	63	2	65
MDG	87	4	24	0	0	5	5	0	46	84	3	87
MEG	210	2	22	0	0	14	17	0	144	199	9	208
MEM	177	3	28	0	0	14	6	1	116	168	6	174
MOR	119	1	12	0	0	13	3	0	85	114	1	115
MOZ	0	3	13	0	0	5	3	0	28	52	0	52
MYM	57	1	26	0	0	1	1	0	25	54	7	61
PAR	102	1	18	0	0	5	1	0	60	85	4	89
PER	161	6	34	0	0	12	10	0	86	148	4	152
PLE	297	3	19	0	0	16	10	0	243	291	2	293
PLN	302	2	45	0	0	9	15	0	225	296	8	304
PLO	233	1	31	0	0	2	8	0	174	216	6	222
PLS	238	2	25	0	0	8	7	0	186	228	8	236
POR	185	0	3	0	0	34	5	1	84	127	0	127
SLK	241	5	26	0	0	14	18	0	166	229	2	231
SLO	107	0	3	0	0	9	0	0	94	106	2	108
SBA	177	0	1	0	0	29	0	1	142	173	0	173
SBI	201	1	5	0	0	51	6	1	127	191	1	192
SLE	214	3	0	0	0	70	3	0	137	213	0	213
SMA	297	0	6	0	0	75	11	0	207	299	0	299
SSE	257	4	10	0	0	28	8	0	194	244	1	245
SVA	162	0	7	0	0	26	4	1	119	157	0	157
SUE	180	1	8	0	0	35	0	0	123	167	1	168
SUO	105	1	2	0	0	23	2	0	77	105	0	105
THA	87	0	6	0	0	13	3	0	63	85	1	86
UNG	41	0	4	0	0	2	1	0	30	37	1	38
URU	105	1	6	0	0	6	4	0	87	104	0	104
VEN	228	5	31	0	0	16	13	0	149	214	9	223
VIE	244	16	77	0	0	23	20	0	89	225	31	256
ZMB	73	2	19	0	0	5	0	0	45	71	5	76
UPS	131	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	122	133	0	133
RMG	83	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	59	77	0	77
Tot.	16460	265	2179	0	3	1846	638	17	10831	15779	492	16271
Ep.	108									114 (*)		114 (*)
Tot.	16568	265	2179	0	3	1846	638	17	10831	15893	492	16385

Note (\*): At 31 December 2006 there are 113 Bishops + 1 Prefect Apostolic

### 5.7 Our dead confreres (5<sup>th</sup> list 2006 and 1<sup>st</sup> list 2007)

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

#### Deceased 2006 – 5<sup>th</sup> list

NOTE: We print a 5<sup>th</sup> list of those the news of whose death in 2006 arrived after the publication of AGC396.

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P BALLARI Giovanni	Jarabacoa (Rep. Dominicana)	28-12-2006	94	ANT
P CAMEROTA Eliseo	Castellammare di Stabia (NA)	28-12-2006	84	IME
P CASTANHEIRA Luiz	Luanda (Angola)	28-12-2006	70	ANG
P ČERNÝ Rafael	Bratislava (Slovacchia)	09-12-2006	82	SLK
P CONCHA FLORES Justo	Lima (Perù)	27-10-2006	92	PER
L D'ADDEZIO Gerardo	Rimini (Italia)	26-12-2006	80	ILE
P DE BORTOLI Carlo	Civitanova Marche (Italia)	23-12-2006	94	IAD
P DONGHI Sandro	Treviglio (Italia)	26-12-2006	65	ILE
L DOSSI Dante	Nave (Italia)	31-12-2006	82	ILE
P GANDARA Alonso	Sevilla (Spagna)	26-12-2006	103	SSE
P JANEČ Štefan	Trenčín (Slovacchia)	16-11-2006	86	SLK
P MAINA Mario	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	29-06-2006	88	ABB
P MUNDATHANATHU Michael	Palai (Kerala, India)	22-12-2006	71	IND
P NATALI Paolo	Roma	30-12-2006	81	UPS
<i>Fu per 2 anni Consigliere regionale per l'Italia-Medio Oriente, per 10 anni Consigliere generale per la Formazione e per 3 anni Superiore della Visitatoria UPS</i>				
P PÉREZ DE NANCLARES J. Ignacio	Pamplona (Spagna)	19-12-2006	63	SBI
P PETTENUZZO Carlo	Castelfranco Veneto (Italia)	24-12-2006	90	INE
P PRATA Luigi	Recife (Brasile)	11-11-2006	88	BRE
P QUIRCE ALARIO Moisés	Lima (Perù)	22-08-2006	89	PER
L SCHNEIDER Felix	München (Germania)	15-12-2006	81	GER
P VOETS Jaak	Leuven (Belgio)	30-12-2006	85	BEN
P WIJNEN Roger	Lubumbashi (R.D.)	23-12-2006	82	AFC

\* \* \*

#### Deceased 2007 - 1<sup>st</sup> list

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
L BAJANIK Adam	Trnava (Slovacchia)	01-03-2007	86	SLK
P BALLISTRERI Antonino	Gangi (Palermo, Italia)	03-01-2007	81	ISI
P BARAN Pietro	Brno (Repubblica Ceca)	28-02-2007	80	CEP
P BAYO S. DE CUTANDA J. Ramón	Valencia (Spagna)	08-03-2007	74	SVL
L BELTRAMELLO Giovanni	Torino	20-02-2007	75	ICP

P BERRUETE José Zósimo	Barcelona (Spagna)	06-03-2007	72	SUE
L BIGAJ Stanisław	Dąbrowa Białostocka (Polonia)	02-02-2007	81	PLE
L BONCI Carlo	Savona (Italia)	02-01-2007	82	ILT
P BUGGEA Salvatore	Pedara (Catania, Italia)	05-01-2007	89	ISI
P BUTTARELLI Armando	Roma	15-02-2007	87	IRO
P CELI Antonio	Casale Monferrato (Italia)	11-01-2007	98	ICP
P CHAMBE Albert	Toulon (Francia)	25-02-2007	91	FRA
P CHENG Hoi-Hong Joseph	Los Angeles (U.S.A.)	10-02-2007	76	CIN
P CUPPERS Alfons (Petrus)	Ternat (Belgio)	09-02-2007	99	BEN
P DOMAGAŁA Bolesław	Oświęcim (Polonia)	17-02-2007	47	PLS
P FARDIN Marcello	Castello di Godego (Italia)	09-01-2007	72	INE
P FAUGIER Pierre	Paris (Francia)	12-03-2007	87	FRA
P FONTANA Antenore	Caracas (Venezuela)	02-02-2007	86	VEN
P GALIZZI Mario	Torino	27-02-2007	81	ICP
P GONZÁLEZ MARTÍN Olegario	Mérida (Badajoz, Spagna)	03-02-2007	80	SSE
P GUCCIONE Giuseppe	Caracas (Venezuela)	06-02-2007	79	VEN
P HOANG PHU BAO Michael	Phuoc Hoa, Tan Thanh (Vietnam)	15-02-2007	79	VIE
E JAVIERRE ORTAS Antonio María	Roma	01-02-2007	86	--
<i>Fu per 4 anni Delegato del Rettor Maggiore per la Delegazione P.A.S. Eletto Arcivescovo titolare di Meta nel 1976, fu per 12 anni Segretario della Congregazione per l'Educazione Cattolica. Creato Cardinale nel 1988, fu per 3 anni e mezzo Archivista e Bibliotecario di Santa Romana Chiesa e per 4 anni e mezzo Prefetto della Congregazione per il Culto Divino e la Disciplina dei Sacramenti.</i>				
P JIŘÍČEK Jan	Olomouc (Rep. Ceca)	27-01-2007	54	CEP
P JUSTEN Bernard	Tampa, Florida (USA)	02-01-2007	86	SUE
P KANJOOPARAMBIL Chacko	Alappuzha (Kerala, India)	22-01-2007	81	INK
P KERBIRIOU Louis	Guingamp (Francia)	04-01-2007	80	FRA
P KISIELIUS Jozef	Saltillo (Messico)	13-03-2007	97	MEG
P KÓCZAN Akos (Augustin)	La Habana (Cuba)	08-03-2007	84	ANT
P MAGDINIER Jean	Toulon (Francia)	03-03-2007	85	FRA
L MANGIAPANE Francesco	San Gregorio di Catania (Italia)	26-02-2007	72	ISI
P MARTZ Gregorio	Bahia Blanca (Argentina)	07-02-2007	82	ABB
L MASCARENHAS Joseph	Mumbai (India)	27-01-2007	83	INB
P MOŁDYSZ Józef	Wrocław (Polonia)	06-02-2007	76	PLO
P O'SHEA Edward	Farnborough (Gran Bretagna)	12-01-2007	84	GBR
P PAGNOZZI Vincenzo	Cerignola (Italia)	21-02-2007	74	IME
P PIPPAN Francesco	Estoril (Lisbona, Portogallo)	03-01-2007	93	POR
P POULMARC'H Hippolyte	Guingamp (Francia)	05-03-2007	95	FRA
L PRUDÊNCIO Manuel Marques	Manique (Lisbona, Portogallo)	24-01-2007	83	POR
P RAJ Joseph Jaswant	Kattupadi-Vellore (India)	24-01-2007	64	INM
P RAVERA Antonio	Torino	11-02-2007	92	ICP
P RECCHIA Vincenzo	Bari (Italia)	04-01-2007	86	IME
P RUIZ GUERRERO Manuel	Sevilla (Spagna)	01-03-2007	77	SSE
P SANTOS Manoel Isai	Piracicaba (Brasile)	14-03-2007	76	BSP
P SANTOS RODRÍGUEZ Manuel	Puerto Ayacucho (Venezuela)	02-03-2007	79	VEN
P TAVELLA Albano	Negrar (Verona, Italia)	15-01-2007	73	MOR
P TERENCE Urbano	Civitanova Marche (Italia)	09-03-2007	93	IAD
P THAZHOOR Chacko	Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)	08-02-2007	66	AFE
P VATEL Michel	Paris (Francia)	25-01-2007	74	FRA
P VAZ Joseph	Mumbai (India)	10-01-2007	87	INB
P ZUÑIGA PATRIÁN Raúl	Santiago de Chile	25-02-2007	67	CIL







