



acts

of the general council

year LXXXVIII october december 2007

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Direzione Generale
Opere don Bosco
Roma

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of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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1. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR	1.1 Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA «I HAVE COME SO THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL» (Jn 10, 10b) <i>Presentation of the Africa-Madagascar Region</i>	3
2. GUIDELINES AND POLICIES	2.1 Don Antonio DOMENECH Suggestion for an approach to work for vocations in Salesian youth ministry	44
3. RULINGS AND DIRECTIVES	(none in this issue)	
4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL	4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council	61 66
5. DOCUMENTS	5.1 Decree on the miracle for the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God Zeffirino Namuncurá 5.2 Decree for the canonical erection of the Special Circumscription "Sacred Heart" of Central Italy 5.3 Decree for the canonical erection of the "Blessed José Vaz" Province of Panjim, India 5.4 New Provincials 5.5 New Salesian Bishop 5.6 Mgr. Raffaele FARINA, Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church 5.7 Our dead confreres	72 74 77 79 80 81 82

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**«I HAVE COME SO THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE
AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL»**

(Jn 10, 10b)

Presentation of the Africa-Madagascar Region

The Africa-Madagascar Region. 1. Africa-Madagascar today. 1.1. *Salesians in the Continent of Africa.* 1.2. *Salesian works.* 1.3. *The social-political and religious background against which our works are set.* **2. History of the development of Salesian works in Africa.** 2.1. *Before Project Africa.* 2.2. *Project Africa.* 2.3. *Project Africa, fruit of Congregational synergy.* **3. The Salesian charism and the African situation.** 3.1. *Youth Ministry.* 3.2. *Parishes and Missions.* 3.3. *Social Communication.* 3.4. *The Salesian Family.* 3.5. *Economy and administration.* 3.6. *Formation.* **4. Towards the Future.** 4.1. *Challenges.* 4.2. *Relaunching Project Africa.* **Conclusion.**

Rome, 8 September 2007
Feast of the Birth of Mary

Dear confreres,

I am writing to you with the affection of Don Bosco, as we are preparing to celebrate the beatification of the 63 Salesian Spanish Martyrs on 28 October in Rome, and that of Zeffirino Namuncurá, on 11 November at Chimpay, in Argentina. The witness of our confreres even to shedding their blood, and that of Zeffirino, who represents another example of Salesian youth holiness begun by Dominic Savio, are a call to the total giving of ourselves to the Lord and to fidelity until our last breath like Don Bosco and those Salesians and young people at the Oratory in Valdocco following in his footsteps.

It is my hope that in all parts of the Congregation these two events will be celebrated, both in the Salesian community and in our educative and pastoral works. We mustn't lose this opportunity to thank God for the gift of Salesian holiness with which He has enriched the spiritual and apostolic family of Don Bosco, and to renew our commitment to place before our young people the heights to strive for.

This time I am writing to you about the Africa – Madagascar Region, with which I conclude the presentation of the eight Regions in the Congregation. I do so with particular enthusiasm, because the Lord has indeed been very good to us in sending us to this immense and stupendous continent. There we have found the opportunity to make of the whole of Africa the largest Oratory in the world. And Africa is enriching the Congregation with so many vocations, and at the same time with inculturated expressions of the charism.

Ever since my first visit to Africa, in 1987, to Conakry and Kankan, when I was Rector of the Theologate in Tlaquepaque, I have become aware that if the most important value to which the Africans are most sensitive is life, paradoxically in no other part of the world is it so threatened by poverty, by hunger and thirst, by disease, AIDS/HIV in particular, by wars and inter-tribal conflicts, by slavery and forced emigration, by drug-trafficking and by the traffic in human beings.

It is natural therefore to hear as a word of comfort and of hope, indeed as a special mandate, the parable of the Good Shepherd, in which Jesus sums up the whole purpose of his life in that beautiful expression: *«I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full »* (Jn 10,10b). We Salesians arrived in Africa in order to “incarnate” Jesus the Good Shepherd, whose coming ensures abundant life, in order to collaborate in defeating the culture of death and helping life to begin, to grow and to reach its fullness. Our collaboration in the building of the Kingdom is achieved through our commitment to promote life, peace, and freedom in the different countries of Africa and in Madagascar, through our concern for the young, for their education, for their meeting with Christ, for the development of their life projects. Real human development as we Salesians carry it out cannot be divorced from education and evangelisation. Therefore we must not limit our presence to social work, even though there are many urgent social problems where our contribution and our generous and effective dedication are needed. We have been sent to evangelise, to be able to speak to

the young and give them the One who can ensure their abundant life, Jesus Christ.

The text quoted above that I have chosen for this letter of mine and in itself a real programme, «*I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full* » (Jn 10, 10b), is part of the address in which Jesus presents in stark contrast the difference between the thief, the brigand, the stranger and the shepherd. The contrast between the two is seen in their different ways of acting when they approach the sheep, the way they enter the sheepfold, their relationship with them and naturally, their way of going out followed by the sheep or not. While the thief climbs in by another way and comes to steal, kill and destroy, the good shepherd enters by the door, in daytime, his voice is familiar, he knows his sheep by name, he goes before them guiding them to good pasture and quenching their thirst with clear water. So the good shepherd is totally dedicated so that his sheep may have life to the extent of giving his own life so that they may have life to the full.

I believe that this is a text that helps us critically interpret the past and the present in Africa and that becomes a message of hope for these peoples, and a real life project for us. I now invite you to explore this marvellous Region.

The Africa-Madagascar Region

The Region of Africa-MDG continues to attract the attention of Salesians today for various reasons. It is the youngest Region of the Congregation and a good many Provinces still have strong links with it even emotional ones because of the active role they played in building it up. It arouses special interest also because it is one of the few areas where the Congregation is still growing numerically at the present time. It is indeed a Region of great promise and of even greater challenges and opportunities for the Salesian charism.

Fr Egidio Viganò launched “Project Africa” in 1980 and ever since there has been a great force of expansion and growth of Salesian foundations in Africa-MDG. The 25th anniversary of the launching of this project has been, or is still being celebrated in many countries of the continent, depending on the year of entry of the Salesians for the first time into these countries. A commemorative volume entitled “*Project Africa 25 –1980-2005*” has been published in several languages to mark this 25th anniversary. It gives a wealth of information about the project itself and looks at the past and the future of Salesian presence in Africa-MDG. I recommend that all take a good look at this informative and thought-provoking volume, as it could very well supplement what I am presenting here in a summary fashion.

Talk about possible Salesian foundations in Africa began during the lifetime of Don Bosco. From 1864 onwards he was in correspondence with St Daniel Comboni, pioneer missionary in Africa, and Archbishop Charles Lavigerie, great apostle of Algeria, concerning possible Salesian initiatives in Africa. Because of his inability to send Salesians immediately to the places suggested by either of them Don Bosco was content with accepting a few orphans into the Oratory of Valdocco (BM 9: 348-349). In 1886 in the course of a meeting of what was then known as the Superior Council, Don Bosco affirmed that the African Mission (or more precisely the plan to open a foundation in Cairo) “forms part of my plans, and is one of my dreams” (BM 18: 109). In fact he did have a dream about Africa in July 1885 (BM 17: 594ff).

Don Bosco’s dream for Africa began to be gradually realized in the time of Fr Michael Rua in the overall context of the worldwide expansion of the Salesian Society. The very first foundation in Africa goes back to 1891 when a group of French Salesians went to Algeria to begin the Oratory of St. Louis at Oran. In 1894 there was a Salesian foundation in Tunisia and in 1896 others followed in Egypt and South Africa.

Other foundations were opened in different countries between 1907 and 1975, but one must admit that there was no concerted effort to reach out to the length and breadth of Africa.

Thanks to Project Africa, today Africa-MDG is a flourishing Salesian reality. As I write, it consists of 2 Provinces, 10 Vice Provinces and one Delegation, which are organized into the Conference of the Provinces and Vice Provinces of Africa-Madagascar (CIVAM). According to the statistics published in January 2007 in this Region there is a total of 1241 professed Salesians and 89 novices, distributed in 168 communities and 11 other foundations, some of them having several works in their care. The best part of these statistics is that about 52% of the professed are of African origin and every year with the new professions of young African Salesians this percentage keeps rising. The African face of the Salesian Congregation that Don Bosco had dreamed of is becoming more of a reality year by year.

It is the unfolding of this beautiful Salesian saga that I would like to bring to your attention in this letter.

1. Africa-MDG Today

To start with, let me give you some idea of the African situation as we find it at the present day.

1.1 *Salesians in the Continent of Africa*

After Asia, **Africa** is the world's second largest and most-populous continent. Having an area of about 30,221,532 km² including adjacent islands, it covers 6.0% of the Earth's total surface area, and 24% of the total land area. With almost 900,000,000 people in 53 independent countries and 3 dependent territories, it accounts for about 14% of the world's human population.

We Salesians are present and working in 42 of these countries. The Sahara, the vast desert in the northern part of the continent is the largest desert in the world covering some 9 million km². More than two thirds of the population of Africa is to be found in the countries situated to the South of the Sahara. Salesian foundations dot the entire sub-Saharan region, with the exception of Botswana, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Somalia.

Of the 42 countries where we are present, Egypt is a part of the Middle East Province and as such is included in the Italy-MOR Region. Capo Verde is attached to the Portuguese Province, Morocco to France and Tunisia to the Delegation of Malta dependent on the Irish Province. As such they form part of the three European Regions. At present there is no Salesian community in Libya, but a confrere on special assignment helps out in the Vicariate of Bengasi. A recent study of the General Council on the Salesian situation in these countries considered it wiser to leave these dependencies as they are for the present, while awaiting more opportune times for a reorganization favouring their integration into the Africa-MDG Region.

Because of their colonial past, the 37 countries that are included in the Africa-MDG Region are divided into three language groups: *Englishspeaking* – AET, AFE, AFM, AFW, ZMB; *Frenchspeaking* – AFC, AFO, AGL, ATE, MDG; and *Portuguesespeaking* – ANG, MOZ.

With the exception of Central Africa, AFC, Angola, ANG and Mozambique, MOZ, all the Provinces and Vice Provinces include two or more countries.

- AFO is composed of Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Ivory Cost, Mali, Senegal and Togo, the Provincial house being situated in Abidjan in the Ivory Coast.
- Next comes ATE with six countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial

Guinea and Gabon. The Provincial house is in Yaoundé, Cameroon. While French is the lingua franca in five of these countries, Spanish is used in Equatorial Guinea.

- AFW is composed of four countries: Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The Provincial house is in Ashaiman in Ghana.
- ZMB too has four countries: Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with the Provincial house in Lusaka, Zambia.
- AFE now has three countries: Kenya, Tanzania and the Sudan. However, the Sudan is a semi autonomous Delegation with special statutes approved by the Rector Major.
- AFM contains Lesotho and Swaziland in addition to South Africa. The Provincial house is in Johannesburg.
- AGL is a recently erected Vice Province composed of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. This last country has English as its common language, making the Vice Province bilingual in its communications. The Provincial house is in Kimihurura, Rwanda.
- AET contains Ethiopia and Eritrea, but the relationship between the two countries is so tense that travel between them is extremely difficult and for Provincial level meetings they are forced to seek a neutral country in order to ensure the participation of everyone. Even this is not always successful. The Provincial house is in Addis Ababa.
- MDG consists chiefly of the island nation of Madagascar, where the majority of the houses and the Provincial house are situated, and just one community in the smaller island nation of Mauritius.

I have presented in some detail the international character of these juridical circumscriptions in Africa-MDG to show the extremely difficult situation of these Salesian foundations. Diversity of language, long distances and the lack of easy communication and transport facilities add to the ordinary difficulties of animating and governing a Province. The Provincials of

most of these circumscriptions spend most of their time in preparing travel documents and in travel itself to visit their communities. Expenses for the animation and administration of the Provinces, too, tend to run into astronomical figures, mainly because of the need to travel from country to country. You can well imagine the fatigue involved in this work of animation!

1.2 The Salesian Works

Looking back at the Salesian experience in Africa-MDG since its inception, and in particular during the last 30 years or so, we can say that Africa and the Salesian charism are truly made for each other. It is a continent teeming with young people, most of them in extreme need and therefore the ideal subjects of our apostolic action. The last 40 years have seen a rapid increase in the population of the continent; with the result that a good percentage of it is relatively young. It is estimated that in some African countries half or more of the population is under 25 years of age. Another estimate claims that about 60% of Africans are children and young people.

In 1988, referring to our entry into Africa, Fr Egidio Viganò remarked: "We are late arrivals for the task of evangelising the continent of Africa; we have a lot to learn from everyone, but we have a treasure which others perhaps do not have. We are the bearers of a particular way of evangelising youth, with a predilection for young people and a style and method that is unique." The focus on youth and their needs has therefore marked Salesian expansion in Africa as a whole.

The bulk of our activities in Africa-MDG in fact, has concentrated on services to young people and the pastoral care of parishes. In the field of education, great stress has been put on setting up Technical Schools or Professional Training Centres,

even though in recent decades it had been quite difficult to establish them. The parishes are numerous and some of them have many substations attached to the main centre. The third major field of activity is the oratory or youth centre through which we reach out to countless young people.

There are other fields of activity in different parts of Africa and Madagascar, but all in all, we could say that Africa-MDG still awaits the full flowering of the Salesian charism in its various forms.

1.3 The Social-political and religious background against which our works are set

In the world at large it has become more or less fashionable to speak about the many problems of Africa, starting with its many forms of poverty and destitution right up to the spread of HIV-AIDS as if this were only an African sickness. It is true that some of these situations cannot be denied as they constantly stare us in the face. But behind this façade of poverty and sickness there are peoples who have a history and a cultural heritage that is comparable to any in the world.

For many centuries Africans have suffered great injustice and unimaginable oppression as a consequence of the colonial outlook of European nations and especially of the detestable slave trade. Now the peoples of Africa are in the process of shaking off the shackles of the past in order to build a more promising future.

It should be said that not the whole of Africa is equally poor and destitute. At one extreme one finds the highly industrialised South Africa or parts of the main cities of many nations. At the other we have the vast majority of the poor who have access to nothing more than a subsistence economy. The divide between the few rich and the many poor is perhaps at its starkest in the continent of Africa.

A rich tapestry of an infinity of tribes, languages and cultures makes up the population of Africa. Music and dance are so integral to the life-style of any African nation that it is difficult not to be caught up by the festive attitude of the people. There is no time-limit when there is a celebration, whether religious or secular. "You have the watch, but we have the time:" they seem to be admonishing the time-conscious, appointment-conditioned people of the so-called developed countries. No wonder, then, that a Sunday Mass in an African parish lasts not less than two hours. It has always been my joy to celebrate the Eucharist with the people in different parts of Africa. Poverty and privation have not robbed the people of their joy and the will to live. This is indeed an excellent characteristic that our Salesian educational system can very well exploit in the education of the young.

The tribal setting and background of the African peoples is indeed a double -edged sword. On the one hand it gives stability and cohesion to the various groups of people. Tribal loyalty guards against social disintegration. It instils a sense of discipline into all its members and preserves customs and traditions, which often are capable of withstanding the onslaught of extraneous and apparently more attractive cultures.

On the other hand tribalism has been the cause of many wars in different parts of Africa, degenerating even into horrible genocide. And wars are one of the chief causes of the seemingly incurable poverty of Africa. Even at this moment several wars are in progress in different parts of Africa, bringing untold misery and hardship to millions of people. The wars in the Darfur region of the Sudan or in Somalia are well known to all, but there are also forgotten wars in Uganda and parts of the Congo.

Tribalism is also one of the causes of political instability in most of the young democracies of Africa. It often stands in

the way of a true integration of peoples. In the imparting of a truly “catholic” education in our numerous centres, particularly in the cities, this is no mean difficulty. In this context, themes such as reconciliation, mutual acceptance and unity in diversity become constant topics in education and evangelisation.

Among the many social problems afflicting Africa-MDG, I cannot gloss over a particular malady that brings Africa into the headlines quite often these days. HIV-AIDS is a fast-spreading sickness and it is affecting millions of Africans. While it is true that HIV-AIDS is not a speciality of Africa alone, it is also true that the proportions this scourge is assuming in Africa go far beyond that of other continents. It is estimated that in some countries of Africa such as Zimbabwe and Swaziland 25 to 30% of the population is affected by AIDS. According to the information provided by the UN, of the 3 million or so people who died of AIDS in 2005, one third were in sub-Saharan Africa, and half a million were children. This social problem is our concern too because only through sound holistic education can one truly combat the plague. Added to that an increasing number of children and young people are victims of AIDS. It could rightly be considered one of our new frontiers for evangelisation and education.

With regard to religion, Christianity and Islam are the most widespread in Africa-MDG. According to one estimate,¹ in a population of about 900 million people approximately 40% are Muslims and 34% are Christians. In addition Africans practise various indigenous African religions, which are commonly put together under the generic term “animism”. A very small number of Africans are Hindu, or have beliefs from the Judaic tradition. Catholics in Africa are about 17 percent of the total

¹ This is a statistic from 2004 quoted during a presentation of the Africa-Madagascar Region in the General Council.

population.² But often it is not important what religion the people belong to because unfortunately there is a great tendency to mix traditional religious customs with the newly accepted faith. This is very evident in the hundreds of religious sects that are constantly multiplying on African soil.

The sub-Saharan region is dominated by Christianity, while the north of the continent has a majority Muslim population. This also partially explains the abundance of Salesian foundations in the sub-Saharan region in comparison to the north. It should also be noted that the type of Islam one finds in the north and in the sub-Saharan region are qualitatively different. Whereas the north tends to be more orthodox, verging on the fundamentalist approach to the practice of Islam, the Muslims in the sub-Saharan region are more tolerant and do not stand in the way of the activities of the Church.

The development of the Church in Africa is relatively recent. In 1900 there were about nine million Christians in the whole continent. In 2005, according to Vatican figures, the number of Catholics was about 154 million. In contrast to what had happened in the past today the strong growth of Christianity in Africa, at least in part, is due to the activities of local evangelisers rather than foreign missionaries.

On the religious front today one notices a concerted effort to Islamise certain parts of Africa, for example the Sudan, and the prolific spread of sects of all kinds. In fact, the need of the African people to celebrate and to take an active part in celebrations attracts many of them to the numerous Christian sects that hold no bar to free expression in the context of worship. This is indeed a challenge to our own commitment to evangelisation, which is seen to be as necessary today as when the Gospel was first preached in the continent. We need to rise

² The percentage is taken from the Annual Statistics of the Holy See in 2005.

to the challenge to adopt methods of evangelisation that appeal to the culture and sensitivities of the people, to preserve and deepen the faith of the baptised as well as to reach out to the millions who have not yet heard the Good News.

2. History of the Development of Salesian Works in Africa

2.1 Before Project Africa

We have already recalled the beginning of the Salesian presence in Africa with the opening of an oratory in Oran in Algeria in 1891. In the decades that followed two other foundations were made in Algeria, but the Salesians had to retreat from the country in 1976 because of the hostile political climate.

Tunisia was the second country to welcome a Salesian presence in 1894. Through the ups and downs of history, of the three foundations made in Tunisia, today only the school opened in 1988 in Manouba survives and is attached to the Delegation of Malta. The students are all Muslims. And proselytism of any kind is absolutely forbidden.

1907 saw the beginning of a Salesian foundation in Mozambique, but it had a very short life span as, in the wake of the republican revolution in Portugal, the Salesians were expelled in 1913 and the school taken over by the government. The reopening of a Salesian presence in Mozambique would have to wait till 1952.

1911 marks the beginning of the Salesian presence in the Belgian Congo. The seeds of the charism sown in this part of Africa have germinated and borne abundant fruits, resulting in the creation of the Province of Central Africa in 1959 and the Vice Province of Africa Great Lakes in 2006. Until the laun-

ching of Project Africa, the Central African Province was the point of reference for Salesian centres in Africa as a whole.

It must be recognised that between 1891 and 1978 the Salesian charism made slow progress in different African countries. At the death of Don Rua in 1910 there were Salesian foundations in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, South Africa and Mozambique. Fr. Paul Albera sent Salesians to the Belgian Congo. During Fr. Philip Rinaldi's Rectorship the Salesians opened houses in the Canary Islands (1923) and Morocco (1929). Fr. Peter Ricaldone was responsible for their entry into Libya (1939) and Cape Verde (1946). When Fr. Renato Ziggioni was Rector Major Salesian foundations were established in Rwanda and Swaziland (1953), Congo Brazzaville (1959), Burundi (1962) and Gabon (1964). Fr. Aloysius Ricceri added two more countries to the Salesian map of Africa, namely Equatorial Guinea (1972) and Ethiopia (1975). Preparations for a Salesian foundation in the Ivory Coast were already begun in 1973 through the presence of a single Salesian.

Of all these foundations – from the first arrival of the Salesians in Africa until the launch of “Project Africa” some no longer exist, but they prepared the way for the great expansion of the charism in the continent. In all these years most of the confreres were missionaries coming from Europe. The pioneers had to face difficulties of all kinds on account of the social and political situation but also because in some cases ecclesiastical authorities failed to understand the specific nature of the Salesian charism. It should also be noted that in many places the work of the Salesians was primarily directed towards the children of immigrant Europeans, though efforts were not lacking to reach out to indigenous African youth. The Salesians accepted elementary schools, opened technical schools or schools of arts and trades as they were then called and engaged in parish activities. They founded missions in order to cater for the needs of those in the rural areas. In statistical terms, in 1978 the Salesians in Africa numbered 330, in 52 centres spread

across 13 countries. There were just five novices. Only 35 of these Salesians were of African origin, including two bishops.

2.2 Project Africa

With the launching of Project Africa by Fr Egidio Viganò in 1980 the Salesian charism made great strides throughout the African continent.

The origins of Project Africa can be traced back to an appeal made by Fr Jacques Ntamitalizo, in one of the sessions of GC21. He was the only African present at the General Chapter as the delegate of the Central African Province. He made a moving appeal to the Chapter to consider that the time had come for the Salesian Congregation to do something more for Africa with greater commitment and planning. His simple message made a deep impression on all present and in the six-year period that followed the Chapter Fr Egidio Viganò formulated the response in the form of "Project Africa."

After the preliminary studies made between 1978 and 1980 Fr Viganò launched the Project with his circular entitled "Our African Commitment" (ASC 297). In it the Rector Major declared his conviction that "Project Africa is for us Salesians a grace from God," and invited all the members of the Salesian Family "to share this conviction". Subsequent events showed that his invitation did not fall on deaf ears.

The strategy followed by the Rector Major and his Council was to entrust certain parts of Africa to groups of Provinces so that they could send confreres to open new foundations and support them financially. It would require much space to go into the details of this intricate planning which involved the whole Congregation in one way or another. It is not my intention to give a country by country account of the implanting of the Salesian charism in Africa. On the other hand, I think not

to mention at least the bare outlines of this Congregational effort would be an affront to the dedication and generosity of those who were involved in it.

Three distinct phases are discernible in the realization of Project Africa. The first is obviously the ***Phase of Foundation*** in many new countries.

Already in 1979 the Province of Great Britain made a foundation in *Liberia*. The following year new foundations were opened in seven countries: The Spanish Provinces of León, Bilbao and Madrid opened foundations in *Senegal*, *Benin* and *Equatorial Guinea* respectively. The Indian Provinces and the Italian Central Province opened foundations in *Kenya*. The Irish Salesians went to *Lesotho* and the Indians to the *Sudan*. *Tanzania* received fourteen confreres and a cooperator from India to begin four foundations.

1981 saw four more countries added to the Salesian map of Africa to which was added Madagascar. The combined efforts of the Provinces of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay sent a group of 10 confreres to open three foundations in *Angola*. The Spanish Province of Barcelona assumed responsibility for a foundation in the *Ivory Coast*, whereas several Italian Provinces took the initiative to open foundations in different parts of *Madagascar*. *Mali* was favoured with two Salesian foundations with confreres from the Spanish Province of Valencia.

1982 witnessed further expansion of Salesian houses in five more countries. Salesians from two Italian Provinces (the Subalpine and Novara) entered *Nigeria* and pitched camp in Akure and Ondo, while two other Spanish Provinces ventured into *Togo* and took over a parish at Lomé. It was then the turn of the Polish Salesians to enter *Zambia* with 12 confreres to make several foundations. *Ethiopia*, where Salesians from the Province of the Middle East were already active received a fresh input of Salesian life with the arrival of Salesians from the Province of Milan.

1983 can be considered the final year of the first phase of planting the charism and the expansion of Salesian works in Africa. In this year there were six more requests for new foundations.

The newly erected foundations continued to depend on the mother Provinces. Some of them were organized into Provincial delegations still under the mother Province. Fr Viganò's strategy of entrusting particular mission territories to mother Provinces in Europe, India and America paid rich dividends, the overall result being that by 1984 the number of Salesians had swelled to 507 in 91 foundations spread over 29 countries. The number of novices, all of them African, too, rose to 10.

1985-1990 could be considered the second phase of Project Africa, namely, the ***phase of consolidation and structural organization***.

With the growing number of foundations, confreres and indigenous vocations, it was necessary to give more attention to the consolidation and structural organization of the scattered centres owing juridical allegiance to mother Provinces in far away countries. Hence a process of weaning the African communities from the jurisdiction of the mother Provinces was gradually introduced by grouping them together first into semi-autonomous delegations and then into Vice Provinces. Just before the GC23 the Delegations of Southern Africa and Eastern Africa were erected into Vice Provinces, each consisting of several countries. By 1990 the number of Salesians had risen to 711 distributed in 129 foundations in 33 countries. The number of novices too had swelled to 37. The result was very consoling indeed, as far as the Project was concerned.

This phase of consolidation continued without let up during the six-year period after the GC23. By 1995 there were five independent circumscriptions and seven delegations in Africa. Salesians were already offering their service in 38 African countries and their number was steadily growing.

The third phase could be called the ***phase of the unification of Salesian Africa with the creation of the Region of Africa-Madagascar***.

The steady growth, consolidation and the structural organization of the Salesian work in Africa led to the bold decision of the GC24 in 1996 to create the Africa-MDG Region. The Project thus became a Region in just 16 years! Fr Antonio Rodríguez Tallón, who was completing a six-year period as Councillor for the Region of Spain and Portugal, was elected the first Regional for Africa-MDG. The Chapter also provided some criteria for the ongoing consolidation and organization of the region, emphasising *Unity, Inculturation, Missionary reciprocity* and other concrete organizational aspects.

In the six-year period that followed (1996-2002) the Africa-MDG Region showed further signs of growth and consolidation. More new works were opened, the number of African confreres increased to a significant 231, and several more independent Circumscriptions were created.

The GC25 went one step further and recommended the grouping of the African Circumscriptions into a Conference. Fr. Valentin de Pablo, of happy memory, as Regional Councillor for Africa-MDG, oversaw the organization of the Conference of the Provinces and Vice Provinces of Africa and Madagascar, with the acronym *CIVAM* and the approval of its Statutes.

Today the Project is a part of history, but the Region of Africa-Madagascar keeps moving forward, tackling new problems and trying to maintain its vocational fruitfulness, and with the determination to grow ever stronger. The Region can boast of structures at the regional level consisting of a Secretariat, Commissions for Youth Ministry and Formation and Coordinators for Communications and Professional Formation.

2.3 Project Africa – Fruit of Congregational Synergy

My dear confreres, in spite of this sketchy presentation of the spectacular saga of the implementation of “Project Africa,” it must be evident to you that this would not have been possible had not the Lord chosen to work through our confreres. Fr Viganò launched Project Africa in response to what he called an inspiration from above and indeed an invisible hand guided us through swift and sure paths to make it a reality.

I would like to highlight a few important factors that account for the success of this Project.

- a) The speed with which we were able to spread throughout Africa was due to the enthusiasm with which all the Provinces accepted the invitation of the Rector Major to participate in the Project. It generated great missionary enthusiasm in the whole Congregation. We can truly say that it was a project of the entire Congregation. I would think that it is one of the best examples of synergy at world level for the realization of a common project and could also serve as an example for other projects.
- b) The generosity and the self-sacrificing spirit of the missionaries deserve all our admiration. Most of them had immense difficulties to face in getting themselves started and inserted in the new places to which they were sent. They courageously faced them all and persevered in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Many of these pioneers are still working in different places in Africa – a wonderful sign of their love for the African people and their identification with the cause of Africa.
- c) The financial help organized by the mother Provinces, by various Salesian Mission Offices and NGOs and the myriad ways in which Divine Providence came to our assistance is another factor that cannot be overlooked. Don Bosco’s assurance that as long as we work for the poor and for the sal-

vation of souls Divine Providence will never desert us has been literally verified in the realization of Project Africa. The African “miracle” of the Salesians continues even today precisely because of our commitment to the poor youth of the continent. With hardly any exception all our beneficiaries are the truly poor and the needy.

- d) Africa now has an African face. The number of African Salesians is steadily on the increase. This is due to the commitment of our confreres to finding local vocations right from the beginning of the Project. The result is that today there are well established formation structures all over the Region and every year there are between 80 and 100 novices. In fact, in 2004 there were as many as 104 novices. All has been made possible with well-planned vocation pastoral work.

I could point to other factors that account for this success, but I think these are sufficient. Let me now tell you something about the implementation of the Salesian mission in Africa-MDG in the various sectors of activity.

3. The Salesian Charism and the African Situation

3.1 *Youth Ministry*

As I have already observed, Africa is teeming with youth, and poor youth at that. It is indeed very fertile ground for the realization of the Salesian charism.

When it comes to the practical expression of our charism in Africa, I think *technical schools and professional training centres* take precedence over the others. There is a great demand for these centres of training. Our Salesian response has been a very practical one. In fact we have more than 82 of them spread out all over Africa-MDG, thanks also to the

interest taken by many Salesian NGOs in finding finance for them. Most of them are well set up and very well equipped, but their ongoing maintenance and improvement are constant headaches.

Even in a difficult country like Eritrea there is a well-equipped technical school in Dekemhare. All its courses are well attended. The kind of service it offers to the young people of this impoverished nation is emblematic of the wonderful help given by all the technical schools and centres of professional training in Africa-Madagascar. Deserving of particular mention are the three professional training centres run by the Salesians for young people in the extensive refugee camp of Kakuma in Kenya. A short time ago this camp had close to 90,000 refugees from different countries, but mainly from the Sudan. Of the different services provided by many humanitarian agencies working in the camp the contribution of the Salesians was one of the most appreciated, as it prepared the young people for life after the camp.

In the field of Technical education and professional training the Vice Province of Mozambique is perhaps the best organized at Provincial level. All the technical schools are coordinated through a centralised organization and they do much for the training of teachers and instructors in technical education. The Government has recognized this and the Salesians have had an important role to play in developing the Government's policy on technical education. The most recent sign of this appreciation is the request of the government to set up a university-level institution to train teachers for technical schools. This new institution could very well be at the service of the Region to prepare our own confreres and other teachers for our technical schools.

The academic school has not yet caught on in a big way in Salesian Africa. In fact there are only 78 primary schools and 36 secondary schools under our care. A small number indeed,

when compared with other Regions. Centres of higher education are practically non-existent. In the future, perhaps, these sectors too will need greater attention to be paid to them in order to provide a good education for many poor young people and especially to train those young people who can be leaders loyal to Christian ideals in society and particularly in politics. Worthy of special mention is the massive literacy programme undertaken by the Salesians in Angola. This programme has been very successful and has reached out to thousands of young people and even adults. It is to the credit of our confreres that they have developed their own textbooks to be used in these literacy programmes. Though not considered formal schooling, this programme is connected with school in so far as it prepares candidates to start formal school training.

The *Youth Centre* is another major sector of activity, and the majority of our houses have some kind of an oratory or youth centre. In fact there are 123 of them in the Region. Each place has its own particular way of running an oratory or youth centre. I think I would need to say that in general recreational activities dominate over other formative initiatives in these centres, so that a full fledged oratory as a place for the overall human and Christian formation of youth in the way Don Bosco would be proud of is still something to be achieved. In spite of this, there is no doubt about the excellent service the Salesians are offering the young people of Africa. A leap in quality is what needs to be aimed at.

There are a variety of groups active in the oratories, youth centres and other places. They all form part of the *Salesian Youth Movement*, which has started making an impact in a few Circumscriptions, while in others every effort is being made to introduce it. It will be an excellent way of uniting the young people of different countries within a Province and among different Provinces. However, the difficulties of travel and the expenses involved restrict and stand in the way of dreams in this field. The vitality of the SYM in Africa will very much depend

on the capacity of Salesians to unite and animate the young people at the local level with practical formation programmes.

I would like to highlight a particular youth ministry activity, not because of the number of centres engaged in it, but because of the quality of the service provided. I am referring to the *centres for the rehabilitation and training of young people at risk*, a good many of whom come to us from the streets. In most Circumscriptions of the Region there are centres that cater for these marginalised young people, even though their number is still quite small. Each centre has its own particular characteristics while striving to carry out the one Salesian mission on behalf of these most needy and deserving of our little brothers and sisters.

The Central African Province (AFC) is one of the Provinces with the largest number of works of this kind. To quote just one example, in Lubumbashi (AFC) there is a well-organized work for street-children. It is known as the Bakanja-Magone, but in fact there are three interconnected areas of activity: Bakanja Ville, Bakanja-Centre and Bakanja-Magone. The first is a drop-in centre for youngsters roaming the streets. It is situated in the city itself and is easily accessible. The children and youngsters move in and out of the place and have facilities they could not dream of having in the street. Those who want to stay for the night are offered the opportunity, and there is no doubt that typical Salesian kindness induces many to do so. Bakanja Centre is a second stage in the rehabilitation of these youngsters. It has a school, a dispensary and a kitchen at their service. Every Sunday, Mass is organized specifically for them. One step further is the Magone Centre, which has residential facilities for children who at one time were on the streets, together with a centre to train them in different trades. The patient work of loving accompaniment, education and training have borne wonderful results in all the years of the existence of this Salesian enterprise. Several other works in the Province are organized on similar lines.

Considering the vastness of the continent, the poverty of the people, and the large number of destitute children and young people, I would tend to think that such works will need to increase in the future, not necessarily by opening new foundations but by directing the existing works in their favour.

A pastoral initiative that deserves special attention and commendation is the effort being made in some parts of Salesian Africa to combat the widespread plague of HIV-AIDS. Many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa where our confreres work have a large number of HIV-AIDS patients and an increasing number of them are children and young people. Two different pastoral approaches to the problem have been adopted by the Vice Provinces of AFM and ATE. AFM has evolved a weeklong formation programme entitled "Love Matters" which has made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of youngsters who have participated in the course at the youth training centre in Walkerville. A different type of initiative has come developed in the Vice Province of ATE, whose Provincial, Fr José Antonio Vega, has gained wide recognition for his expertise on education to prevent HIV-AIDS. The Vice Province has produced a series of manuals and other material to sensitise people about the illness and to educate them in the Christian way of preventing it. It is to the credit of our confreres that these booklets are used not only in Salesian institutions, but also in other places. Following the lead given by these two Vice Provinces and using and adapting the material produced by them other African Circumscriptions too have introduced HIV-AIDS prevention programmes. Obviously, the apocalyptic dimensions this sickness is assuming in Africa calls for more commitment on the part of all our centres to give more serious thought to this aspect of education and evangelisation.

It is very encouraging to note that over the years the youth ministry sector has become better organized in the Region. In most Circumscriptions there is a Commission for Youth Mini-

stry. For the last few years at Regional level there is a Commission for Youth Ministry with a designated Regional Delegate. One of the Provincials represents it at the CIVAM. Even though the delegate is not yet working full time on this, he acts as the liaison between the youth commissions of the different Provinces and organizes meetings at Regional level. In its annual meetings during this six-year period the Commission has devoted much attention to various aspects of youth ministry and offered valuable suggestions for improvement. The proposals coming from these meetings are taken up in the CIVAM for practical decisions that have a ripple effect on all the Provinces.

3.2 Parishes and Missions

Parishes, many of them with missions attached to them, form a major field of activity in Africa-MDG. There are some 105 of them under our care. We did not pioneer most of these, for we inherited them from other religious Congregations. Thanks to the hard work of these pioneer missionaries, we were able to easily organize the pastoral care of these parishes and gradually conform them to our Salesian style. Most of these parishes have a large number of faithful. In Angola, for example, we have two parishes in the city of Luanda which have over 75000 faithful. It is indeed wonderful to hear that we have churches that can accommodate 2000 to 3000 people in places like Tulear (Madagascar), Kinshasa (D.R.Congo) or Cotonou (Benin), where our confreres arrange for well-attended celebrations of Sunday Masses in which large masses of people pray, sing and dance together to praise and glorify the Lord of life and the giver of all good things. It is even more encouraging to hear of parishes like the one we have in Pointe Noire (Congo Brazzaville) where daily morning Mass is celebrated with more than 1000 in the congregation.

Catechesis is an important aspect of pastoral life in our parishes. Some of them have several hundred catechumens, most of them young people, preparing for baptism over a period of three to four years. Lay involvement is seen in the different groups that are active in the parishes and the numerous catechists and lay leaders who help in their administration. Some parishes have indeed as many as 20 or more active groups.

Though we are mainly engaged in pastoral ministry in already established parishes, there is no lack of *pioneering mission work* in several Provinces. Some city parishes are very much engaged in the mission *ad gentes* and have hundreds of catechumens every year. A good many parishes all over Africa have several rural substations attached to them. Often each substation is as good as a small parish.

Kandi in Benin (AFO), Luena in Angola and the prefecture of Gambella in Ethiopia are good examples of pioneering missionary work. In the mission of Kandi our confreres are gradually bringing the light of the Gospel to the Mokolé tribe. Until some years ago these people had hardly any contact with the rest of the world.

Luena is perhaps the largest single missionary parish we have in the Congregation. The furthest mission station is about 600 km away from the centre with very poor connecting roads. It is estimated that only about 5% of the 400,000 or so people who live in this region in very poor conditions has been evangelised. I am told that they are waiting for the Catholic missionaries (read Salesians) just because we stayed with them through thick and thin during the long and difficult years of the civil war and helped them to survive. Our confreres are held in high esteem and they have started to reach out to the people with the Gospel through the activities of lay catechists since we Salesians are too few in number.

Gambella is for the most part virgin mission territory. Under the leadership of Mgr Angelo Moreschi SDB, the Prefect

Apostolic, a host of missionary activities have been started and the Church is growing steadily. Had we more missionaries, the fruits of evangelisation would certainly be very abundant.

The reports coming from these missions remind me of apostolic times. These are but some examples of the possibilities for the mission *ad gentes* in the African continent.

I think this is the appropriate moment to speak about a new project we have launched. The Project Africa launched by Fr Viganò has now become the Region of Africa-MDG and can be considered as officially concluded with the celebration of its 25th anniversary. However, two years ago we launched "*Project Sudan*" because of the great need in this war-torn country. The long years of war have brought the southern part of the Sudan, which is predominantly Catholic, to the depths of human misery and socio-economic collapse. For almost 25 years children and young people have had no opportunity to go to school. The mining of roads and the prevailing situation of war prevented priests and catechists from visiting the villages. Consequently, during all these years the life of faith of the people was not sufficiently nourished and deepened, even though the vast majority of them remained faithful in their Christian faith. Over and above all this at present there is a concerted effort to Islamise the south. Our parish in Tonj has 160 villages to look after, but after reopening this presence in the year 2000, as yet our confreres have been able to reach out to only 80 of them. The harvest is great, but the labourers are few.

In short, the Sudan has need of urgent attention to rebuild a people that were on the brink of complete destruction. To this end, in 2006 the Department for the Missions launched "Project Sudan" and invited the entire Congregation to make it the theme of the annual Salesian Missionary Day (DOMISAL). Seeing the urgent needs, the Sudan has been re-proposed as the theme for 2007 as well. In collaboration with the various Salesian International NGOs a comprehensive project has been

drawn up for Salesian operations in the Sudan. The consolidation of present foundations, the opening of new ones in the most needy areas and reaching out to the much neglected rural poor, particularly the children and young people, are all important features of this Project, which should continue for a few more years even though it may not be re-proposed as the theme of the DOMISAL. Taking a cue from the successful outcome of Project Africa, if all the Provinces can take this new Project Sudan seriously and generously, I think we will be able to work wonders in a short time.

While we are on the theme of the missions it gives me great joy to point out that Salesians of African origin have already started to go to other countries as missionaries. There is a movement of missionaries within the continent and from Africa to other continents. Most recently, a priest and a practical trainee from AFC went as missionaries to ATE and AFM respectively, whereas two other practical trainees, one from ANG and the other from AET went to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. We are hopeful that as the years go by the number of missionaries from Africa will increase.

3.3 Social Communications

At the meeting of the CIVAM in 2003 the theme of social communications was studied against the African background and some practical proposals were made to invest more resources in this sector. Last year, at the Regional level a coordinator for Social Communications was appointed. This marks the good will and determination of the Provincials to become better organized in this sector in the future. It must be admitted, however, that in spite of all the efforts made so far, in Africa as a whole, the sector of social communications is still to receive the attention it deserves. Nevertheless, what has already been achieved in the different Provinces, though modest, is quite impressive.

With varying frequencies several editions of the Salesian Bulletin are published in the different Provinces. A single Salesian Bulletin with the title "Salesian Family Bulletin" is published in English from Nairobi. Two other English Salesian Bulletins come out from AFW and ZMB. Three French editions of the Bulletin are published from AFC, AFO and ATE and a Portuguese edition from Mozambique.

Modest efforts to publish useful booklets have been made in several Circumscriptions. DBYES (Don Bosco Youth Educational Services) in Nairobi (AFE), though a centre for the overall formation of young people and the training of youth animators, has a department of communications as well, which takes care of various publications for the benefit of young people. This centre has also produced a programme of formation to train young people in the use of the media. Periodically various publications come out in other Provinces as well. No doubt much more could be done if the publication activity of the various Provinces could be coordinated at the Regional or inter-Provincial level.

The "Colombe" Centre in Lubumbashi (AFC) in collaboration with the local television station offers a range of prime time television programmes in French as well as Swahili, particularly for young people.

There are at least two radio stations run by the Salesians in the Region. "Radio Don Bosco" Ebolowa (ATE) is small in size and serves the nearby rural population. On the other hand, "Radio Don Bosco" in Ivato (MDG) is indeed a communications service of which the Congregation can be truly proud! I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that it is one of the best radio stations we have at present in the Congregation. Without doubt it is the number one radio in Madagascar. Indeed, reliable surveys show that among all the radios broadcasting in the country, including that of the state, Radio Don Bosco has the largest number of listeners. Through its satellite connections it

reaches out to practically the whole island nation and is linked to most of the 20 dioceses of Madagascar.

Radio Don Bosco was started in 1996 as the Salesian response to the situation and needs of Madagascar and to make known the presence of the Salesians in the territory and within the culture of the country. It forms part of a strategy to enhance the quality of the service offered by the Salesians to the youth and to the people of Madagascar. Through its daily 24 hour broadcasts in the Malagasy language it provides a variety of programmes for the people in general and for the young people in particular. With its emphasis on programmes in the field of education, evangelisation and social development it is in all senses a youthful Salesian radio station at the service of the Salesian charism.

The means of social communication are evidently the means par excellence for education and evangelisation. By investing more in them we can make our mission more effective and reach out to the greatest number of people.

3.4 The Salesian Family

Many groups of the Salesian Family are present and active in different parts of Africa-Madagascar.

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians have communities in all our Provinces, although not in all the countries where the Salesians are present. The arrangement of their eight Provinces does not always coincide with ours.

The Cooperators have their centres in almost all the Circumscriptions, but the Past Pupils are still to be well-organized in most countries. The other groups of the Salesian Family present in Africa are the Sisters of Mary Immaculate who have a Province in Tanzania, the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians who have just one foundation in Swaziland and the

Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary who work beside the Salesians in Cameroon. Other groups such as ADMA, VDB and CDB have small groups in a few Circumscriptions.

It needs to be said that the potential of the Salesian Family is still to be fully explored in Africa. In the most recent meeting of the CIVAM in Dar Es Salaam with Fr. Adriano Bregolin and his team an assessment was made of the present state of the Salesian Family in the Region, with a view to giving it a greater impact and dynamism. From the reports presented at the meeting it was evident that in most African Circumscriptions the Salesian Family is rather weak. Much more needs to be done to promote it and to make it into a true movement for the carrying out of the Salesian mission. The Provincials present at the meeting have already drafted a plan for the promotion of the Salesian Family and suggested ways of achieving greater synergy among its various groups. I dare say that the future impact and efficacy of the Salesian charism in Africa will depend to a great extent on the capacity of the Salesian Family to work together for the implementation of a common mission while guaranteeing and respecting the specific characteristics and autonomy of each group.

3.5 Economy and Administration

This is an important aspect in the carrying out of our mission in every part of the world. We have already referred to the wonderful and massive way in which Divine Providence has come to our assistance for the implementation of Project Africa. Such assistance continues today as most of the Provinces still depend almost exclusively on the help of funding agencies and individual benefactors in Europe and America. A good number of the mother Provinces that were responsible for the establishment of Salesian foundations in the different Circumscriptions

continue to assist the new African Provinces financially according to the agreements that have been made between them. I feel the need to say a special word of thanks to these Provinces for their continued financial support and interest.

In the foundational stage it was quite easy to find finance for the establishment of the works. Now it is a question of maintenance and daily running, for which it is more difficult to find the needed funds. In this regard in particular the ongoing maintenance of the technical schools tends to become a heavy burden, even though through them we can give the best service to the poor youth of the Region. The Circumscriptions are already studying various possibilities to raise funds locally for the support of our works. For the moment the self-support of our works in Africa-MDG is a big dream and it is not possible to predict when it will become reality. We are confident, however, that Divine Providence will continue to be at work in this poor continent and will never abandon us.

The sound administration of the resources Divine Providence sends us is the test of our fidelity as religious. It is the guarantee that we shall never lack the means needed for the fulfilment of our God-given mission. I dare to say, with Don Bosco, that our own frugal way of life and the witness we give to evangelical poverty coupled with unwavering commitment to the poor and the marginalised will ensure for us a privileged place at the bank of Divine Providence.

3.6 Formation

And now we come to the most important topic of formation. On it depends the dynamism and the charismatic effectiveness of the Region in the present as well as in the future. After my presentation above of the different ways of carrying out our mission in Africa-MDG and having referred to some of the numerous challenges involved in deepening the roots of the cha-

rism in this continent, it should be clear what type of formation is required for the new generations of African Salesians.

During these last 25 years the Region has seen a consistent growth in the number of formation houses at all levels of initial formation. Whereas in 1980 the Salesian Directory enumerated only 2 houses of formation in the whole of Africa at Butare in Rwanda and Kansebula in Congo, in 2007 there are as many as 41 formation communities in the Region.

There are 18 pre-novitiate communities because of the complex international character of several Circumscriptions, some of which have several pre-novitiates in the various countries. There are 10 novitiates and 9 post-novitiate communities at the service of the 12 Circumscriptions. It is to be noted that because of the difficult political situation prevailing between the two countries of which it is composed, and the impossibility for those in formation to travel outside Eritrea, AET has no other option than to have all the phases of formation in Eritrea itself as well as in Ethiopia. It is the only Vice Province that has 2 novitiates and two postnovitiates.

There are 4 communities for students of theology in Lubumbashi, Yaoundé, Utume (Nairobi) and Fianarantsoa. This last is combined with the post-novitiate community in the same house. With the exception of Lubumbashi, where the classes are held in our own centre, the students of theology attend theological institutes that are at the service of the dioceses or religious Congregations.

Very recently a community for the specific formation of Salesian Brothers has been opened in Nairobi for the English-speaking Circumscriptions.

As recommended by the *Ratio*, the inter-provincial formation communities are regulated by their respective governing bodies (*Curatorium*) composed of the Provincials of the participating Provinces.

Impressive as the number of formation communities is, it must also be mentioned that a good many of them do not have an adequate number of competent formation guides. Providing competent and holy staff for these communities and improving the quality of the initial formation in all its stages will remain great challenges for many more years to come. No wonder, then, that the number of Salesians seeking academic qualifications in different universities outside the Region is constantly on the increase.

The Regional Formation Commission has been well-organised during this six-year period and is providing a great service by studying topics of common interest to all the Circumscriptions. The Commission functions according to the statutes approved by the CIVAM and has one of the Provincials as its referent. The role of this Commission cannot be overestimated, given the number of formation houses in the Region and the importance of initial and ongoing formation for a true inculturation of the Salesian charism in Africa-MDG.

4. Towards the Future

With our hearts full of joy we need to raise a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God for all that has been done in Africa-MDG from the first Salesian foundation in 1891 until the present day, but in a very special way for the last 30 years of intense activity. However, we must humbly admit that what has been done so far is only the tip of the iceberg. So much more needs to be done and could be done.

The challenges facing Africa and Salesian Africa in particular are many and complex. They require of us fresh energy and renewed commitment in a spirit of optimism and creativity that are essential characteristics of our spirituality. I would like to sum up all these challenges and needs under one broad title: ***a more profound inculturation of the Salesian charism in Africa and Madagascar.***

Until now the responsibility for the implanting of the Salesian charism in Africa-MDG rested on the shoulders of the expatriate missionaries. From now on it is shifting gradually on to the new generations of Salesians of African origin. The African face of the Salesian charism about which Don Viganò spoke does not consist only in the numerical increase of Salesians of African origin, but even more in the inculturation of our charism in the African world so that it can bring about the transformation of African society according to the vision of the Gospel and in our Salesian style.

4.1 Challenges

Speaking of challenges and prospects, rather than giving new formulations, I prefer to draw from and expand on what I have already written in the concluding document of the Team Visit held in Johannesburg in February 2006. I think it captures well the crux of the problem.

The mission is for us Salesians the centre of gravity and the driving force of our life. It is crucial therefore to understand what our mission is. The mission is not to be identified with the works, activities or undertakings. It is rather the expression of our *zeal for the salvation of youth*, the “passion” of *‘Da mihi animas coetera tolle’*, a zeal that has its source “in the heart of Christ, apostle of the Father” (C. 11).

We want the Salesian mission and its inculturation in Africa and Madagascar to be the reason for our religious life and therefore for all our efforts to renew our presence in this vast and impoverished continent. We have been called by God to be here so that young people, especially those who are poor, abandoned and most at risk, “have life to the full” (cf. John 10,10) through the gift of human development, education and evangelisation.

Before our eyes and in the depth of our hearts we have the drama of the tremendous poverty of the people and of the social

and political instability; the devastating new epidemic of HIV-AIDS; the lack of opportunities for the young people; the menacing expansion of Islam, etc. And it is precisely in this context marked by the anti-culture of death that we Salesians want to be “signs and bearers of God’s love” putting our trust in youth, believing in education, being missionaries.

The challenges that apostolic Consecrated Life faces in Africa and Madagascar come from:

- *cultural tendencies*: secularism, materialism and consumerism that promote a life without God, without spiritual values and without a capacity to make our lives self-less offerings to the young;
- *personal temptations*: individualism that destroys the Christian sense of communion, puts at risk the social experience of solidarity, produces departmentalisation in our works and fragmentation in our lives, and activism that leads confreres to give more importance to doing than to being, which causes physical tiredness, psychological stress and spiritual emptiness;
- *institutional and organisational problems*: a certain resistance to the change necessary to respond adequately to external circumstances that are changing rapidly and profoundly; the emergence of an internal situation, characterised by the increase in local vocations accompanied by the scarcity of personnel for the roles of leadership, which requires on our part a restructuring of our works, with an increase in co-responsibility of the young confreres and a change in our way of operating. Community life in Africa and Madagascar, whose protagonists are confreres from different countries, cultures and ethnic groups, is a prophetic witness to countries torn apart by wars; it is evangelisation in action, an expression of love that overcomes every kind of racial antagonism.

To be effective as religious in today's Africa, Salesians must become *more zealous, more religious and more Salesian*. Therefore we need people full of pastoral fire, of deep spirituality, with a sense of identity and with a planning mentality, that is to say, men whose most powerful incentive is pastoral charity, who allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit, who make Don Bosco their point of reference and the norm of their lives, and who know how to network and collaborate with other educational and pastoral agencies present in their area, and so create synergy.

It is indeed a challenge worth taking up to ***give the Salesian charism deeper and firmer roots in the Region***. The interaction between African cultures and the Salesian charism should result in mutual enrichment for the benefit of the young people of Africa and Madagascar. In this context *vocation animation* and *Formation* both initial and ongoing take on their real importance. There is still a long way to go before we can staff every formation community with suitable and competent staff. Only a concerted effort in this matter, even at the cost of great sacrifices, will ensure the charismatic integrity of the Region.

Further consolidation and a more complete expression of the Salesian mission in its different aspects is yet another challenge and a task for the coming years. This consolidation implies among other things giving particular attention to the numerical consistency of each community, ensuring a high level of community life and the qualification of the confreres for the roles entrusted to them. Consolidation alone, however, could tend to make us fall into monotonous routine and lead eventually to death. Reckless expansion, on the other hand, weakens the very fabric of our mission. The happy marriage between consolidation and a healthy expansion requires wisdom and discernment guided by extreme sensitivity to the needs of the times. Expansion cannot be seen only in terms of new works and new communities, but should also mean the

reorganization and reorientation of our existing works in a creative manner, in order to give more convincing responses to the needs of the poor and the young at risk.

Poverty is another reality that stares us in the face in the entire continent and demands our attention. It invites us to a more authentic life of evangelical poverty so that as individuals and communities we can be witnesses to those with whom and for whom we interact and work. At the same time it challenges us to find the economic means necessary to place the poor on the path of development and dignified self-sufficiency.

In this context the self-support of our works in Africa-MDG is not a small challenge. At present all our works depend heavily on foreign funds. Even though foreign funds cannot be dispensed with completely it is necessary to discover the presence of Divine Providence in Africa and Madagascar.

More urgently it is necessary to create a sense of Christian solidarity and mutual help among the millions of Africans, because I am convinced that the lasting transformation of African society can come about only from within African societies themselves, rather than as a result of the economic aid that may come from outside, even though this can help considerably if it is put to wise use without creating a mentality of dependence.

Don Bosco has assured us that as long as we work for the really poor we shall not lack the necessary means. This assurance, verified by the living experience of the Congregation, makes me believe that every effort must be made to make our works self-supporting as much as possible.

4.2 Relaunching Project Africa

It is true that Project Africa as it was originally conceived has been officially concluded and attention is now focused on the Region of Africa-Madagascar. However, faced with the enor-

mous challenges facing Salesian Africa at the present day, and the many possibilities it offers to the Salesian charism, it has been suggested that we should relaunch Project Africa with a new focus. It seems to me a very good idea, but its successful implementation will now depend on the individual African Circumscriptions and the CIVAM as a whole.

Relaunching Project Africa in the context of present day challenges and possibilities would mean working towards the achievement of an Adult Salesian Africa from all points of view. One, that is, that not only sustains itself, but generates new life for the millions of poor youth in the continent. It should become a more active player in the overall transformation of African society according to the Christian vision of life and of human society.

This new Project Africa would have to give particular attention to various aspects of our life and activities.

- Keeping **evangelisation** always in the centre so that in all places and in every circumstance we can be true proclaimers of the Gospel and educators in the faith. Every Salesian in Africa-MDG, whether of foreign nationality or of local origin should feel himself a missionary, an evangeliser.
- Rethinking and improving our **educative commitment** so that with improved contents and methods we form new ways of thinking to create a more human and Christian society. In this respect, educating the young for responsible participation in the social and political life of their countries assumes an importance that cannot be overestimated.
- Making more strategic use of the different **means of communication** to enhance our services in evangelisation and education, linking the different communication centres at the Regional level for a greater impact on society.
- Ensuring that **formation** both initial and ongoing prepares the new generations of Salesians to take up the challenges

presented by the African scenario and for leadership in the communities and works in keeping with authentic Salesian traditions. Confreres in the active life need to be constantly stimulated and encouraged to recommit themselves creatively to answering the needs of the changing times.

- Creating a ***vast movement of people*** so that in synergy with others who share our vision and mission we can reach out to the maximum number of needy youth and the poor. For this the promotion of the Salesian Family and making it a centre of synergy at the service of the common Salesian mission assumes particular importance.
- In spite of the differences in languages, cultures and socio-economic status, focusing on ***synergy and solidarity*** among the communities within a Province or Vice Province and among the different Salesian Circumscriptions so that no one lives in splendid isolation. Together we can be better witnesses and evangelisers and reach out to many more deserving young people.
- ***Discovering the presence of Divine Providence in the African continent*** and fostering a sense of solidarity among the African peoples, so that all those for whom and with whom we work can live in dignity and the works undertaken for their benefit can with time become more self-dependent economically.

Conclusion

It is difficult to foresee where this new Project Africa will take us in another 25 years. It will all depend on how faithful we can be to our religious and Salesian vocation and with what seriousness and commitment we can plan projects to address the many needs of the poor and the young people in Africa and Madagascar.

Mary has always been very much present in our work in Africa-Madagascar. Devotion to Mary Help of Christians has spread to different parts of the continent and artists have represented her in African garb and colours. Sanctuaries and pilgrimage centres have been built in her honour in different places or are still being planned. With her by our side as we continue our journey of evangelisation and education in Africa and Madagascar, we are certain that we shall never fail. May she lead us to higher levels of quality in our charismatic service to this continent, so that its peoples so loved by God “may have life and have it to the full.”

With affection, in Don Bosco,


Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva
Rector Major

2. GUIDELINES AND POLICES

2.1 SUGGESTIONS FOR AN APPROACH TO WORK FOR VOCATIONS IN SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY

Fr Antonio DOMENECH

General Councillor for Youth Ministry

Vocation work is a fundamental challenge for youth ministry, not only because of the great disproportion between the ever increasing needs of the Church and of the young and the small number of vocations to the religious and priestly life, but especially on account of the ever greater awareness by the Christian communities of the responsibility of each baptised person in the task of evangelising and transforming contemporary culture and society according to the Gospel.

The Department for Youth Ministry had undertaken a reflection on the subject of vocation work in the World Consultative Meeting in 2005 and subsequently shared the results with the various Provincial teams in the Regions and with the team of the Formation Department¹. Now I should like to present the main findings of this reflection and offer some suggestions to help the Provinces to organise the many initiatives that they are carrying out in a more integrated and effective process of animation and vocational work within the Salesian educative and pastoral project.

1. The culture in which young people are living today

In spite of the enormous differences of locations and cultures, the general climate in which young people are living has some characteristics that have much in common, and that often make it difficult to speak about vocations and to encourage life choic-

¹ F. CEREDA - A. DOMENECH, *Letter to Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry and for Formation on collaboration between vocational animation and initial formation*. Rome, 29 April 2006.

es of special commitment in the service of the Gospel and make it appear irrelevant.

Young people nowadays are living in a *culture that is ever more globalised*, that offers them unheard of possibilities for education and a greater quality of life, around values such as self-fulfilment, immediate and satisfying relationships, freedom and tolerance etc.

The ever greater access young people have to goods and services often leads to a *consumerist and market-based view of life*, considered as the immediate gratification of one's needs and one's expectations, in which the value of everything appears to be judged on the basis of the advantages one derives from it and the price one pays.

Globalisation has also transformed *the market and the meaning of work*, fostering an increasing awareness of technology and specialisation, a great emphasis on profit and, at the same time, a search for gratification and personal fulfilment. In many places this transformation has produced increasing uncertainty about employment, in particular for the young, who are exposed to increasing social exclusion and irrelevance. This situation makes it difficult for them to plan their future with any confidence.

The pervading culture is becoming ever more secularised: *transcendent and religious values* are marginalised and a relativised ethical stance is in favour; religion is considered a private affair that shouldn't impinge on everyday decision making about life. Nevertheless, in this climate there is a widespread nostalgia for depth, a search for silence and various forms of religious expression that, although marked by subjectivism and fragmentation, lead young people towards a restless search for the meaning of life and for meaningful experiences of self-giving and of service.

The family continues to be the fundamental institution in society in which the new generations acquire values and a sense of the meaning of life. However, it is undergoing profound changes

that make it less capable of guiding the life options of the children, and in particular of fostering and following up their Christian vocational choices.

We therefore find ourselves in a society that is struggling to place high and demanding ideals before the young, a society that frequently seduces them, but then leaves them alone and abandoned to themselves. This situation demands an appropriate vocational ministry on the part of the Christian community, one capable of facing up to a culture that in every respect shows itself to be truly “anti-vocational.”

2. Promoting a vocational culture, an essential task for youth ministry

In this culture, which in many ways promotes values contrary to a vocational commitment, Salesian Youth Ministry is faced with the challenge of including in all its programmes of education and evangelisation, from childhood onwards, projects, and elements of vocational guidance with motivations for it.²

All pastoral work, and in particular youth ministry, is at root vocational: the vocational dimension constitutes its inspiration and its natural outcome.³ It is necessary, therefore, to put aside any limited concept of vocational ministry as being concerned solely with looking for candidates for the religious or priestly life. On the contrary, vocational ministry ought to create the appropriate conditions for every young person to discover, take up and responsibly follow his or her own vocation.

The first condition consists in the creation of an atmosphere in which a true “*vocational culture*” is lived and transmitted, that is to say a way of understanding and living life as a gift freely received and one to be shared, at the service of the

² A. DOMENECH, *Salesian Youth Ministry. A basic frame of reference*. Rome 2000, pp. 38-39.

³ Cf. C. 28 and 37.

fullness of life for everyone. Living a vocational culture requires developing certain attitudes and values, such as the promotion and the defence of the sacred value of human life, confidence in oneself and in one's neighbour, an interior life that leads to discovering in oneself and in others the presence and the action of God, a willingness to feel oneself responsible and to allow oneself to be involved on behalf of others with an attitude of service and generosity, the courage to dream and to have high hopes, solidarity and being responsible for others, especially those most in need, etc.⁴ Within this context or vocational culture, youth ministry ought to propose to young people the various *vocations* – matrimony, consecrated life, priestly service – and accompany them in their task of discernment and of decision making.

Every educative-pastoral community needs to be aware of those aspects of its own environment and of its own everyday educative-pastoral activity that can foster this vocational culture, and commit itself to developing them fully aware that, in general, the environment in which the young are living does not encourage it. Here are some things that can help:

- *Creating a family atmosphere with significant vocational witnesses.*

Young people are living in an environment of the mass-produced, in which they feel that they are not recognised nor listened to; they have to earn and fight for everything, while the weak and the less well prepared are marginalised and forgotten. In this sort of environment it is impossible to live life as a gift to be shared; instead it seems to be a fight for survival or a race to be won in order to achieve material prosperity and personal fulfilment. On this account, in the family atmosphere that is typically Salesian, in which one is made welcome and appreciated gratuitously, the young person has the experience of trusting re-

⁴ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Message for the XXX World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, 8 September 1992

relationships with significant adults, he/she feels involved in the life of the group, develops a capacity to take the lead and to accept responsibility, learns to build up the educative community and to feel co-responsible for the common good, finds moments for reflection, dialogue and calm discussion. This is the best environment in which a vocational culture can develop.

- *Ensuring guidance and accompaniment.*

In an atmosphere of mass production or one in which relationships are purely functional the development of a vocational view of life will be very difficult. It requires the presence and the closeness of the educators among the young, especially in more spontaneous or relaxed moments, familiarity with and interest in their lives, a capacity for personal relationships on an occasional and spontaneous basis, time for discussion and reflection together which help in looking at life from a positive and vocational point of view, and time and space for more prolonged organised meetings for personal guidance.

- *In multi-religious settings*, where the majority of the population are not Christians, promoting a “vocational culture” demands:

- accompanying young people in giving life a meaning, in harmony with a positive and integral view of the person and of society;
- helping them to discover a sense of God and of the signs of His presence and action in daily life;
- developing all the resources to be found in one’s own religion and striving to overcome one’s own deficiencies;
- giving more depth to one’s social and political responsibility in harmony with one’s own faith.

3. Some fundamental criteria for a vocational youth ministry

I recall some basic criteria that ought to govern our youth vocational ministry. They have been expanded on in other publica-

tions and on other occasions; now I just want to reaffirm some of the main ones, to assist with the assessment and the revision of the Provincial Plans for vocation ministry.⁵

3.1. A vocation is a gift from God to the Church and to the young people; we need to ask them with confidence to accept it with a sense of responsibility.

In Luke's Gospel the first thing Jesus asks from his disciples when he sends them two by two ahead of himself is prayer: «The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest» (Lk 10,2).

Sometimes with all our good will we have thought that our efforts at renewal and our pastoral initiatives could produce new vocations, but the reality has often disappointed us. This painful experience lived in faith and trust in the gift of God ought to urge us to promote, in addition to a commitment to vocations, prayer for vocations in Salesian communities and in the Christian and educative communities; a prayer of trust in which we thank the Lord for the gift of our vocation, we ask for the grace of perseverance in it and we open ourselves to collaborate actively with his grace in order to be witnesses and significant vocational guides in the presence of the young.

3.2. All those responsible for youth ministry must also play their proper role in vocation promotion, and not delegate it to someone else.

“I repeat that vocational guidance is not the duty of only certain confreres who have received this special task, but an essential dimension of the educative and pastoral activity of the whole

⁵ Cf. J. VECCHI, *Youth Ministry and Vocational Guidance*, in *Seminarium* 2000 n. 1, pag. 67-80. J. VECCHI, *Now is the acceptable time. Letter of the Rector Major*, in AGC 373, pp. 3-46. A. DOMENECH, *Renewed pastoral work for vocations. Guidelines and policies*, in AGC 364, pp. 41-55.

community and of every Salesian, as we were reminded by the GC23".⁶ So wrote Fr Juan E. Vecchi. The Province or local vocation promoter cannot replace the responsibility of the community, but must assist it by fostering the collaboration of everyone.

Within the educative community *the families* need to be involved in a special way in the vocational growth and guidance of their sons and daughters. Families need to be helped to understand the life of their own children as a vocation, so that they may collaborate in their vocational development.

3.3. *A true Christian vocational ministry is based on a serious process of carefully accompanied education to the faith.*⁷

To prepare young people to discern and accept their vocation, to bring their motivations and fundamental attitudes to maturity in order to respond in a responsible manner to God's call requires them to be involved in a process of human and Christian development that helps them to:

- develop fundamental vocational attitudes;
- personalise their own faith with a solid and deep personal relationship of friendship with Jesus, through systematic contact with the Word of God and reception of the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation;
- educate to a sense of the Church, to the extent of seeing the Christian community as the new family in Christ and in the Spirit, and sharing in its mission with the generous donation of one's own life;
- take up a demanding plan of life in the service of others.

The groups of the *Salesian Youth Movement*, who follow this process of education to the faith, should be those among whom the maturing of a Christian vocation is given priority.⁸

⁶ J. VECCHI, *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁷ Cf. Reg. 9.

⁸ Cf. CG25, 46.

In this process it is fundamental to ensure that there is *personal accompaniment* that helps the young people to interiorise their experiences and projects lived, deepen their self-knowledge and purify their own motivations, discern signs of a vocation and ensure a mature and responsible choice. The lack of an adequate accompaniment is at the basis of many vocational failures.⁹

3.4. Those young people who show the inclination and the desire for Salesian religious life should be given special attention with specific proposals and suggestions that prepare them for a clear and responsible option.¹⁰

The Lord has called us to live and develop the Salesian charism that He raised up in Don Bosco, through the motherly intervention of Mary, for the benefit of the young (cf. C. 1). We therefore, have the responsibility of encouraging and accompanying with special care those young people who show the inclination and the desire to follow Jesus Christ in the Salesian religious life (cf. C. 28).

Our way of living consecrated life has lost its visibility and it seems unintelligible in some ways. This becomes even more challenging in the face of the growing presence of lay people in the Salesian mission and in the Church. Therefore it is necessary to insist on the importance and on the value that consecrated life has in the plan of Don Bosco who wanted it at the centre of his work.¹¹ This demands in every community confreres who are directly involved in vocation promotion, capable of accompanying young people in their journey of vocational discovery and discernment.¹²

⁹ F. CEREDA, *Vocational fragility. Initiating reflection and suggesting action*, in AGC 385, 2004, pp. 34-53; in particular pp. 39-47.

¹⁰ Cf. C. 109.

¹¹ Cf. J. VECCHI, *Now is the acceptable time*, in AGC 373, p. 41.

¹² F. CEREDA - A. DOMENECH, *Letter to Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry and for Formation on collaboration between vocational animation and initial formation*. Rome, 29 April 2006, pp. 3 and 4.

3.5. *Giving special vocational attention nowadays to young youth leaders, volunteers, collaborators in our works, without neglecting the preadolescents and adolescents.*

Nowadays the age of making a vocational choice in life is becoming later and later and even if the seed is sown in pre-adolescence and adolescence, it often matures later when the young people are at university or just starting work. It is important to arrange for opportunities and practical situations which allow us to accompany them at these times decisive for their future.

Among these young people we should give special attention to those closest to us, the youth leaders, volunteers, collaborators in our works who generously share many aspects of the Salesian mission, have a genuine desire to serve and are looking for a meaningful plan of life. It is necessary to ensure that the experience of leadership or voluntary service helps them to live their own lives in vocational terms.

3.6. *Carrying out vocational ministry in close communion and collaboration with the local Church, with the families of the young people and the various groups of the Salesian Family.*

Every Christian vocation is raised up by God for the good of the Church, in the communion of the various charisms at the service of the Church's mission of salvation. For this reason vocation work should take into account the general good of the Church without restrictions or favouritism, trying to integrate all efforts and possibilities in working together and bringing to this common task the experience of our specific charism as a precious gift for all. The good of the Church and of the young people called, demands that we devote ourselves to this joint work in the local churches, imitating Don Bosco who in the Oratory at Valdocco fostered very many vocations for the dioceses of Piedmont.

4. Stages of vocational promotion within the Salesian educative-pastoral plan

In Salesian pedagogy the choice of a vocation is the mature and indispensable outcome of all human and Christian growth. The service of vocational guidance in Salesian youth ministry has these three fundamental and complementary stages:

- the effort to educate the young in a vocational culture and to develop their human and baptismal vocation with a daily life progressively inspired and unified by the Gospel (cf. C. 37);
- constant attention so as to discover and accompany with differentiated and appropriate initiatives vocations of special commitment in society and in the Church whether lay, consecrated or priestly (cf. C. 28);
- a particular responsibility towards those young people who show the inclination and the desire for Salesian religious life, offering them specific opportunities and suggestions that prepare them for a clear and responsible option (cf. C. 109).¹³

4.1. *Life proposed as a vocation*

The first stage of vocational maturing is meant for *all the young people* who are part of the Salesian educative-pastoral project and ought to take place in *every Salesian centre*.

It has as its **objective** that of developing in the environment and in the educative community a vocational culture and of helping every young person to discover his or her human and Christian vocation and to follow it in a responsible way.

Here are some **requirements** in order to achieve this objective:

- an *educational atmosphere* according to the Salesian family style, in which Gospel values are lived with the close and meaningful presence of educators who are joyfully living their

¹³ Cf. GC21, 110.

own lives as a vocation, with a variety of proposals that help the young person to live a vocational culture of gift and of service (“the good morning” – “the good night”, vocation campaigns, celebrations, etc.);

- *pedagogical and professional guidance*, carried out according to a vocational view of life that helps each young person to discover his /her own talents and use them in the service of others, to discover the positive meaning of studies and work, to lead to maturity the motivations for choosing one’s studies or work;
- the *promotion of groups* involved in service, the apostolate, the missions, the liturgy... in which the young people have a positive experience of formation, personal accompaniment, sharing and commitment on behalf of others;
- opportunities for *spirituality and gratuitous service* on behalf of those most in need, that help the fundamental attitudes of a vocation to mature: an interior life and a sense of God, self-giving and generous service etc.;
- the systematic presence of the *subject of vocation* in the courses of evangelisation and education to the faith, in which the young people are presented with the different vocational paths in society and in the Church: the presentation of vocational testimonies and experiences, meetings, vocation days or weeks ...;
- a *family ministry* that promotes a vocational culture in the families and helps them to accompany and guide their children in their life choices.

Responsible for the stage is *every Salesian and educative community*. It is necessary therefore to renew in all the confreres and all the communities a vocational sensitivity, so that the concern about and a focus on vocations is not something special for special occasions, but a constant attitude. The one in charge of youth ministry and his team at both Province and local levels, should be the main promoters of this awareness and involvement on the part of everyone.

4.2. *Specific vocational guidance.*

The second stage regards the care of apostolic vocations as part of the process of education to the faith (Cf. Reg. 9).

It has as its **objective** that of offering adolescents and young people who are following the process of education to the faith and show signs of a vocation, experiences, opportunities and accompaniment that help them to clarify their motives, to give depth to their attitudes and to bring to maturity the choice of a Christian lay, religious or priestly life in the Church and in the Salesian Family.¹⁴

This stage presupposes the **following features**:

- a systematic *programme of education to the faith*, in which attention is given in a special way to human and Christian formation, education in prayer, to the sacraments and to a commitment to the service of others, drawing up a practical and simple plan of life;
- *specific occasions for a deeper understanding of the Christian life as a vocation and of the different vocations in society and in the Church*: vocation meetings, summer vocation camps, retreats, vocation study groups with a specific programme etc.;
- contacts with *meaningful witnesses and communities* of the different vocations of special consecration in the Church and in the Salesian Family;
- *experiences of commitment and collaboration* in the Salesian apostolic mission in areas of need, of the missions, of voluntary service, etc., ensuring a suitable opportunity for reflection, assessment and systematic accompaniment;
- *personalised vocational guidance through accompaniment* and spiritual direction that helps the young people to give

¹⁴ Cf. Reg. 16: "Vocational guidance centres welcome and keep in touch with young people who feel called to some commitment in the Church and in the Congregation. This service can also be carried out by organizing local and regional meetings, by means of activities of special groups, or by inserting young people in one of our communities."

greater depth to their motivation and to draw up their plan of life;

- *prayer moments* for apostolic vocations in the Church during which the young people and their families join with the Salesian community and the educative community;
- *places or communities with a vocational slant*: for example, welcoming Salesian communities where the young can share the Salesian life and the mission for certain periods of time; or also a specific community such as an apostolic school or a pre-aspirantate, provided by a Salesian community, in which the adolescents and young people are accompanied with special care in their process of human formation and education to the faith;
- an appropriate *family ministry*, in particular for those parents whose sons and daughters are already involved in a faith journey and in vocational discernment.

Those responsible are again the Salesian communities and the pastoral educative communities, guided by the Province and local teams of youth ministry. Important in this phase is the work of *those at Province and local level responsible for vocations* who through the use of aids, meetings and visits accompany and encourage the communities, coordinate and direct the Province initiatives for vocation promotion. At this stage it is important to involve the Province Centres of Spirituality; as also to give attention to the young youth leaders, volunteers, collaborators, since the vocational option is often made at this age.

At the end of this second stage of the process of vocational guidance, the paths diverge. For those who are moving in the direction of a Salesian religious vocation there is the possibility of the Aspirantate. For those moving towards other forms of lay, consecrated or priestly Christian vocation, *specific opportunities for the maturing of a vocation* should be offered; among these it is important to provide initiatives to accompany those whose inclination is towards the vocation of Christian marriage.

4.3. *The proposal and discernment of the Salesian religious vocation: the Aspirantate.*

For those young people who at the end of the previous stage have shown a sufficiently mature inclination for Salesian religious life, a specific period of further reflection and accompaniment is offered, and an experience of Salesian life and mission, in order to assess and allow this initial guidance to come to maturity.

The objective, therefore, of this third stage of the vocational journey is to deepen the motivations and to discern the signs of a Salesian religious vocation, develop the human and Christian suitability for a first clear and responsible Salesian vocational option.¹⁵ In the General Regulations this specific stage is called “Aspirantate”.¹⁶

Various kinds of aspirantate exist: a free-standing community as is the case in some Provinces, or small groups of “aspirants” who live together with Salesians, as is the case with the “vocational guidance communities” or in “vocational voluntary service”. Each Province needs to choose the more convenient form or forms according to the situation of the young people, in order to achieve the proposed objectives.

The vocational experience of the aspirantate requires the **following elements**:

- further development of the *human and Christian formation* of the aspirant, in order to ensure that he has the attitudes and fundamental requirements for a mature and responsible vocational option, helping him to make his own a faith that is constantly more personal and based on a relationship with the Lord that is expressed in prayer and in frequent reception

¹⁵ Cf. Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco (“Ratio”), 330.

¹⁶ “The aspirantate is a centre of Salesian vocational guidance. It keeps itself open to the neighbourhood and in contact with families, and helps older boys and young men who show an aptitude for the religious and priestly life to know their own apostolic vocation and to correspond with it” (Reg. 17). Cf. also AGC 385, pp. 44-45.

of the sacraments, to form his own conscience, to develop a capacity for leadership and personal involvement, to reach a sufficient educational level as regards an approach to study, being able to speak well, the habit of reading books, the development of his cultural and artistic gifts, the practice of good manners;

- a specific and systematic *vocational accompaniment*, that helps the candidate to know himself, to discern his own vocational option, to draw up his own personal plan of life, to make of the experiences offered something personal;
- a *serious knowledge of Don Bosco* and an *experience of the Salesian life and mission* in direct contact with a Salesian community and with the Province, offering the possibility of spending either a prolonged period or time occasionally in the open and family style context of the local community and of having friendly relationships with the Salesians, developing the ability to live in a group with other candidates, coming into direct contact with the two forms of the Salesian vocation, that of the priesthood and that of the Brother;
- *contact with the family* of the candidate by the Salesians, helping them to accept in a positive manner their son's vocational choice and getting to know the family and social circumstances in which the young man has grown up.

Those responsible for this stage are *the Provincial Vocation Director and his team*, together with the communities of the aspirantates or vocational guidance communities, in collaboration with the Provincial Commission for Formation and in a special way those responsible for the "pre-novitiate."

The Aspirantate is the link between youth ministry and the formation process. At Province and Regional level it is necessary for the Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry and for Formation, the vocational directors and those in charge of the aspirantates and of the prenovices to get together and agree on the criteria for the selection of candidates to begin the aspirantate experience, on how to carry out the guidance, the accompaniment

and the vocational discernment, in order to ensure that the young aspirants can make a sufficiently mature option for the Salesian religious life before beginning the prenovitiate.¹⁷

5. Some practical suggestions

I conclude with some practical suggestions to foster in the Provinces a profound renewal in their commitment to vocation ministry.

- ***Promoting in the Province a general mobilisation for vocations.***

The guidelines are more than sufficient, clear and usually accepted by the communities and the confreres, but often we don't succeed in putting them into practice. It is not enough that some confreres and communities work enthusiastically for vocation promotion if the majority of the confreres don't share this concern and enthusiasm. It is therefore essential to interest, involve and mobilise the greatest number possible of the confreres and the communities, of lay collaborators, of parents and young people in vocational animation, promotion and accompaniment; creating in the Province a vast movement of prayer for vocations, that involves more and more people; reawakening enthusiasm for one's own vocation, so that it becomes a visible, joyful and attractive witness; promoting moments for sharing one's life and mission with the young etc.

- ***Giving priority to vocational promotion at local level.***

While vocational promotion at Province level appears in general to be good, well-structured and quite well planned, at local level it seems rather weak. For this reason it is necessary to draw

¹⁷ F. CEREDA - A. DOMENECH, *Letter to Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry and for Formation on collaboration between vocational animation and initial formation.* Rome, 29 April 2006, pp. 4-5.

up or revise the local vocation promotion plan and carry out a frequent assessment through the “scrutinium vocationis”, identifying one or more confreres to be entrusted with the role of local vocation promoters in close collaboration with the Rector, supporting and accompanying the local communities through more frequent visits by the Province vocation promoter.

- ***Allocate and qualify confreres for the accompaniment of the young.***

We are all convinced of the importance of accompaniment, but pressures of the moment often prevent us from offering this essential contribution. For this reason the Provincial should allocate and see to the preparation of confreres for vocational accompaniment and at the same time, revitalise some aspects of Salesian pedagogical tradition closely connected with it, such as contributions in educational contexts (“the good night”, conferences, vocation campaigns, etc.), the organisation of formation groups, spontaneous personal conversations, the ministry of the confessional, etc.

- ***Identifying in each Province some communities ready to accept*** and accompany in a particular way young men following a vocational discernment process, offering them the possibility of sharing moments of their own life: celebrations, friendship, meals, prayer, planning, missionary commitment...¹⁸

- ***Clarifying and giving special care to the Aspirantate stage***, according to the suggestions proposed.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. CG 25, 48.

¹⁹ Cf. n. 4.3 earlier: third stage in the vocational process. Cf. F. CERREDA - A. DOMENECH, *Letter to Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry and for Formation on collaboration between vocational animation and initial formation*. Rome, 29 April 2006 pp. 3 and 4.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

– June 2007

On Friday 1 June the Rector Major returned from Aparecida, Brazil, where – invited by the Holy Father – he took part in the V General Assembly of the Latin-American and Caribbean Bishops.

In the evening of the following day he went to the Generalate of the De La Salle Brothers for the closing Mass of their General Chapter, and also stayed for supper.

On Sunday 3, the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity, he presided at Mass in the Generalate, attended by the members of the Consultative Body of the Salesian Family with whom he then had a meeting. During the morning he also had a meeting with the Bishop of Kaga-Bandoro, Bishop Albert Vanbuel, SDB, and some confreres. Having received news of the death of Fr Pietro Stella, after dinner he went to the UPS to offer condolences to his brothers and to the Superior of the Vice Province and to pray beside his body.

On Monday morning 4, Fr Chávez had a meeting with the

two Executive Committees of the USG and the UISG.

On Tuesday 5 the *plenary session of the General Council* began, which was due to conclude towards the end of July. These two months were to see the Rector Major in addition to the meetings of the Council involved in other significant events.

On Saturday 9, at midday in the Generalate he gave a conference on the V General Assembly of the Latin-American and Caribbean Bishops. In the evening he left for Turin.

The following day, after having visited the “St Dominic Savio” community of the FMA (Turin Sassi), he went to Riva near Chieri to celebrate Mass for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. Immediately afterwards in the Town Hall he was presented with *Honorary Citizenship* on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of St Dominic Savio. After the ceremony, the Rector Major had lunch with the Past Pupils in the house where St. Dominic Savio was born, at San Giovanni Riva, and then returned to Rome.

On the evening of Monday 11, after a very busy day of meetings he opened the *Course for the New Provincials* and welcomed them.

Between Tuesday 12 and Saturday 16, in addition to the sessions of the General Council he had a full agenda of meetings with the Councillors and Provincials, in particular those who had come for the Course.

On Monday 18 he preached a day of recollection for the Provincials concluding with concelebrated Mass. Then between Tuesday 19 and Friday 22 Fr Chávez undertook the normal work of the plenary session of the Council and the Course for the Provincials. Mention should be made of a visit to the Rector Major by Bishop Fouad Twal, Coadiutor of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

On Friday morning 22, after the session of the Council he had the concluding meeting with the Provincials. In the afternoon with Fr Francesco Cereda and Fr Juan José Bartolomé, he took part in a meeting of Theological Committee of the USG.

On Sunday 24 in the Generalate the "Feast of the Rector Major" was celebrated on the name day of Don Bosco, as has become traditional. The Successor of Don Bosco received expressions of

gratitude from the confreres of the Council, the Community, the Provincials who were in the house and some invited guests.

Between Tuesday 26 and Friday 29 Fr Chávez undertook the normal work of the plenary session of the General Council together with a full agenda of meetings with individuals and groups.

On Wednesday morning 27, he took part in the celebration of the centenary of the birth of Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez SDB, organised by the Salesian Pontifical University and the Chilean Embassy to the Holy See.

On Friday 29, with Fr Adriano Bregolin, he took part in the solemn concelebration in St Peter's Basilica, during which the Holy Father conferred the pallium on 51 Metropolitan Archbishops, including three SDB, Archbishop Lillo La Piana (Messina), Archbishop Riccardo Ezzati (Concepción, Chile) and Archbishop Oscar Julio Vian (Quetzaltenango, Guatemala). In the afternoon he greeted the Provincials of the Italian Provinces of the Adriatic, Liguria-Tuscany, Rome and the Vice Province of Sardinia.

On Saturday morning 30, he had a meeting with the Provincial of the Middle East, Fr Gianmaria Gianazza, and the Economist General, Fr Gianni Mazzali.

– July 2007

Between 1 and 7 July, at Santa Fosca di Cadore, the Rector Major with the whole Council were on a *Retreat* preached by Fr Aldo Girauda, Professor of Salesian Spiritual Theology at the UPS.

Having returned to Rome, on Sunday 8 and Monday 9 July he had two very full days of meetings with the Councillors and other confreres who came to see him including Bishop Pierre Pican SDB, of Bayeux. On Monday evening he had a meeting with Fr Joseph Enger and Fr André van der Sloot, Provincials respectively of France and South Belgium, at which Fr Adriano Bregolin and Fr Filiberto Rodríguez were also present.

Between Tuesday 10 and Friday 13 Fr Chávez presided at sessions of the General Council. On Tuesday afternoon he gave a conference to those attending the *V Assembly of the IUS* and on Wednesday evening with all the Council, he went to Castelgandolfo, to the house of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for the half-yearly meeting of the two General Councils SDB – FMA. Mention should also be made of visits by Bishop Francis Xavier Osamu Mizobe SDB, of Takamatsu, Japan on Thursday afternoon and the

Provincial of Guwahati, Fr Joseph Almeida, on Friday after the session of the Council. On Friday evening with some of the Councillors he took part in a meal on the occasion of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the IUS.

On Saturday morning 14 he presided at the closing Mass of the V Assembly of the IUS, and towards midday he went to the Vatican with the Vicar and the Economist General, to keep an appointment with the Secretary of State, His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone.

On Sunday evening 15, he presided at Mass for the opening of the *VI Assembly of the VDB*, and then took part in the opening ceremony.

Between Tuesday 17 and Friday 20 the meetings of the General Council continued. During the week, on Tuesday evening the Rector Major with his Vicar went to Castelgandolfo for a meeting with the new Provincials who were following a formation course. On Thursday morning he greeted and spoke to a group of Salesians-Cooperators from Sidney, Australia. In the afternoon he received the Provincial of Bolivia, Fr Juan Pablo Zabala. On Friday at midday Fr Chávez received Bishop Gastone Simoni of Prato, and

then Fr Rosario Salerno, from Madagascar. In the afternoon he greeted the confreres from the community of Urnieta in the Bilbao Province.

On Saturday evening 21, with all the General Council he went to the Salesian community in the Vatican for a fraternal supper with the confreres attended also by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Archbishop Raffaele Farina and Sr. Enrica Rosanna, FMA.

On Monday evening 23, he received the Director General of the "Hermandad Sacerdotes Operarios Diocesanos", P. Ángel Javier Pérez Pueyo, accompanied by the Secretary of the Fraternity.

In the evening of Tuesday 24 Fr Chávez had a meeting with a group of male and female religious from Flanders. On Wednesday morning with his Vicar he went to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and afterwards accompanied by the Councillor for the Missions, to the Congregation for Catholic Education. After a busy afternoon meeting members of the Council, in the evening the Rector Major went to offer his congratulations to the newly elected President General of the VDB, Miss Ol'ga Křižová.

On Friday 27 he presided at the

closing Mass of the VI General Assembly of the VDB, attended by all the members of the General Council. Afterwards he presided at the final meeting of the Summer Plenary Session of the Council.

On Sunday 29 Fr Chávez left for a few days break. In Turin he was welcomed by the Provincial, Fr Pietro Migliasso, and by Fr Antonio Domenech. They went to call on the community in Châtillon and after lunch continued their journey to Les Combes. Here the Rector Major rested and worked as he also held several meetings.

On Tuesday morning 31 he gave a conference to young Salesians on their practical training from Piedmont and other Provinces. He then said Mass and had lunch with them.

– August 2007

On Friday afternoon 3, the Rector Major left for Turin-Valdocco for a meeting and Mass with young people from Spain and Portugal who had come for "Campo-Bosco" 2007.

On Saturday 4 he celebrated Mass in the Pinardi Chapel, received some confreres from Valdocco and after lunch visited the FMA communities in Orta and

Pella. Then he arrived at Mornese, where he was welcomed by the Vicar of the Mother General, Sr. Yvonne Reungoat, and by a large group of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

On Sunday 5 he met Mother Marinella Castagno and then presided at Mass during which a group of FMA made their Perpetual Profession. After lunch he returned to Valdocco, visited the Ivrea community and returned to Les Combes, where he stayed from Monday 6 until Thursday 9, and on 10 returned to Rome to take up again his ordinary work.

On Sunday 12 he went to Genzano for a meeting with the novices: he said Mass with them and stayed for lunch.

Early in the morning of Wednesday 15, with Fr Adriano Bregolin, Fr Pietro Migliasso and Fr Pier Luigi Cameroni, the new World Spiritual Assistant of the ADMA, he left for Mexico for the *V International Congress of ADMA*. On their arrival they were met by the Provincial Fr Miguel Aguilar and various confreres from the Mexico Province.

On Thursday 16 the Rector Major visited the EDEBÉ Publishing House in Mexico City, and then presided at Mass with the first Profession of the novices from the

two novitiates of the Provinces of Guadalajara and Mexico.

On Friday 17, in the Parish Church of Mary Help of Christians, the location for the Congress, Fr Chávez inaugurated the ADMA International Congress with an opening conference and then presided at Mass.

In the afternoon of Saturday 18, accompanied by the Provincial of Mexico, Fr Miguel Aguilar, he left for Guadalajara, where there was the celebration of the Perpetual Professions of young confreres from the two Provinces plus one from the Antilles.

On Sunday morning 19, accompanied by the Provincial of Guadalajara, Fr Filiberto González Plascencia, and by his Secretary Fr Juan José Bartolomé, the Rector Major left for Saltillo. On his arrival he greeted his family and friends with whom he celebrated Mass in memory of his elder brother Antonio who had recently died. Then he had dinner and supper with his family.

On Monday morning 20, he celebrated Mass in the community chapel of the "Colegio México" in Saltillo. He then had a meeting with the Provincial, the Rector of the house and the new Principal of the Don Bosco Technological Institute, after which he presided

at the ceremony for the blessing –inauguration of this new work. Present for the occasion, in addition to the Provincial and the Salesian community, were the Governor of the State of Coahuila, the Mayor of the city, benefactors and naturally the teachers staff and students.

On Tuesday 21, with the Provincial of Guadalajara as guide, accompanied by his Vicar, by the Provincial of Piedmont, by the new Spiritual Assistant of ADMA, and by his secretary he made a pilgrimage-visit to the Sanctuary of Christ the King, patron of the Province of Guadalajara. Afterwards he visited Guanajuato, the Boys' Town and the Don Bosco Sanctuary at León.

On Wednesday 22 he celebrated Mass for the two communities of theologians at Tlaquepaque, and then greeted the educative community of the "Anáhuac Revolución" College and took part in the celebration for the birthday of the Provincial.

On Thursday 23 he met the novices at Chapala and celebrated Mass there.

On Friday 24, with his companions he began the journey home, arriving in Rome at midday on Saturday 25.

Between Monday 27 and Thurs-

day 30 the Rector Major undertook his normal work in the office and saw several people.

Early on the morning of Friday 31, he left for Loreto for a meeting with the young people of the Italian SYM within the context of the great Youth "Agorà" convoked by the Italian Conference of Bishops which had as its central event a meeting with Pope Benedict XVI. At Loreto Fr Chávez, welcomed by those attending the meeting, was greeted by the Provincial of the Adriatic Province, Fr Giovanni Molinari, and by the Mayor of Porto Recanati. He then gave a conference on "Listening to the young so as to be witnesses to Christ in our society", followed by an open discussion with the young people. In the afternoon after meeting the young people from the SDB and FMA Provinces of Lombardy-Emilia, who were delayed in arriving, the Rector Major went to the Loreto City Hall where the Mayor presented him with an award to mark the 130th anniversary of the visit by Don Bosco to the city of Loreto and to the Holy House of the Madonna. Afterwards he presided at Mass in the Sanctuary of the Madonna and in the evening returned to Rome, thus concluding these very busy summer months.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Council

On 5 June 2007 the *Summer Plenary Session* of the General Council began, and kept the Councillors busy until 27 July 2007. In addition to the 26 plenary meetings there were other meetings of groups or commissions to study various topics. During the session - between 11 and 24 June - there was also the last meeting, during this six-year period, of new Provincials, who met with the Rector Major and his Council. The Councillors also made their own contributions to various meetings especially those held at the Generalate, in particular the Meeting of the Consultative Body of the Salesian Family in preparation for the Spirituality Days, the V Assembly of the IUS, the VI General Assembly of the VDB. 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 there were only three Provinces or Vice Provinces for which the Superior was appointed. The General Council undertook a careful process of discernment, taking as its foundation and reference point the results of the consultation held in the Province or Vice Province. These in alphabetical order are the Provincials (or Superiors of Vice Provinces) appointed in the course of this session: Genaro Gegantoni, for the Vice Province of Ethiopia-Eritrea in Africa; Sławomir Łubian, for the Province of Warsaw, Poland; Mario Peressón, for the Province of Bogotá, Colombia.

N. 5.4 in this issue of the AGC provides some biographical details of those appointed.

2. *Reports of 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 eight Provinces or Vice Provinces: the Province of Argentina - Bahía Blanca; the Vice Province of Sri Lanka; the Province of Italy - North East; the Province of Bolivia; the Province of Austria; the Province of Spain - Barcelona; the Province of South Belgium; the Province of South Philippines.

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 anima-

tion and government for the six-year period and to the life and activity of the Council itself. Some practical decisions were taken regarding matters discussed. The main topics considered were as follows.

– **The Strenna of the Rector Major for 2008.** In the Council there was some reflection on the theme presented by the Rector Major for the 2008 Strenna:

*Let us educate with the heart
of Don Bosco,
for the integrated development
of the life of the young,
especially the poorest
and most disadvantaged,
promoting their rights.*

It is a theme that follows on from the two previous ones (the family and life) and is closely connected with the Congress on the Preventive System and Human Rights that VIS is preparing to be held in January 2009.

– **Review of Provincial Chapters,** held in 2007, as regards the Provincial Directories, EPPS, POI and the Chapter decisions that need the approval of the Rector Major and the General Council, especially for what refers to the topic of the “new frontiers”.

Among the areas of particular interest and concern in the Provinces could be mentioned: formation, the economy, the Salesian Family, social communication. In all 52 Provincial Chapters were examined.

– The drawing up and submission to the Rector Major of the **reports of the Department Councillors and the Regional Councillors in view of the GC26**. The reports are intended to offer, in their respective areas, elements for an assessment of the implementation or otherwise of the programme of animation and government drawn up at the beginning of the six-year period to put into effect the main guidelines of the GC25, identifying the goals achieved and those that still need our attention. It is well known that changes in ways of thinking are not a matter of a six-year period.

– **Erection of the “Sacred Heart” Special Salesian Circumscription of Central Italy** (ICI: Provinces of Central Italy), which groups together the Adriatic, Liguria-Tuscany, and Roman Provinces and the Vice Province of Sardinia, starting on 1 September 2008, with headquarters in Rome, at the “Sacred Heart”

House. The composition of the Italy – Middle East Region will thus change from 10 to 7 circumscriptions (cf. Decree of the Rector Major n. 5.2 in this issue of the AGC).

– **Erection of the Province of Panjim, India**. Taking account of the fact that in these years the Vice Province of Panjim has consolidated its communities, structures of animation and government, as well as economic-financial aspects, arriving at a situation of stability and with the necessary vocational prospects for the future; given the favourable opinion of the Regional Councillor; having obtained the consent of the General Council in the meeting of 15 June 2007, the Rector Major has canonically erected the Salesian Province of Panjim, named after “Blessed José Vaz” with headquarters in Odxel (Goa), in the house of “Saint John Bosco” (cf. Decree of the Rector Major in n. 5.3 of this issue of the AGC).

– **Approval of the unification of the Provinces of France and South Belgium**. Having considered the process followed by the Provinces of France and South Belgium in view of their unification, the General Council has giv-

en its consent for the beginning of the official process of the unification of the Provinces of FRA and BES, with the start of a consultation process among the confreres of the two Provinces concerned. The juridical setting up of the new Province is foreseen for August 2008.

– **Evaluation of and Guidelines for Initial Formation in the Regions.** During this session the General Council examined the evaluation carried out in the North Europe Region, in three parts, in reference to the three zones in which the Region is divided: Poland and EST; CIMEC; Atlantic and Germany. In this way the survey was concluded of the situation regarding Initial Formation in the Congregation (formation houses, formation teams, formation programmes, study centres, formation in Salesianity), with the challenges and the decisions regarding lines to be followed proposed in agreement with the Provincials and the Regional Councillors.

– **Approval of the consolidated account for 2006.** During this session, following its presentation by the Economist General, the General Council examined

and approved, according to the norms of the Regulations, the consolidated account of the Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, at 31 December 2006.

– **Distribution of “Mission Funds”.** The General Council considered and approved the proposals presented by the commission for the n. 140, June 2007 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.

– **Translations of Salesian texts.** The General Council, with the presentation by the General Councillor for Formation, was brought up to date with the situation and the practical application of the decision of the Rector Major with his Council in July 2004 regarding the translation into different languages of some fundamental sources and studies in Salesianity. For the coordination of the translations and for their supervision, it was proposed to refer the matter to the centres of formation or to publishing houses, so as to ensure the quality of the translations and the stability of the initiative.

– **Approval of the New Statutes of the UPS Vice Province.** After careful study in several sessions, the General Council gave its consent for the approval of the new Statutes of the UPS Vice Province *ad experimentum for two years*. The Council also approved *ad experimentum* the proposal assigning areas of competence with the respective responsibilities between the Vice Province and the Salesian University.

– **Reports of the activities of the Departments.** The General Councillors responsible for the Departments presented reports on the activities of their Departments during the period February-June 2007.

Among the **significant events** in the course of the session, should be noted in particular:

- **Retreat** (Santa Fosca di Cadore, 1 – 7 July). A beautiful and very enriching experience from all points of view was the Retreat, at Santa Fosca di Cadore, preached by Fr Aldo Giraudo on Don Bosco's interior and exterior journey

as he himself tells it in the Memoirs of the Oratory, now being seen ever more as a spiritual testament in which Don Bosco presents himself to his Salesian sons as a most affectionate father, as the model of a pastor, offering them a plan of life, through a faith-filled theological reading of his life story, well illustrated also in his educational approach in the Biographies of the Boys. The linking together and the comparative study of the two sources – Memoirs of the Oratory and the Biographies of the Boys – were an important key to their interpretation. In addition to assisting in their own spiritual renewal in the light of the attractive personality of our Father and Founder, they also put the Councillors in the atmosphere of the General Chapter.

- **Meeting of the SDB and FMA General Councils.** On 11 July in the St. Rosa house at Castel Gandolfo, there were two topics: the history of the USG, challenges, choices and future direction, and the last meeting of the General Assembly of the UISG, which resulted in a lively discussion.

5.1 Decree on the miracle for the Beatification of the Venerable Servant of God Zeffirino Namuncurá

We print below, in an English translation, the Decree "regarding the miracle" promulgated by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints for the approval of the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Zeffirino Namuncurá in view of his Beatification.

CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES
OF SAINTS

DIOCESES OF ROME AND OF VIEDMA

BEATIFICATION AND CANONISATION
OF VEN. SERVANT OF GOD

ZEFFIRINO NAMUMCURÁ

LAYMAN
STUDENT OF THE SOCIETY
OF SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES
(1886-1905)

**DECREE REGARDING
THE MIRACLE**

The Venerable Servant of God Zeffirino Namuncurá was born in the village of *Chimpay*, near *Choéle-Choel*, in Patagonia, a region of Argentina, on 26 August 1886, son of Emmanuele Namuncurá, from the native tribe of the Araucani, and of Rosaria Bur-

gos. He was baptised in 1888. Attending the school run by religious of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, he quickly followed the path of holiness. A student in the College of the Salesians in Buenos Aires, he made his first Communion and the following year was Confirmed. Because of his poor health, he was transferred to the Salesian College in Viedma. In 1904 he was taken to Italy to continue his studies. He distinguished himself by his goodness, his modest behaviour, his simplicity of heart and his religious fervour. Struck down by pulmonary tuberculosis, he piously gave his soul to the Lord in Rome on 11 May 1905.

The Supreme Pontiff Paul VI, on 22 May 1972, issued the decree by which it was recognised that the Servant of God had to an heroic degree practised the theological, cardinal and other virtues connected with them.

In view of his Beatification, the Promoter of the Cause presented for the judgement of this Congregation for the Causes of Saints the miraculous cure recently verified of Mrs Valeria Regina Herrera, who in the Cordoba Hospital in Argentina on 16 November 1999 was subjected to a clinical examination with the biopsy of a

particle of the endometrium that revealed the presence of a carcinoma of the skin covering the organ itself, a tumour highly malignant, aggressive and rapidly death threatening. Four vulva lesions corresponding to a similar number of metastases of the tumour were also diagnosed.

Aware of the seriousness of her condition Mrs Valeria, together with her family, began to have recourse to divine assistance through the intercession of the Servant of God Zeffirino Namuncurá and, before undergoing all the necessary treatment to overcome the tumour, the sick woman was subjected to new clinical tests which revealed the disappearance of the vulva nodular lesions and the signs of an extraordinary recovery of the blood count.

In the face of a cure of the tumour so rapid, spontaneous and complete, considering it to be a miraculous occurrence, in 2005 the diocesan process was celebrated in the Curia of the Archdiocese of Córdoba, in Argentina, whose authority and juridical validity were recognised by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints with a decree dated 5 May 2006. The Medical Board of the Department, in their meeting on 11 De-

cember of the same year, declared that the cure was unexpected, complete and long-lasting with a total recovery, and scientifically inexplicable. On 20 February of this year 2007 the special assembly of the Theological Consulters took place and on the 15 of the following month of May the ordinary session of the Cardinals and Bishops, with the Presenter of the Cause Mgr. Andrea Maria Erba, Bishop emeritus of Velletri-Segni. And in both meetings, that of the Consulters and that of the Cardinals and Bishops, to the question whether it was clearly a matter of a miracle worked by God, the answer was in the affirmative.

After the undersigned Cardinal Prefect presented an accurate report of all this to the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, His Holiness, accepting and ratifying the votes of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, today declared that: *It is certain that the miracle took place worked by God through the intercession of the Ven. Servant of God Zeffirino Namuncurá, layman student of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, that is the unexpected, complete and long-lasting cure of Mrs Valeria Regina Herrera from "coriocarcinoma associated with metastases, malignant tumour of the trophoblast."*

The Supreme Pontiff directed that this decree be published and preserved among the Acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given in Rome on 6 July 2007.

† JOSÉ Card. SARAIVA MARTINS
Prefect

† MICHELE DI RUBERTO
Archbp. Tit. of Biccari
Secretary

5.2 Decree for the canonical erection of the Special Circumscription "Sacred Heart" of Central Italy

Prot. n° 214/2007

DECREE FOR THE CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE "SACRED HEART" SPECIAL CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF CENTRAL ITALY

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

- considering the situation of the Salesian foundations and works in the area of Central Italy, divided at present between the three Provinces "Madonna di Loreto" with head-

quarters in Ancona, "San Giovanni Battista" with headquarters in Genova-Sampierdarena, "San Pietro" with headquarters in Rome and the Vice Province "Madonna di Bonaria" with headquarters in Cagliari;

- after having consulted the four Provincials with their respective Councils and taking into account the results of the consultation among the confreres of the four Provinces;
- with reference to article 156 of the Constitutions;
- having obtained the consent of the General Council in the meeting of **18 July 2007**, in accordance with articles 132 §1,1 and 156 of the Constitutions;

CANONICALLY ERECTS

by this present Decree, the **SALESIAN SPECIAL CIRCUMSCRIPTION of CENTRAL ITALY**, with the title **"SACRED HEART"**, with headquarters in **ROME**, in the **"Sacred Heart house,"** resulting from the unification of the three Provinces of Italy **Adriatic, Italy Liguria-Tuscany, Italy Rome and the Vice Province of Italy Sardinia**, including therefore the Communities currently forming part of the

aforementioned Provinces, with the confreres assigned to them:

- ALASSIO,
"Madonna degli Angeli"
- ANCONA,
"San Luigi"
- ANCONA,
"Madonna di Loreto"
- AREZZO,
"Beato Alberto Marvelli"
- CAGLIARI Istituto,
"San Giovanni Bosco"
- CAGLIARI Parrocchia,
"Maria Ausiliatrice"
- CASTEL GANDOLFO,
"San Tommaso da Villanova"
- CIVITANOVA MARCHE ALTA,
"Beato Ertemide Zatti"
- CIVITANOVA MARCHE,
"San Domenico Savio"
- CIVITAVECCHIA,
"Sacra Famiglia"
- COLLE VAL D'ELSA,
"Sant'Agostino"
- FIGLINE VALDARNO,
"San Francesco di Sales"
- FIRENZE Istituto,
"Maria Immacolata"
- FIRENZE Scandicci,
"San Giusto"
- FORMIA,
"San Giovanni Bosco"
- FRASCATI Villa Sora,
"San Carlo"
- GENOVA Quarto,
"San Giuseppe Artigiano"
- GENOVA Sampierdarena,
"San Vincenzo de' Pauli"
- GENZANO DI ROMA,
"San Luigi Versiglia"
- GUALDO TALDINO,
"San Roberto"
- L'AQUILA,
"San Giovanni Bosco"
- LA SPEZIA S. Paolo,
"San Paolo"
- LANUSEI,
"Sant'Eusebio"
- LATINA,
"San Marco"
- LIVORNO,
"Sacro Cuore di Gesù"
- LORETO,
"Madonna di Loreto"
- MACERATA
"San Giuseppe"
- NUORO,
"San Domenico Savio"
- ORTONA,
"San Tommaso Apostolo"
- PERUGIA,
"San Prospero"
- PORTO RECANATI,
"Preziosissimo Sangue"
- PRATO,
"San Giovanni Bosco"
- ROMA B. Filippo Rinaldi,
"Beato Filippo Rinaldi"
- ROMA Boemi,
"San Venceslao"
- ROMA CNOS,
"San Lorenzo"

- ROMA Don Bosco,
"San Giovanni Bosco"
- ROMA Gerini Istituto,
"San Domenico Savio"
- ROMA Pio XI,
"Maria Ausiliatrice"
- ROMA Prenestino,
"San Giuseppe"
- ROMA Sacro Cuore,
"Sacro Cuore di Gesù"
- ROMA San Callisto,
"San Callisto"
- ROMA San Tarcisio,
"San Tarcisio"
- ROMA Speranza,
"Santa Maria della Speranza"
- SASSARI,
"San Giovanni Bosco"
- SELARGIUS,
"San Domenico Savio"
- SULMONA,
"Cristo Re"
- TERNI,
"San Francesco di Sales"
- VALLECROSA,
"Maria Ausiliatrice"
- VARAZZE,
"San Giovanni Battista"
- VASTO,
"San Giovanni Bosco"

and in addition the foundation (not canonically erected) at GROSSETO.

The following decisions have been made:

- 1° Members of the Circumscription are the confreres who at the date of

the canonical erection, are living and working in the Salesian houses listed above.

- 2° Also members of the Circumscription are confreres in formation from the former Provinces "Madonna di Loreto" of Ancona, "San Giovanni Battista" of Genova-Sampierdarena, "San Pietro" of Roma and the Vice Province "Madonna di Bonaria" of Cagliari and other confreres incardinated in the same Provinces, who at the time of the canonical erection are outside the Circumscription for reasons of study, health work or other [just cause].

- 3° The houses of the Italy Rome Province: Roma Gerini "San Domenico Savio" and Roma Testaccio "Santa Maria Liberatrice" (Students of the Roman Pontifical Universities), are transferred to the "Maria «Sede della Sapienza»" Vice Province, with headquarters in Rome, Italy (Salesian Pontifical University Vice Province).

- 4° The Superior of the Circumscription has the faculties of a Major Superior ("Provincial"). He will be assisted in the government and animation by a Council composed of Vice Provincial, Economist and five Councillors appointed by the Rector Major with his Council, after appropriate consultation and as proposed by the Superior.

5° According to articles 156 of the Constitutions and 114 of the General Regulations, at the General Chapter the Superior and three Delegates elected by the confreres assembled in the Chapter of the Circumscription will take part.

The Chapter of the Circumscription is composed of the Superior, who presides, by the members of the Council of the Circumscription, by the Moderator of the Chapter of the Circumscription, by the Rectors, by the Director of Novices and by one Delegate from each canonically erected house, as well as by the Delegates of the Confreres, elected in proportion of one for every twenty five, according to Reg. 165.

6° The Present Decree will come into force on **1 September 2008**.

The arrangements contained in it will be assessed during the six-year period following the 26th General Chapter.

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

Rome, 24 July 2007.

Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA
Rector Major

Fr. Marian STEMPEL
Secretary General

5.3 Decree for the canonical erection of the “ Blessed José Vaz” Province of Panjim, India

Prot. n° 169/2007

DECREE FOR THE CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE SALESIAN PROVINCE “BLESSED JOSÉ VAZ” IN PANJIM, INDIA

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

- taking into account that on 13 June 2004, with the Decree of the Rector Major N. 137/2004, the “Blessed José Vaz” Salesian Vice Province of Panjim was canonically erected detached from the “Saint Francis Xavier” Province of Bombay;
- given the request addressed to the Rector Major by the Superior of the Vice Province, Fr. Loddy Pires, with the agreement of his Council, following also a proposal from the Provincial Chapter, for the change from Vice Province to Province, with the reasons given;
- having considered that in these years the Vice Province of Panjim has consolidated its communities, structures of animation

- and government, as well as economic-financial aspects, arriving at a situation of stability and with the necessary vocational prospects for the future, in accordance with art. 157 of the Constitutions;
- given the favourable opinion of the Regional Councillor, Fr. Joaquim D'Souza;
 - having obtained the consent of the General Council in the meeting of **15 June 2007**, in accordance with articles 132 §1,1 and 156 of the Constitutions;

by the present Decree,

CANONICALLY ERECTS

the SALESIAN PROVINCE OF PANJIM, with the title "BLESSED JOSÉ VAZ", with headquarters in ODXEL (Goa), in the house of "Saint John Bosco" with the following houses until now belonging to the Vice Province:

1. BENAULIN,
"Blessed José Vaz"
2. FATORDA MARGÃO,
"Saint John Bosco"
3. KATKI-SANKESHWAR,
"Saint John Bosco"
4. ODXEL,
"Saint John Bosco"
5. PANJIM,
"Saint John Bosco"

6. PINGULI,
"Saint John Bosco"
7. QUEPEM,
"Saint John Bosco"
8. SIRSI,
"Blessed José Vaz"
9. SULCORNIA,
"Saint John Bosco"
10. SUTTGATTI - Hubli,
"Saint John Bosco"
11. TRASI,
"Saint John Bosco"
12. TUEM,
"Saint Francis Xavier"

and in addition the Salesian foundations, not yet canonically erected, in:

- KELMBET
- KUDAL - OROS
- LOUTOLIM
- PARRA

Members of the Province are all those Confreres assigned to the houses listed above, as well as the confreres in formation, already part of the Province.

The present Decree will come into force on this same day, **15 June 2007**, *Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*.

Rome, 15 June 2007.

Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA
Rector Major

Fr. Marian STEMPEL
Secretary General

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 June-July 2007.

1. *GEGANTONI Genaro, Superior of the Vice Province of Ethiopia and Eritrea.*

Fr Genaro GEGANTONI is the new Superior of the “Maria Kidane Meheret” Salesian Vice Province of ETHIOPIA-ERITREA (AET). He succeeds Fr Alfredo Roca.

Born on 27 February 1945 in Western Negros (Philippines), he became a Salesian on 31 May 1963, when he made his first profession at San Fernando, in the Philippines Province. Perpetually professed on 24 May 1969, he was ordained a priest at Cebu on 8 December 1973.

After ordination he worked for several years at the Don Bosco Technology Center – Boys’ Town in Cebu, of which he was Rector between 1976 and 1981. After this he left as a missionary for Ethiopia, and was assigned to the house of Makallé, where between 1984 and 1986 he was Director of Novices. In the year 1986-1987 he was in the U.S.A. at Berkeley (SUO), for a course of spirituality. Having re-

turned to Ethiopia, he continued as Director of Novices at Adigrat (where the novitiate had been transferred), until 1994. He then went to Addis Abeba – Gotera, for a year again as Director of Novices, then as Rector. After returning to the Philippines (where for three years he was again Rector of the D.B. Technology Center in Cebu), he was sent to the house of Dekemhare, in Eritrea (2001-2004), then to Debre Zeit (Ethiopia) as Rector and Director of Novices the role he was still occupying.

2. *ŁUBIAN Sławomir, Provincial of the Province of WARSAW, Poland.*

To succeed Fr Jan Niewęglowski, as Provincial of the “St. Stanisław Kostka” Province with headquarters in WARSAW, Poland (PLE), Fr Sławomir ŁUBIAN. has been appointed by the Rector Major.

Born on 17 October 1963 in Warsaw, Poland, he made his first Salesian religious profession on 22 August 1984 in the novitiate at Czerwińsk. Perpetually professed on 19 August 1990, he was ordained priest in the theological studentate in Łódź on 4 June 1992.

After priestly ordination he exercised his educative and pastoral ministry in the Salesian house of Lublin – ul. Pawłowa (1992-1994) and Lublin

– ul. Misjonarska (1994-1998). He was then Rector of the postnovitiate at Łódź for six years (1998-2004). Afterwards between 2004 and 2007 he was again in the community of Lublin – ul. Pawłowa, as Vice Rector. From 2005 he was Spiritual Assistant of the VDB in Poland.

3. **PERESSÓN Mario**, *Provincial of the Province of BOGOTÁ, Colombia.*

To lead the “St Peter Claver” Province of *BOGOTÁ, Colombia* (COB), Fr. *Mario PERESSÓN* has been appointed. He succeeds Fr Nicolás Rivera.

Mario Peressón was born on 27 November 1940 at Bogotá, Colombia, and became a Salesian making his first profession on 29 January 1957 in the novitiate of La Ceja (Colombia). On 28 June 1962 he took his perpetual vows and was ordained priest on 5 March 1966 in Rome, where he completed his theological studies, obtaining a doctorate in Theology.

After this he spent a period in Paris for further studies. Having returned to Colombia, from 1970 he exercised his educative and pastoral ministry for the most part in the “Leo XIII” College in Bogotá, where for two periods he was Rector (1973-1976 and 2003-2007) and also Principal. He was Provincial

Councillor between 1972 and 1978 and between 1999 and 2005. In 1984 he took part as Delegate of the Province of Bogotá in the 22nd General Chapter. From 2004 he has been Provincial Delegate for Catechetical Ministry.

5.5 New Salesian Bishop

GALBUSERA Gaetano, *Coadjutor Bishop in the Vicariate Apostolic of PUCALLPA, Perú*

On 18 July 2007 the Press Office of the Holy See published the appointment by Pope Benedict XVI, of the Salesian priest *Gaetano GALBUSERA* as Coadjutor Bishop of the *Vicariate Apostolic of PUCALLPA* (Perú), assigning him the titular see of *Mascula* (Numidia).

Born on 28 August 1940 at Maresio-Missaglia, in the province of Como and the archdiocese of Milan, Gaetano Galbusera became a Salesian on 16 August 1957, the date of his first profession, in the novitiate of Missaglia, in the Lombardy-Emilian Province. After following the normal course of Salesian formation he made his perpetual profession on 16 August 1963 and was ordained priest on

22 December 1967 in Rome, at the conclusion of his theological studies at the Salesian Pontifical University, where he obtained a Licence in Theology. He also obtained a degree in Philosophy at the Catholic University in Milan.

After priestly ordination and having completed his studies, he exercised his educative and pastoral ministry in the Salesian houses of Brescia (1971-1974) and Arese (1975-1979). In 1980 he was appointed Rector of the Salesian community of Arese-Parish (a community erected in that year). At the end of the six-year period he was transferred as Rector to the community of Bologna-Don Bosco, where he only stayed a year, because in 1987 he was appointed Provincial of the Salesian Adriatic Province. At the end of the six-year period in 1993, having returned to the Lombardy-Emilian Province he was sent as Rector to the community of Sesto San Giovanni – Parish. He stayed there until 1997, when he left for Perú, where he was Rector of the Major Seminary of Pumallucay, in the Prelature of Huari, the position he held until his appointment as Bishop. He was ordained on 26 August 2007 in the cathedral of Chimbote, Perú, by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, SDB.

5.6 Mgr. Raffaele FARINA, Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church.

On 25 June 2007 the Press Office of the Holy See published the appointment of Bishop *Raffaele FARINA*, S.D.B., as *Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church*, and at the same time as archbishop.

Archbishop. Raffaele Farina, born on 24 September 1933 at Buonalbergo, in the diocese of Ariano Irpino and the province of Benevento (Italy), a Salesian from 25 September 1949, perpetually professed on 25 September 1954, and ordained priest 1 July 1958, was *Prefect of the Apostolic Vatican Library*, to which position he was called by Pope John Paul II on 25 May 1997. In November 2006 His Holiness Benedict XVI raised him to the dignity of a Bishop, and he received episcopal ordination on 16 December 2006, in St Peter's Basilica from His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, SDB.

More biographical details may be found in AGC 396, n. 5.3.

5.6 Our dead confreres (3rd 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." (C. 94).

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P ALOISIO Pietro	Messina (Italia)	13-05-2007	98	ISI
P ANTONINI Camillo	Arese (Italia)	09-07-2007	99	ILE
P AZARKIEWICZ Antonio José	Funes (Santa Fe, Argentina)	17-08-2007	93	ARO
P BARSÌ Alberto	Varazze (Italia)	10-08-2007	89	ILT
P BARTOLINI Bartolino	Torino	07-07-2007	78	ICP
P BARZAGHI Felice	Sesto San Giovanni (Italia)	09-07-2007	67	ILE
P BELTRAME José Miguel	Córdoba (Argentina)	02-08-2007	92	ACO
P BESNATE Mario	Arese (Italia)	25-08-2007	97	ILE
P BOSCIA Giovanni	Messina (Italia)	03-07-2007	80	ISI
P BREUER Rupert	Vöcklabruck (Austria)	28-06-2007	75	AUS
P BUCCIO Adriano	Chieri (Italia)	14-06-2007	75	ICP
P CASAROTTI Mauro	Mumbai (India)	20-07-2007	90	INB
<i>Fu per sei anni Ispettore</i>				
P CASTELLVÍ Pere	Barcelona (Spagna)	07-07-2007	76	SBA
P CAVALLINI Italo	Verese (Italia)	20-07-2007	82	ILE
P CHMIEL Jan Antoni	Warszawa (Polonia)	30-06-2007	75	PLE
P CUSUMANO Guillermo Ángel	Córdoba (Argentina)	20-08-2007	52	ACO
E DALLA VALLE Franco	Cuiabá (MT, Brasile)	02-08-2007	62	—
<i>Fu per sei anni Ispettore e per otto anni Vescovo di Juína (Mato Grosso, Brasile)</i>				
P De BOISSOUY Michel	Caen (Francia)	02-07-2007	83	FRA
P DE FRANCESCHI Giuseppe	Schio (Italia)	13-07-2007	75	VEN
P DE SANTIAGO SÁNCHEZ Glicerio	León (Spagna)	26-07-2007	85	SLE
L DELLA GIACOMA Virginio	Trento (Italia)	17-08-2007	87	INE
P D'HAENE Raúl	Cuenca (Ecuador)	30-06-2007	79	ECU
P DIETRICH Lothar	Buxheim (Baviera, Germania)	28-08-2007	77	GER
P FERNÁNDEZ SEDANO Emilio	Bilbao (Spagna)	18-07-2007	55	SBI
P FILIPPI Walter	Arese (Italia)	23-06-2007	72	ILE
P GAMBOA Juan José	San José de Costa Rica	29-06-2007	95	CAM
P GÁRATE Juan María	Barcelona (Spagna)	16-06-2007	76	SBA
L HAMILTON James	Heathcote, NSW (Australia)	28-05-2007	90	AUL
P HERAS Baltasar	Córdoba (Argentina)	26-07-2007	86	ACO
N HROMÁDKO Jan	Tatra (Slovacchia)	12-06-2007	30	CEP
P IACUZZI Silverio	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	26-07-2007	77	ABA
P IOFRIDA Leone	Vibo Valentia (Italia)	11-08-2007	69	IME
P KABIS Antoni	Szczyrk (Polonia)	21-06-2007	84	PLS
P KOLLANOOR Thomas	Vellore (India)	06-07-2007	82	INM
P KOOTTIANIYIL Philip	Madhakottai, Tanjavur (India)	30-07-2007	84	INT
L KRAMAR Jozef	Trstenik (Slovenia)	06-09-2007	88	SLO
P KRÓL Bronisław	Poznań (Polonia)	02-08-2007	68	PLO

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
L KRÜGER Georg	Köln (Germania)	18-08-2007	72	GER
P LEDO Antonio	São Paulo (Brasile)	22-07-2007	77	BSP
L LIU Joseph Chin-Yuen	Tainan (Taiwan)	04-09-2007	78	CIN
P LÓPEZ ZAMBRANO Carlos	Quito (Ecuador)	16-06-2007	57	ECU
P MADDHICHETTY Amala Joseph	La Crosse (U.S.A.)	09-06-2007	44	INT
P MATTEUCCI Giulio	Calcutta (India)	27-07-2007	87	INC
P MONTANI Mario	Arese (Italia)	05-09-2007	80	ILE
P MOYANO FLORES José	Córdoba (Spagna)	16-08-2007	78	SSE
L MYLAN Gene	Montebello (CA, U.S.A.)	20-08-2007	63	SUO
P NEDUMPURAM John	Coimbatore (India)	07-07-2007	84	INT
L NEGREIROS José Augusto	Niterói (Brasile)	27-07-2007	85	BBH
P NOVAK Janko	Bled (Slovenia)	21-06-2007	70	SLO
S NYIRIMANA Anaclet	Gisenyi (Rwanda)	17-08-2007	24	AGL
P OBRI Eugène	Mulhouse (Francia)	23-07-2007	82	FRA
L OTTOLINI Francisco	Luanda (Angola)	18-08-2007	38	ANG
P PARRA CARO Miguel Alfonso	Cartagena (Colombia)	05-08-2007	96	COM
L PEREIRA Julio	Baucau (East Timor)	04-07-2007	23	ITM
P PEREZ Rosario	Tiruchy (India)	27-08-2007	45	INT
P PERFEITO José da Silva	Goiânia (Brasile)	21-07-2007	78	BBH
L PIRATTON André	Thonon-Les-Bains (Francia)	30-07-2007	84	FRA
E REZENDE João Costa	Belo Horizonte (Brasile)	21-07-2007	96	—
<i>Fu per 4 anni Ispettore, per 1 anno Consigliere generale, e per 54 anni Vescovo: 4 anni a Ilhéus, poi 29 anni a Belo Horizonte, prima come Vescovo Coadiutore, poi per 18 anni Arcivescovo Metropolitana</i>				
P ROJAS DÍAZ Hobed Eudoro	Medellín (Colombia)	12-07-2007	68	COM
P SAAVEDRA S. José María	Medellín (Colombia)	30-07-2007	96	COM
P SAINI Ernesto	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	01-07-2007	87	ABB
P SANCHO Eustasio	Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	12-06-2007	89	CAM
P SCUCCES Antonino	Viagrande CT (Italia)	21-06-2007	69	ISI
P STREIFENEDER Johannes	Benediktbeuern (Germania)	24-06-2007	79	GER
L THAN VAN HOAN Joseph	Ben Cat (Vietnam)	27-06-2007	71	VIE
L TOPPO Ignatius	Guwahati (India)	22-06-2007	65	ING
P VINAI Agostino	Torino	25-08-2007	81	ICP
P ZHAO Stefano Ting Ping	Hebei (Cina)	19-08-2007	87	CIN
P ZUCCHET Marcello	Castelfranco Veneto (Italia)	14-07-2007	94	INE

