



# acts

**of the general council**

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year XC    september-december 2009

**N. 405**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale  
Opere don Bosco  
Roma





# acts

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

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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**“Successor of Don Bosco: son, disciple, apostle”**

**THE HUMAN AND SPIRITUAL PROFILE  
OF BLESSED MICHAEL RUA**

**On the hundredth anniversary of his death**

**1. Don Rua “the most faithful son of Don Bosco”.** The six mysterious word which keep coming back.  
- Two urgent matters: one for Don Bosco and the other for Michael. - A prophetic letter on the bedside table. - Being Don Bosco at Mirabello Monferrato. - “Being Don Bosco here at the Oratory”. **2. Don Rua “the living Rule”.** All the work is finished. Is Don Rua finished too? - Don Bosco shares with him his mind and heart. - Becoming Don Bosco day after day. - The ‘Rule’ once approved becomes the path of holiness. - “Don Rua studied me and I studied Don Rua”. - Don Bosco’s hand in that of Don Rua. **3. Don Rua: fidelity to consecrated life “for a whole lifetime”.** Fruitful fidelity to Don Bosco. - Jesus: food in the Eucharist and merciful love in his Heart. - “All that we have we owe to Mary the Most Holy Help of Christians”. - Obedience. - Poverty. - Chastity. **4. Don Rua: “the evangeliser of youth”.** New fields of pastoral work. - Among the workers and the sons of workers. - Among the miners in Switzerland. - Emigrant among the emigrants. - Risking everything that can be put at risk like Don Bosco. - “That simplicity with which he tried to accompany what he did”. **Conclusion.** - Prayer to intercede for the canonisation of Blessed Michael Rua.

Rome, 16 August 2009

My Dear Confreres,

It is some time since I last wrote to you. It was not a matter of my neglect and even less of a lack of will; just the opposite, you know how much I care for you and keep you in my heart. Visiting the Provinces I noticed once again that the circular letters, as for that matter the various documents of the Congregation, travel at different speeds; this is due to a number of reasons not least delays in the translations. So it happens that they pile up and in the end there is the risk, by no means imaginary, that they are not read; in this case the opportunity is lost of re-enforcing our charismatic identity and of reflecting together on our life and mission. After speaking with the General Council, therefore, I took the decision to reduce to three – rather than the present four – the circular letters each year, one of which will be dedicated to the presentation of and the commentary on the Strenna. The Acts of the Council too will thus come out every four months, being published in January,

May and September. I hope that this decision will help us to appreciate our Salesian literature more, to reflect on it more deeply and to make it become life. Only in this way will it be able to achieve the fundamental objective of creating a "Salesian culture" in the Congregation.

In this period there have been some quite significant and interesting events involving in particular the Rector Major, which you have been able to follow through ANS on our site *sdb.org* and in some cases through television transmissions or by live streaming. I remind you of some of them: preaching the Retreat for the Rectors of the ICC, ICP, ILE, INE Provinces belonging to the Italy and Middle East Region, which is one of the Rector Major's more important services of animation aimed at promoting vocational development; taking part in the 'Youth Festival' of the INE Province in Jesolo, which gave me the opportunity to see and appreciate one of the more successful Youth Ministry experiences; the meeting with the Provincials of Poland and the EST Circumscription, in which we reflected together on the relationship between these Provinces and those of the North Europe Region, with the rest of Europe and with the Rector Major and the General Council, in the new context so different from that of the years of Nazism and of Communism, in which these Provinces find themselves living the Salesian charism today, and on the role of these Provinces in the 'Project for Europe'; the visit to the EST Circumscription which had the purpose of assessing the progress made since it was established, of examining the challenges and the proposals made by the Provincial Council and by the Ukraine Delegation and the other parts of the Circumscription, to indicate the lines to be followed at the present moment.

Then there were other events in which I took part: the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation in the ICP Province in Turin, which in some ways is an indication of what the other Provinces are doing and which will reach a climax on 18 December, the day on which we are invited to renew our profession; the first *Forum* of the SYM of the new ICC

Circumscription, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the Don Bosco Temple at Cinecittà and the start of the pilgrimage of Don Bosco's casket; the conclusion of the ADMA National Congress in Spain at Albacete; preaching the Retreat to the Province of Valencia and visiting the Seville Province; participation in various meetings of the Union of Superiors General, as President, and in the Half-yearly Assembly on the subject "Geographical and cultural changes in Institutes of Consecrated Life: challenges and future prospects"; the plenary session of the General Council in June and July, including a pilgrimage in the steps of Saint Paul; welcoming the Holy Father to our house at Les Combes; finally the first meeting of the Commission for the 'Project for Europe.'

I should like to begin this new stage in our communication with a letter about the first Successor of Don Bosco, in this way launching the **Year dedicated to Don Rua in the Centenary of his death**, which took place on 6 April 1910. To study him more deeply, we shall shortly be holding in Turin the Fifth International Congress on the History of the Salesians, organised by the ACCSA and the ISS, in preparation for the International Congress of the Salesian Congregation which we will be celebrating in Rome in 2010. I thank right away the Salesian Historians' Association, the Salesian Historical Institute and the Committee for the International Congress who, with dedication, responsibility and skill have taken on this commitment which I entrusted to them.<sup>1</sup>

"Remembering Don Rua", we can come to know a fundamental part of the history of our Congregation and a person who embodies its identity. This letter of mine is not meant to be a minibiography, an alternative to the work written by Fr F. Desramaut,

<sup>1</sup> The Committee for the International Congress on Don Rua, chaired by Fr Francesco Motto, has also organised the computerisation of all Don Rua's letters undertaken by the Salesian Brother Giorgio Bonardi and made available on the site of the Direzione Generale, and the biography written by Fr F. DESRAMAUT, entitled "*Vie de Don Michel Rua, Premier successeur de Don Bosco*", published in French by the Libreria Ateneo Salesiano and shortly to be translated and printed in other languages.



which I invite you to read, but an approach to his human and spiritual profile, through a study of what has so far been written about him, and drawing especially on the "*Positio*"<sup>2</sup> prepared in view of his cause of beatification. We hope that soon we may see Don Rua canonised; for this we will invoke him, asking for God's help and graces through his intercession.

## 1. DON RUA "THE MOST FAITHFUL SON OF DON BOSCO"

«Don Rua was the most faithful, therefore the most humble and at the same time the most valiant of the sons of Don Bosco».<sup>3</sup> With these words spoken with great conviction, on 29 October 1972 Pope Paul VI delineated for always the human and spiritual figure of Don Rua. In that homily, proclaimed under the Cupola of Saint Peter's, the Pope described the new Blessed with words which as it were hammered home this fundamental characteristic of his: fidelity. «*Successor of Don Bosco, that is continuer: son, disciple, imitator...* He made the example of the Saint a school, his life a history, his rule a spirit, his holiness a type, a model; he made the spring a stream a river». The words of Paul VI raise to a higher level the earthly life of this "slight and worn-out profile of a priest". They disclose the diamond which glistened in the meek and humble fabric of his days.

It had all started long before with a strange gesture. Eight years of age and having lost his father, with a broad black band fixed to his jacket by his mother he had stretched out his hand for a medal from Don Bosco. But instead of a medal Don Bosco had given him his left hand while making a sign as though cutting it in half. And he said to him: "Take it, little Michael, take it". And before those wide-open eyes which gazed on him transfixed, he said six words which were to be the secret of his life: "*We two will always go halves*".

<sup>2</sup> Sacra Rituum Congregatione. TAURINEN. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Michaëlis Rua – POSITIO SUPER VIRTUTIBUS – Romae, Typis Guerra et Belli 1947

<sup>3</sup> PAUL VI, *Homily for the beatification of Don Rua*, Rome, 29 October 1972

And slowly the remarkable shared process began between the holy master and the disciple who went halves with him in everything and always. In the early years Don Bosco wanted Michael to stay with him but also that every evening for supper and to sleep he should return to his mother Mrs John Mary. However, when he came to the Oratory, already in those early years Don Bosco wanted him at his side at table.<sup>4</sup> In this way Michael began to take in Don Bosco's way of thinking and behaving. He was to say later: "Watching Don Bosco even in his tiniest actions made a greater impression on me than reading and meditating any holy book".<sup>5</sup> Being with Don Bosco, he had to build up in that tiny body enough calm powerful resources to last him for the whole of his life in which he would have to show unfailing strength.

### **The six mysterious words that keep coming back**

On 3 October 1852, during an outing which the best of the boys at the Oratory had each year to the Becchi for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Don Bosco clothed him in the clerical habit. Michael was 15. That evening returning to Turin, Michael overcame his shyness and asked Don Bosco: «Do you remember the time we first met? I asked you for a medal and you made a strange gesture, as though you wanted to cut your hand in half and give it to me and you said: 'We two will always go halves'. What did you mean?». And he replied: «My dear Michael, haven't you understood yet? And yet it is so clear. The older you get the more you will understand what I wanted to say to you: In our lives we two will always go halves. Sorrows, concerns, responsibilities, joys and all the rest we shall share together.» Michael was quiet, full of silent happiness: Don Bosco, with simple words had made him his sole heir.<sup>6</sup>

Fr Giulio Barberis had been chosen as the first Salesian Novice Master, because in him Don Bosco had discovered a very fine searcher and educator of souls. Ten years younger, he lived beside

<sup>4</sup> M. WIRTH, *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni*, LAS Rome 2000, p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> A. AMADEI, *Il Servo di Dio Michele Rua*, vol I, SEI Turin 1931, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. AUFRAY, *Don Michele Rua*, SEI Turin 1933, p. 30.

Michael Rua for 49 years as disciple, confrere, confidant, friend. And in the process of beatification described in this way his inner self: "He was always determined to enter into Don Bosco's ideas, to give up his own views, his own opinions, to be conformed" to Don Bosco's way of seeing things. "As soon as he got to know that he intended founding the Salesian Congregation, he at once was the first to make a vow of obedience to him". It was 25 March 1855, Michael was 18. "From then on his only thought was to put aside his own will in order to do the will of God as expressed by Don Bosco".<sup>7</sup>

Don Bosco did not give him any commands; he only let him know the things he wanted doing. And for Michael these were commands, without his giving any thought to what it might cost him. They were the wishes of Don Bosco, promptly put into effect by Michael: teaching religion to the young boarders, attending to the cholera victims during the terrible pestilence of 1854, teaching the new and complicated decimal system, assisting constantly in the huge refectory, in the playground, in church, directing the Sunday Oratory of Saint Aloysius when Fr Leonardo Murialdo had to withdraw, copying out, at night time in his neat and orderly handwriting, the muddled pages of Don Bosco's *History of Italy* and the heavily corrected pages of the first *Rules of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales*.

At the beginning of 1858 Don Bosco had to go to Rome to see the Pope and he took Michael Rua with him. He has the fresh and sharp memory of his 21 years, which takes in all the details. He listens as the Pope speaks with Don Bosco. In the following days he accompanies Don Bosco on his visits to Cardinals and important dignitaries and sees the extraordinary esteem that they all have for him.

### **Two urgent matters: one for Don Bosco and the other for Michael**

When in April of that year 1858 they return to Turin there are two urgent matters to attend to. Don Bosco sees to one of them and entrusts the other to Michael. Leaving for Rome, Don Bosco

<sup>7</sup> *Positio*, p. 912.

had entrusted the direction of the Oratory to Fr Vittorio Alasonatti, a pious but rather strict priest, three years older than he was, who had come to help him. Don Bosco always saw the Oratory as a large family. Fr Alasonatti, during the months of Don Bosco's absence had transformed it into a disciplined barracks. Don Bosco told Michael: "As soon as possible we have to recreate the large family. You see to it". And he did see to it. He set himself the task of 'doing a Don Bosco'.

Don Bosco, who followed his work with satisfaction, had to devote himself completely to the second urgent matter: now that he had the encouragement of the Pope he had to found the Salesian Congregation. Many fine young men who had grown up with his help had in the past promised to devote themselves to the poorest boys at his side, joining together in a Society. But when it came to the "crunch" they did not feel they could carry on, and they had left him on his own. Now Don Bosco, in the months that followed, had to speed things up, meet one by one the twenty or so very young men who seemed to have decided to form the first Salesian Society. He had often to gather them together, apart from the others, speaking calmly, explaining, clarifying, clearing up doubts, overcoming uncertainties. Sometime he was successful, as with John Cagliero, sometimes not, as with Joseph Buzzetti.

To Michael Rua he didn't need to say anything. Michael Rua spent those days in December 1859 leading up to the first official meeting of those 'enrolled' in the Salesian Society, making a Retreat in preparation for being ordained Sub-deacon on 17 December. For him it was obvious: as soon as possible he would be a priest of Don Bosco.

The 18 December 1859 was a Sunday. In the evening, eighteen people gathered in Don Bosco's room, which at that moment is the Salesian Bethlehem. The foundation meeting of the "Pious Society of Saint Francis of Sales", that is of the Salesians, is taking place. The eighteen pray, declare that they want to join together in a Society for their own sanctification and to devote their lives to the young and boys at risk. They hold the first elections. Don Bosco, the founder is called by all of them to be the first Superior General.

The sub-deacon Michael Rua, at 22 years of age, is elected Spiritual Director of the Society. With Don Bosco he will have to work on the spiritual formation of the first Salesians. Michael does not take this new task as an "honorary" role. Giulio Barberis, who is among the youngest and attends his lessons of formation testifies: "He was extremely diligent in preparing the lessons and encouraging us to study".<sup>8</sup>

### **A prophetic letter on the bedside table**

On 29 July 1860 Michael Rua was ordained priest. John B. Francesia, who, as always, was at his side, testifies: "His preparation was extraordinary. He spent the night before in prayer and pious meditation".<sup>9</sup> On the evening of that festive and most important day Don Rua goes up to the attic which serves as his bedroom and finds on the bedside table a letter from Don Bosco. He reads: "Better than me you will see the Salesian Work pass beyond the frontiers of Italy and become established in many parts of the world. You will have much work to do and much to suffer; but, as you know, only through the Red sea and the desert does one arrive at the Promised Land, Suffer with courage, even down here consolations and the Lord's help will not be lacking".

Having become 'Don Rua', he quickly took up all his occupations again. John B. Francesia, to whom Don Rua's load of work seemed to be excessive, asked Don Bosco in those days: "Why do you have him do so many things?" He received the reply: "Because there is only one Don Rua".<sup>10</sup> As the years passed the Oratory becomes a huge house. Every year the number of boys increases in an incredible manner. They reach 800, of whom 360 are artisans. The Salesians, who are also growing in number each year, are engaged in the class rooms, in the work shops, in the vast courtyards. Working and coordinating everyone's work, under the supervision of Don Bosco, is Don Rua.

<sup>8</sup> *Positio*, p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> *Positio*, p. 72.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Positio*, p. 71.



Fr Giulio Barberis, having become the wise Master of Novices, years later will testify: "So many occupations for one person could have taken away the time for prayer and the religious spirit. In Don Rua the spirit of prayer and meditation were second nature. Obedience to his Superior was at an admirable level. At that time he had begun a life of mortification and self-denial that was quite extraordinary. I, who had only recently entered Don Bosco's House, was amazed. I recall that speaking with friends we were all convinced that he was a saint. Don Bosco was convinced of it too, and he used to say so".<sup>11</sup>

### **Being Don Bosco at Mirabello Monferrato**

In 1863 Don Bosco took a decisive step for his Work. It was functioning well at Valdocco, because running it was the charismatic and fatherly figure of Don Bosco himself. But transplanted elsewhere without Don Bosco, would it work? In the spring of that year Don Bosco had a confidential and very serious meeting with Don Rua, who was 26 years of age. "I have to ask you for a big favour. In agreement with the Bishop of Casale Monferrato I have decided to open a 'Junior Seminary' at Mirabello. I am thinking of sending you to direct it. It is the first house the Salesians are opening outside Turin. There will be a thousand eyes watching us. I have full confidence in you. I am giving you three helps: five of our more sound Salesians, including Fr Bonetti who will be your "Deputy"; a group of boys, chosen from the best, who will come from Valdocco and continue their studies there, to be the yeast among the new boys you will be getting; and going with you will be your Mamma".

Don Rua left in October. Don Bosco had written four pages of precious pieces of advice for him which will then be transcribed for every new Salesian Rector: they are considered one of the clearest statements about Don Bosco's educational system. Among other things he wrote: "Every night you should sleep at least six hours.

<sup>11</sup> *Positio*, pp. 48-49.

Seek to make yourself loved before being feared. Try to be among the boys during the whole of recreation. If questions arise about material things, spend all that is necessary provided that charity is preserved". Don Rua sums up all these pieces of advice which for him are commands, in a single phrase: "At Mirabello I shall try to be Don Bosco".

After some months, the chronicle of the Oratory, written by Fr Ruffino, reports: "Don Rua at Mirabello is behaving like Don Bosco in Turin. He is always surrounded by boys attracted by his friendliness, and also because he is always telling them something new. At the beginning of the school year he advised the teachers not to be too demanding for the present". After two years the 'Junior Seminary' was overflowing with boys who gave good signs of a vocation to the priesthood for the diocese of Casale and for the Salesian Congregation. Among these is Luigi Lasagna, a very lively boy would become the second Salesian missionary Bishop in South America.

In the summer of 1865 at the Salesian House in Valdocco things are not going well. The administrator general Fr Alasonnatti is dying; he will pass away on 7 October. Four other Salesians among the best are out of action because of the stressful work. The number of boys has gone over 700. The building of the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians is going ahead rapidly and requires ever greater funding. Don Bosco is under intense pressure with the need to raise funds by travelling, and through lotteries, with a huge amount of correspondence. Someone is needed to take the situation firmly in hand: a well-disciplined life for the boys, the material management of the work-shops and the schools, supervision of the work on the Sanctuary. Of that calibre of person Don Bosco knows only one: Don Rua. And he at once sends for him.

Fr Provera, a great Salesian semi-invalid to whom Don Bosco entrusted the more delicate and difficult tasks arrives at Mirabello. He goes into the Rector's Office of the Junior Seminary and finds Don Rua writing a letter. "Don Bosco asks you to leave the Rector's post giving the responsibility to Fr Bonetti and to come

at once to Valdocco. Fr Alasonatti is dying. When you are ready we can leave". Don Rua calls Fr Bonetti and hands things over to him. Then he goes to say good bye to the boys in the class-rooms. He embraces his Mamma telling her: "Don Bosco has called me. For the present you stay here, the kitchen and the linen-room need you. Then I shall let you know". Then he takes his Breviary and says to Fr Provera: "I'm ready, let's go".

Fr Wirth astutely notes: "The Mirabello experience served to develop his spirit of personal initiative, which would have been perhaps a little restricted had he never been away from Don Bosco".<sup>12</sup> In Don Rua's activity in Mirabello, there was more however: it was proof that Don Bosco's Work could be transplanted, that is could live and prosper even without the physical presence of Don Bosco, provided that there was a person in charge who was sound from a Salesian point of view: on this account, Don Rua's successful experiment opened up unlimited horizons for the Salesian Congregation.

### **"You will be Don Bosco here, at the Oratory"**

Don Rua arrives at Valdocco without a fuss. He has a long talk with Don Bosco who in synthesis tells him: "You have been Don Bosco at Mirabello. Now you will do the same here at the Oratory". On his narrow shoulders he confidently places every responsibility: the schools, the work-shops, the young Salesians to be formed and encouraged in their studies and examinations, the publication of the *Catholic Readings* which every month reached thousands of subscribers, the imposing building of the Sanctuary, the greater part of the correspondence addressed to him, which Don Rua has to read, annotate and give to a trustworthy Salesian for a reply. "I have to go to Rome again for the approval of our Rule. I shall be away more or less two months and I shall take Don Francesca with me. I leave everything to you. There are some excellent Salesians around you. See what

<sup>12</sup> M. WIRTH, *o. c.*, p. 267.

their talents are, decide and put them to work where you think best. As well as working, you will have to coordinate the work of the others”.

Don Rua gets up very early. He says Mass, makes his meditation on his knees and prays like an angel. Then he gets down to work with that special concentration that only he has. The Salesians and the boys who had not seen him for two years notice that there has been a deep change in him. He is no longer the ‘prefect of discipline’. Among the eighty boys at Mirabello and now among the seven hundred at Valdocco, he has learned to be like Don Bosco the ‘Rector-Father’. The hand which takes command is firm, but its manner is kind and loving.

There are certainly many things to be done. They become exhausting in the months leading up to the completion of the building of the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians: autumn 1866, the laying of the last stone of the cupola; eight months of intense work for the internal construction and finishing off; 9 June 1867 the solemn opening followed by eight days of high-level functions. “For the whole of that month of June”, – notes the diligent A. Auffray – “he did not sleep more than four hours each night. He had to see to everything, organise, decide, supervise, encourage”,<sup>13</sup> while Don Bosco was submerged in a crowd of people who wanted to talk to him, receive his blessing, obtain a grace from the Madonna, give him a donation.

## **2. DON RUA “THE LIVING RULE”**

### **All the work is finished. Is Don Rua finished too?**

When all the work on the Sanctuary was finished, it seemed that Don Rua was finished too. One morning in July, in the torrid heat of a Turin July, at the main entrance to the Oratory on the way out, he collapsed into the arms of a friend who was at his side.

<sup>13</sup> A. AUFFRAY, *o. c.*, p. 104.

'Galloping peritonitis' was the verdict of the doctor who had been called immediately. 'There is nothing more to be done. Give him extreme unction'. Penicillin had still to be discovered, surgery was still in its early stages. Don Rua, with a high fever and suffering a great deal, called for Don Bosco; but he was in the city. Someone was sent to find him. When he arrived and he was told that Don Rua was nearing his end he acted in an incomprehensible manner. The boys were in church for the monthly day of recollection and he went straight to hear their confessions. 'Don't worry, Don Rua won't go without my permission', he said going into the church. He came out much later, and instead of going to the infirmary he went for the modest supper put on one side. Then he went up to his room to leave his briefcase and papers and finally, when everyone was on tenterhooks, he went to Don Rua's bedside. He saw the holy oils and was almost angry: "Who on earth had that idea?" Then he sat down next to Don Rua and said to him: "Listen to me. I don't want this, understand? I don't want you to die. You have got to get better. You will have to work and work very hard at my side, anything but die. Listen carefully; even if you were to jump out of the window just as you are you wouldn't die".<sup>14</sup> Francesia and Cagliero had seen and heard everything, and they became convinced that Don Bosco, who in his dreams used to speak to the Madonna and extract from her impossible favours, had had the guarantee that the Madonna would leave "that lad" the only one of his brothers to have survived, at his side for his whole life.

On 14 August 1876 a Salesian, after supper, asked him straight out: "Is it true that several Salesians have died from too much work?" Don Bosco replied: "If it were true, the Congregation would not have suffered any damage, just the opposite... But it is not true. One who might deserve the title of a victim of work, is Don Rua, and you can see him in good shape; but fortunately for us the Lord keeps him strong and healthy".<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. AUFRAY, *o. c.*, p. 104; E. CERIA, *Vita del Servo di Dio Don Michele Rua*, SEI Turin 1949, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> A. AUFRAY, *o. c.*, p. 136.



## **Don Bosco gives him his mind and his heart**

After three weeks of convalescence, Don Rua returns, slight and strong as before, to be the most faithful son of Don Bosco, who year after year entrusts him with the most important tasks: the selection and the formation of those who ask to join the Salesians, the assignment of the confreres to the various houses which are being opened in the north of Italy, the first visitation of these houses in 1872 to guide them and keep them on the path of the genuine Salesian spirit. In 1875 he shares with him the preparation of the first missionary expedition to South America. In 1876 he entrusts to him the General Direction of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, founded four years before, in the place of Fr Cagliero who had left for the missions. He wanted him with him on the long and tiring journeys he took, begging for alms in France and Spain. Day after day, Don Bosco 'makes' Don Rua his successor at the head of the Salesian Congregation. More by his way of doing things than by his words, he passes on to him his thoughts, his guidance, his way of dealing with things, his total, calm trust in God and in Mary Help of Christians. Especially on the last journeys, Don Bosco talks very confidentially with him, speaking to him about the present and the future, about the Salesian Congregation which is the work of the Madonna. The two of them haven't to think of it as their work but just love it and keep it from harm and from decay, keeping close to the confreres, encouraging them to keep the Rule as the way that leads to salvation and to holiness. In a word: Don Bosco shares with him his mind and his heart. "Don Rua found his spiritual path in the contemplation of Don Bosco".<sup>16</sup>

## **Becoming Don Bosco day after day**

Among all his responsibilities, during all those years, Don Rua is always the Rector of the large number of boys who crowd Valdocco: students, artisans, Salesian aspirants, very young Salesians.

<sup>16</sup> M. WIRTH, *o. c.*, p 273.

Don Rua is striving to "become Don Bosco" in everything, also in his outward manner. Certainly his physique and temperament are different. "His behaviour, his voice, his features, his smile don't have that mysterious fascination which attracted and tied the boys to Don Bosco. But for everyone he was the attentive and affectionate father, striving to understand, encourage, support, forgive, enlighten, love", as he had started to be at Mirabello.<sup>17</sup> And the boys at Valdocco, infallible judges like all young people in the world when it comes to recognising who really cares for them and who, on the other hand, is only pretending to, show by their deeds that they know him to be a father and friend.

Next to Don Bosco's confessional in the sacristy of the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians was that of Don Rua. And for thirty years the boys sought him out every morning, thronging the confessional almost like that of Don Bosco. And when he was miraculously cured from his serious illness and returned to show himself timidly under the porticos he was surrounded by the evident joy of waves of boys. At recreation time, as he had regularly done at Mirabello, he returned to be present among the boys, the most cheerful and the most lively of the Salesians. At first he did not dare to join in the vigorous chases of the 'barra rotta', but crouched down with the small boys playing a form of miniature skittles or "marbles", intent like them, and in the beautiful evenings of that summer, under the starlit sky, joining in with the youthful voices, he sang with all his heart and with great delight.

Leading a crowd of youngsters like that and making them into a large family as Don Bosco always wanted, since that was his educational system, was not always easy. It was necessary to give free rein to the better ones, encouraging them to form apostolic groups, such as the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, that of the Blessed Sacrament, of St Joseph, of St Aloysius, of the Altar Servers, identifying them through a general secret vote which indicated the best in conduct, earning them small prizes, discretely presenting them as models to be imitated. These are the *élites* who

<sup>17</sup> A. AUFRAY, o. c., p. 151.

draw the crowd along with them! Don Rua and the Salesians were familiar with these educational methods which Don Bosco had used with them when they were boys, and they made good use of them.

It was also necessary to push the mediocre ones, to rein in the worse, of whom in a large group there are always some. To do this, every week Don Rua presided at a meeting of the assistants and the teachers. In a register a note was kept of the corrections to be given, the disorders to be prevented and the advice to be offered. Don Rua saw to most of these himself on the following days. One of his disciples of those days writes: "He was loved because he treated everyone well. Even when he had to give someone a correction, a reproof, or impose some punishment, he knew how to sugar the pill, and he used to praise the one needing to be corrected before blaming him, mentioning his previous good conduct and expressing hope for the future. Then the culprit would be moved to be sorry and repent, and promise to do better even before any reproof or punishment, which often were not needed and were avoided, to the great joy of the one who was to have been on the receiving end, and who then felt even more inclined to love and admire the kindness of his Superior".<sup>18</sup>

However, it would be a serious mistake to think of the Oratory as a place where it was necessary to have recourse to punishments to keep the boys in order. Among those boys, great Salesians grew up, those who, year after year, carried and would carry the light of faith throughout South America as far as the edge of the South Pole. The second generation of Salesians, which would soon be spread out in a dozen countries of Europe, America and Asia, was growing up in that mass of boys who crowded the class-rooms, the apostolic groups, shouting happily in the noisy games of 'barra rotta', and who in church prayed like angels, at break-time emptied the baskets of fragrant bread straight out of the ovens under the Sanctuary, and in the evening joyfully sang under the stars. It was a constellation of famous names of "young men" Unia, Milanesio, Balzola, Gamba, Paseri, Rota, Galbusera,

<sup>18</sup> A. AUFFRAY, *o. c.*, p. 103.

Rabagliati, Fassio, Caprioglio, Vacchina, Forghino... on to the 'children' Versiglia and Variara, whom we now venerate among the saints and the blessed. Among them there were boys who had nothing to envy in Saint Dominic Savio.

In 1876 – Don Vespignani relates in a memorable page of his “A year at the school of Don Bosco” – the Bishop of Rio de Janeiro, Pietro Lacerda from Brazil came to visit Don Bosco. He had read about Dominio Savio and had been struck by the extraordinary gifts which God had given him. He made a disconcerting request of Don Bosco: to be able to speak with some boys who were as good as Dominic, “because I need to resolve some fears concerning my responsibility before God. Don Bosco brought five boys with calm serene faces who were very respectful towards the Bishop”,<sup>19</sup> The Bishop put before each one of them “his case: a large city of almost a million souls whose salvation weighed on his conscience. He had few priests. There were many enemies of God united in sects; when he preached he had been stoned... Did he the Bishop have the responsibility, would he be blamed?... They were frightened and stunned by the fearful picture... All freed me of every fault – the Bishop told me – and they took from me the great weight of the responsibility, promising to pray for me”.<sup>20</sup> These were the boys who were living at Valdocco under the loving direction of Don Bosco and Don Rua. However, Don Bosco saw that the role of ‘corrector’ could harm the figure of Don Rua, in whom only sweetness and amiable fatherliness ought to shine out, in order to soon become the ‘second Father’ of the Congregation. And this task was entrusted to others.

### **The ‘Rules’ approved by Rome become the path to holiness**

On 3 April 1874 Valdocco was celebrating: a telegram from Don Bosco sent from Rome announced that the Holy See had definitively approved the ‘Rules’ of the ‘Pious Society of Saint Francis of Sales’. The Salesians had officially come into existence in the

<sup>19</sup> G. WIRTH, *Un anno alla scuola di Don Bosco*, Scuola Tipografica Don Bosco, SAN BENIGNO CANAVESE 1930, pp. 29-30.

<sup>20</sup> G. VESPIGNANI, *o. c.*, p. 30.

Church and taken their place beside the great religious families centuries old: the Benedictines, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, the Jesuits,... That thin booklet of 47 pages, divided into 15 short chapters, was the guide which the Lord, through the Pope, gave to the Salesians as 'the path of holiness'. Among the 15 short chapters the three central ones stand out, those which deal with consecration to the Lord through the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity. In the letter with which he presented the Rule to his sons, Don Bosco wrote: "In observing our Rules we rest upon a firm, secure, and I may add, infallible basis, since the judgement of the supreme Head of the Church sanctioning them is infallible".

From that moment – the witnesses testify – Don Rua was most faithful in their observance. Each prescription was translated by him into practice with extraordinary exactitude. In fact he was rebaptised '*the living Rule*'. For him there was no distinction between rules more or less important. He declared: "Nothing can be called small, once it is contained in the Rule".

In Don Rua's process of beatification Fr Giulio Barberis testified: "When the Rules were approved by the Holy See, it was as though the Lord Himself had composed them, and it would have been considered gravely culpable to have transgressed just one of them... Neither I nor his companions, with whom he had to deal, can say that we ever saw him commit an act of disobedience... The promptness with which he obeyed, even the smallest rule, for example regarding silence, was always admirable... He had no other thought than to destroy in himself his own will in order to do in everything the will of the Lord".<sup>21</sup> "He constantly told us that the Lord did not expect extraordinary things from us, but perfection in the small things, he wanted every rule to be kept, giving the greatest importance to every rule, and that this was the means to raise up the great edifice of holiness".<sup>22</sup>

Fr John B. Francesia, his companion from the earliest days of the Oratory and close friend, testified: "He was most exemplary in the observance of the Rules of our Pious Society... Obedience to the

<sup>21</sup> *Positio*, pp. 912-913.

<sup>22</sup> *Positio*, p. 699.



Rule was for him superior to any other consideration. The love he had for the Rule drew out from his heart words of tenderness: 'God has given us a rule-book which is to guide us on the way to Paradise. Let us love this rule-book, consult it often, and when we finish reading it let us kiss it as a sign of love and gratitude to God'.<sup>23</sup>

### **"Don Rua studied me and I studied Don Rua"**

Fr Joseph Vespignani, who would become a great Salesian and missionary in South America, arrived at Valdocco in 1876. Newly ordained priest, 23 years of age, he had come from Faenza to stay with Don Bosco. In his simple "A Year at the School of Don Bosco" he has given us a lively picture of the activity of Don Rua, one of whose secretaries he was from the start. With a sensitivity which in general is not possessed by someone who lives the daily routine of every day, he captures the atmosphere and the setting of Valdocco, animated by the presence of two saints, Don Bosco and Don Rua.

"From that day", he writes – "I placed myself with my whole heart at the disposal of my dear Superior, Don Rua. Oh what beautiful lessons I learned at that school of piety, charity and Salesian activity! His was a cathedra of knowledge and holiness; but above all it was a training ground of Salesian formation. More and more every day did I admire in Don Rua punctuality, untiring constancy, religious perfection, self-denial joined to the gentlest kindness. How much charity, what kind ways he used to give a subject the charge he wished to give him! What delicate study, what penetration to know and test their views in order to educate them so as to make them useful to the Works of Don Bosco!...

The office of Don Rua was a place of piety and prayer. As soon as we were in he recited the Ave Maria devoutly and then read a thought from Saint Francis of Sales; we ended in the same way reading a line from our Saint and then the Ave Maria. In the morning he prepared a large number of letters with marginal notes. Often they were marked by Don Bosco himself, who left to Don

<sup>23</sup> *Positio*, p. 923.

Rua's judgement the carrying out of commissions, accepting boys without charge, expressing thanks for offerings, requests from aspirants. I replied according to the marginal notes, feeling happy to be able to interpret the thought and feelings of the Superiors and also to imitate their style, short, kind, to the point, which I saw was the Salesian way. Thus, Don Rua studied me so as to make me able to fulfil the duties of my vocation; but I too studied him, and in him Don Bosco, for he seemed the faithful copy and living image of Don Bosco in everything he did... Even the work itself was founded on sentiments of piety, because all those notes of Don Bosco and of Don Rua, that I had to use in my letters of reply, were an inspiration to faith and trust in the Lord and in Mary Most Holy: they were invitations to prayer, to resignation, to accept everything from God's hands, to rest in his Goodness; there were letters of consolation, of encouragement, of advice; with the promise of prayers, assurance of the boys' prayers and of Don Bosco's blessing. Often there was advice and suggestions about vocations, the conditions for being accepted as aspirants or Sons of Mary were indicated... This was a genuine apostolate of piety and charity, while assisting Head Office, in other words the Direzione Generale of Don Bosco's whole Operation.

Besides this, the Office was often visited by Priests, Rectors, and Cooperators of all sorts, as well as by the boys. If it was not a private matter the secretary too heard what the visitors had to say, and learned more about the comings and goings of the Oratory inside and out, and how in all things to seek only the glory of God and the good of souls... The room and office of Don Rua was for me a high observation post from where I watched the Salesian Society at work with all its characteristics; it was like the bridge of a great ship where the captain stands and studies the way ahead in order to avoid the rocks and come safely to harbour while giving orders for the government of all his people... With Don Rua I was coming to an idea of the grandeur and beauty of all that the Congregation and the whole Work of Don Bosco really was".<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> G. VESPIGNANI, *o. c.*, pp. 19-22 *passim*.

From up there Fr Vespignani was able to watch the courtyard packed with boys who with their assistant took part in a variety of games, or cheerful conversations. He continues: "It was explained to me that those priests and clerics in the class room and in the studies had a special system or method to lead their disciples to carry out their own duties. It was the same in the workshops. Don Rua took the formation of the clerics very much to heart, the classes of philosophy and theology were objects of his care. 'So this, I thought, is how all these Salesians, priests, clerics and brothers, *are working* with the same aim and, all in agreement, with the one intention of saving souls'".<sup>25</sup> He also learned just how the Salesians lived their lives together. When Don Rua sent him to the external Prefect Fr Bologna, to have his personal details recorded in the general register, hearing his age, 23, Fr Bologna looked at him and half-joking; "asked me: 'So what makes you so serious?' (in the seminaries in those days priests were taught to preserve a 'priestly *gravitas*'). These words made me reflect on the expression I would have to have on my face, in my words and in my manner to give me the appearance of a Salesian and a true son of Don Bosco. All around me everyone was smiling, including Don Bosco: they all looked at me and and treated me as a friend and brother; they seemed old friends and long-standing companions".<sup>26</sup>

"I had read in the Rules that from time to time it was a good thing for the Salesians to speak with the Superior and Father on spiritual matters". But Don Bosco was very busy and I asked Don Rua, who was the Rector, if I could speak with him. He had to go to Valsalice to hear the boys' confessions. He told me: "Take your hat and we'll go. On the way we can speak together". "So I made my first manifestation". Don Rua asked what had made a good impression on him, in the first days, and then what had made a bad impression. "What I found most to admire was not only seeing Don Bosco's holiness, but also to find Superiors every-

<sup>25</sup> G. VESPIGNANI, *o. c.*, pp. 37, 41.

<sup>26</sup> G. VESPIGNANI, *o. c.*, p. 12.

where so united with him. Indeed you can also say that they are like him in his bearing, in his way of acting and dealing with people so that in everyone and in everything you find the spirit of the Founder and the Father". "You are right, my friend; this unity of thought and of affections and of method comes from the family-style of teaching that Don Bosco has given to his own which has won over our hearts, impressing on them all his ideals. And anything you find displeasing?" "Everything has edified me. The altar servers, the band, and especially the Sodalities of Saint Aloysius, of Saint Joseph, of the Blessed. Sacrament... Their members have such a strong influence for good on their companions".<sup>27</sup>

### **Don Bosco's hand in that of Don Rua**

Between 1875 and 1885 was the decade in which Don Bosco lived most intensely, but also inexorably consumed his life. At his side, more and more his right hand man Don Rua worked intensely and silently, being given more and more responsibility: day after day in everyone's eyes he became "the second Don Bosco". In 1875 the first Salesian missionary expedition left for South America. In the following years Don Bosco founded the Salesian Cooperators and started the 'Salesian Bulletin'; the first Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for whom Don Rua was the General Director left for the missions; Fr John Cagliero became the first Salesian Bishop; and Don Rua was appointed by the Pope 'Vicar' of Don Bosco, ready to succeed him. And he, on the night between 30 and 31 January 1888, takes the hand of the dying Don Bosco and guides it in a last blessing for the Salesian Family. The hand which Don Bosco held out to the little boy saying: "Take it, little Michael, take it", now for the last time squeezes the hand of little Michael who had become his Vicar, and hands on to him everything, everything that he had achieved on earth for the Kingdom of God.

<sup>27</sup> G. VESPIGNANI, *o. c.*, pp. 23-24.

### 3. DON RUA: FIDELITY TO CONSECRATED LIFE “FOR A WHOLE LIFETIME”

In the letter sent on 30 December to all the Salesians giving them the latest news about Don Bosco's health, Don Rua wrote: “During a brief moment yesterday evening when he was able to talk with less difficulty, as we were all gathered around his bed, Bishop Cagliero, Fr Bonetti and I, he said among other things: *I recommend to the Salesians devotion to Mary Help of Christians and frequent Communion.* Whereupon I said: *This counsel might serve as a strenna for the New Year to be sent to all the houses. Let this be a strenna for a whole lifetime*, he rejoined”.<sup>28</sup> Don Bosco's every suggestion was for Don Rua a command. Those words which from then on were to guide his whole life, were impressed on Don Rua's heart: that was to be the way, Don Bosco was telling him, that the Congregation was to follow ‘for a whole lifetime’. As always Don Rua was utterly faithful to the charge: Jesus in the Eucharist, Mary Help of Christians, the three vows and total fidelity to Don Bosco. With his heroic example as well as his words, he would incessantly confirm that this was the Salesian path to holiness.

#### Fruitful fidelity to Don Bosco

More than one Cardinal in Rome, on the death of Don Bosco, on 31 January 1888, was persuaded that the Salesian Congregation would rapidly run out of steam; Don Rua was scarcely 50 years of age. It would be best to send a Papal Commission to Turin to prepare the way for the Salesians to be joined to another Congregation with a proven tradition. “In great haste” Fr Barberis testified under oath, “Bishop Cagliero called together the Chapter (in other words the Superior Council of the Congregation) with some of the older ones, and a letter to the Holy Father was drawn up in which all the Superiors, and the older confreres, declared that in total agreement they would accept Don Rua as Superior,

<sup>28</sup> *Memorie Biografiche* XVIII, pp. 502-503.

and not only would they submit to him, but would receive him with great joy. I was among those who signed... On 11 February the Holy Father confirmed and declared Don Rua in office for twelve years according to the Constitutions”.<sup>29</sup>

Pope Leo XIII had known Don Rua personally and knew that the Salesians under his direction would continue their mission. And so it was. The Salesians and the Salesian works multiplied like the bread and fish in the hands of Jesus. In his life time Don Bosco had founded 64 works; Don Rua took these to 341. At the death of Don Bosco, there were 700 Salesians; Don Rua, in 22 years as Superior General, took this to 4,000. The Salesian missions, with which Don Bosco had struggled and started, during his life-time reached Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego; Don Rua multiplied the missionary outreach, and Salesian missionaries arrived in the forests of Brazil, in Ecuador, Mexico, China, India, Egypt and Mozambique.

To ensure that, over such enormous distances, fidelity to Don Bosco might not diminish, Don Rua was not afraid to travel far and wide on the uncomfortable trains of the time, always in third class. His whole life was studded with journeys. Fr Barberis testifies: “On a number of his travels he took me as a companion. Don Rua went to his Salesians wherever they might be, spoke to them about Don Bosco, re-awakened in them his spirit, informed himself in fatherly fashion but carefully about the life of the confreres, about the Works, and left written instructions and words of advice so that fidelity to Don Bosco might flourish”. “Not only did he give his attention to the good of the Congregation abroad”, – Fr Barberis’ testimony continues, – “but his main concern was to ensure better consolidation of the Congregation at home. For this purpose, in 1893, he took me and two other Superiors as companions to Rivalta Torinese, so that together we might establish the various means so that the Congregation would make more and more progress, re-touching the regulations and adding to them others which were considered necessary”.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Positio*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>30</sup> *Positio*, p. 57.

## Jesus: food in the Eucharist and merciful love in his Heart

In the letter-testament that he wrote to all the Salesians before he died, Don Bosco declared: "Your first Rector is dead. But our true Superior, Jesus Christ, will never die. He will always be our Master, our guide, our model. But remember that he in his own time will also be our judge and the rewarder of our faithfulness in his service".<sup>31</sup>

This, from his infancy, was a conviction of Michael Rua. In the circular letter he sent on 21 November 1900 he repeated and developed these words, saying to all the Salesians: "What is more sublime in this world that to stir up in ourselves, to make known and stir up in others, the immense love of Jesus in the redemption; to stir up in ourselves, to make known and stir up in others the love of Jesus in his birth, in his life, in his teaching, in his example, in his sufferings... in instituting the Most Holy Eucharist, in bearing his most painful passion, in leaving us Mary as our Mother, in dying for us..., and, I would say, even more in wanting to remain with us until the end of time in the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar".<sup>32</sup>

Concerning his love for Jesus in the Eucharist, the witnesses at the process for beatification are very explicit. Fr John B. Francesia and Fr Barberis declare that arriving in a Salesian house his first request was: "Take me to greet the Master of the house". By this he meant the church where he spent a long time on his knees before the tabernacle. Fr Francesia adds that he often spent 'a large part of the night' to keep company – as he used to say – with the Solitary one in the Tabernacle. Again he testifies: "He wanted the Blessed Sacrament to be the centre of all our hearts. He used to repeat: 'Let us make a tabernacle of our hearts and keep always united to the Blessed Sacrament'".<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> FROM THE SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT OF SAINT JOHN BOSCO, cf. "Constitutions of the Society of St Francis of Sales", Edition 2003, p. 270 (DB, Memorie dal 1841 al 1884-5-6, ASC 132, quaderni-taccuini 6)

<sup>32</sup> *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani*, Direzione Generale delle Opere Salesiane, Torino 1965, pp. 276-277.

<sup>33</sup> *Positio*, p. 306.

The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, established in 1856, spread more and more around the Christian world devotion to this symbol of the merciful love of Jesus. Pope Leo XIII gave a particular impetus to this devotion, and especially in the days which marked the passage from the XIX<sup>th</sup> to the XX<sup>th</sup> century he exhorted all Christians to consecrate themselves to the Heart of Jesus, composing a lengthy formula of consecration himself. Don Rua wanted the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Cooperators and all the young people in the Salesian houses to make this consecration on the night between 31 December 1899 and 1 January 1900. In the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians he himself, together with the Major Superiors, the Salesians and the young people spent the night in prayer, and around mid-night his voice, joined by all those present, slowly and solemnly pronounced the Act of Consecration.

### **“Everything we have we owe it Mary the most holy Help of Christians”**

Michael Rua became the first Salesian on the day of the Annunciation of the Angel to Mary. He himself recalls this in his statement to the Process of beatification of Don Bosco: “In 1855, the day of the Annunciation of Mary Most Holy, I was the first, while I was doing the second year of philosophy, to make the vows for a year”. Living at Don Bosco’s side for 36 years he absorbed his spirit, an essential element of which was devotion to Mary Help of Christians. The witness Lorenzo Saluzzo affirms: “I remember particularly hearing from the Servant of God these words: ‘You cannot be a good Salesians if you are not devoted to Mary Help of Christians’”.<sup>34</sup>

Don Bosco built the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians, Don Rua restored, embellished and decorated it. The solemn ‘crowning’ of the picture of Mary Help of Christians which took place in the Valdocco Sanctuary in 1903, was obtained by him from the Pope and performed by Cardinal Richelmy, Papal Legate. On 17 Febru-

<sup>34</sup> *Positio*, p. 339.



ary he announced the great event to the Salesians saying: "Let us strive to make ourselves less unworthy of our heavenly Mother and Queen, and let us preach with ever greater zeal her glories and maternal tenderness. In a prodigious manner she inspired and guided our Don Bosco in all his great undertakings; She continued and still continues today such maternal assistance in all our works, so that with Don Bosco we can repeat, all that we have we owe it to Mary the Most Holy Help of Christians".<sup>35</sup> The day of the crowning, 17 May, was a most solemn one with a veritable sea of people. Fr Melchiorre Marocco testifies: "Fr Ubaldi and I were assistants to the throne of the Papal Legate and therefore we were able to observe the truly ecstatic expression of Don Rua, who when he saw His Eminence place the holy crowns on the heads of the Child and of the Madonna burst into copious tears, which surprised us not a little since we knew the absolute self-control he had".<sup>36</sup>

On 19 June, giving an account of the events to all the Salesians in the world, Don Rua wrote: "I am very pleased to think that the coronation of the miracle-working image of Mary Help of Christians will produce among the Salesians spread around the world the most fertile fruits. She will increase our love, our devotion, and our gratitude to our heavenly Patroness, to whom we owe all the good that we have been able to do... In these memorable solemnities of ours the name of Mary Help of Christians was always linked with that of Don Bosco, who, with extraordinary sacrifices, raised up this Sanctuary, with his words and with his pen he became the apostle of devotion to her, and he placed all his trust in her most powerful intercession. How beautiful it was to see so many pilgrims, after having satisfied their devotion in church, all lining up to visit, with profound veneration, the rooms of Don Bosco! I have no doubt at all that with an increase among Salesians of devotion to Mary Help of Christians, there will also be an increase in esteem and affection for Don Bosco, as well as in a commitment to preserve his spirit and imitate his virtues".<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> A. AMADEI, *o. c.*, vol III, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> *Positio*, p. 426.

<sup>37</sup> A. AMADEI, *o. c.*, III, p. 43.

We Salesians owe to Don Rua the daily recital of the prayer of consecration to Mary Help of Christians after meditation, and also the procession of the statue of Mary Help of Christians through the streets of Turin which he first arranged in 1901, and which quickly became a beautiful and venerable tradition for the city and for the whole of Piedmont.

In the notes for his sermons to the people one reads: "In all our needs we find in the Most Holy Mary our advocate; never has anyone had recourse to her in vain. We are therefore fortunate to be sons of such a Mother... Let us honour her, let us love her and get her to be loved by others, working to make her known as the support of Christians, let us turn to her as our secure defence in illness, in mixed fortunes, in families in which there is discord, to prevent certain grave scandals, in towns and in cities. But if we want to honour her in the most acceptable way, let us make sure that we take extra-special care of youth... Then in particular let us take care of poor youth".<sup>38</sup>

The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, called by the people, the "Sisters of Don Bosco", were founded by the Saint in 1872, and were called by him "the living monument of his gratitude to the Holy Virgin".<sup>39</sup> They expanded very quickly and did incalculable good for poor and marginalised young people. Don Rua, extremely devoted to Mary Help of Christians, associated himself very closely with her 'Daughters'. On the death of Don Bosco, the Superior General Mother Daghero wrote to Don Rua entrusting the Institute of the FMA to him with total confidence. He who had seen them begin and had followed their gradual development, took care of them as a sacred inheritance left him by Don Bosco, and with great commitment he generously offered them the treasures of his mind and heart.

His presence is to be found on every page of the history of the FMA for over twenty years. It is a period of considerable expansion and activity. Houses are opened in many countries in Europe, in

<sup>38</sup> A. AMADEI, *o. c.*, III, pp. 746, 748.

<sup>39</sup> ISTITUTO FIGLIE DI MARIA AUSILIATRICE, *Cronistoria I*, Roma 1974, p. 298.

Palestine, in Africa and in several Republics in America. New works, according the needs of the times, appear, especially for the assistance of young working girls; new front-line mission fields are opened; the schools are given a new look.

In his many travels Don Rua also included the houses of the FMA in his visits: everywhere he left his words – those of a saint; he enlightened, supported, guided. Everywhere he showed his interest in everything, never tired, never in a hurry. He made suggestions and gave advice always and only aimed at doing good. His letters in a clear small hand, written perhaps on scraps of paper, had the quality of simplicity and the fragrance of the interior life.

## Obedience

The consecration to God of all religious is expressed in the offering of themselves to Him through the evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty and chastity. The first of these counsels, according to Salesian tradition, is obedience.

At the end of 1909 Don Rua was 72 and his health was seriously undermined. On 1 January of that year he wrote his penultimate letter to all the Salesians. In it he said: “The Constitutions coming from the paternal heart of Don Bosco, approved by the Church, infallible in its teachings, will be your guide, your defence in every danger, in every doubt and difficulty. With Saint Francis of Assisi I say to you: Blessed is the religious who observes his Holy Rules. They are the book of life, the hope of salvation, the kernel of the Gospel, the life of perfection, the key of heaven, the expression of our covenant with God”.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout his whole life Don Rua had shown an absolute obedience, so ‘absolute’ that Don Bosco sometimes joked about it. In his statement for the process of beatification, the Rector Major Fr Philip Rinaldi testified: “Don Bosco used to say: ‘You don’t give orders to Don Rua, not even as a joke’, such was his promptitude in carrying out whatever was said by the Superior... For Don Rua

<sup>40</sup> *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani*, o. c., p. 499.

obedience was very easy, because he was profoundly humble. Humble in his attitude, humble in his words, humble with the great and with the lowly".<sup>41</sup> Yet even the humble obedience of Don Rua was sorely tried on two occasions. He received two orders from the Holy See which would deeply wound his sensitive nature.

*Until 1901 "Salesian superiors and rectors, faithful to Don Bosco's example, saw the great advantage of themselves hearing the confessions of both the religious and the pupils in their houses. Don Rua use to hear confessions at the Oratory and elsewhere, so convinced was he that this tradition was one of the keys of the Salesian method. On this account he was painfully surprised when a decree of 5 July 1899 forbade the Rectors of the houses in Rome to hear the confessions of the pupils. According to the Holy Office, this norm was to safeguard the freedom of the penitents and to avoid any potential suspicion about the superior's government. Fearing, with just cause, that more extreme measures were on the way, Don Rua tried to play for time. But a second decree of 24 April 1901, explicitly forbade all Salesian superiors to hear the confessions of any person dependent on them. Then, finding himself torn between two loyalties, he tried to manoeuvre, which led to him being summoned to Rome, where he had to submit to a personal dressing down from the Holy Office; he was then told to leave Rome immediately. He obeyed without hesitation, but with a very sorrowful heart"*.<sup>42</sup>

Fr Barberis, who spent those sorrowful and tense days at Don Rua's side, testified: "I am perhaps the only one who knows about these things in all their detail... Don Bosco introduced the practice in our Houses that the Rector was also the Confessor: he did not make this obligatory; it is not mentioned in any article of the Constitutions, nor of the Regulations, it became the custom and no one found any difficulty with it... Being a matter of a custom introduced by Don Bosco, a custom that was undisturbed for about 70 years, and it being mentioned in the Decree that 'The Superiors are to make provision within the year...', Don Rua believed himself au-

<sup>41</sup> *Positio*, pp. 979, 981.

<sup>42</sup> M. WIRTH, *o. c.*, p. 272.

thorised to delay somewhat... to have time to seek advice... from very important people, among whom I recall Cardinal Svampa, Archbishop of Bologna... But as soon as he became aware of the import of the Decree to its full extent, he immediately set himself to communicate it to the whole Congregation, on 6 July 1901".<sup>43</sup>

*In 1906 another decision of the Holy See* subjected his obedience to a new severe trial, seeing that once again the heritage received from Don Bosco was under attack. From its foundation, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians was aggregated to the Salesians. The union of the two Congregations was ensured by a common direction. "The Institute of the FMA", – their Rule used to say – "is subject to the high and immediate authority of the Superior General of the Society of St. Francis of Sales... In practice, this superior used to delegate his powers to a Salesian priest, who had the title of the Director General of the Institute of the FMA. At local level he was represented by the Provincials. The internal government of the Institute, on the other hand, was in the hands of the Superior General and her Chapter. Don Bosco observed this practice".<sup>44</sup>

To organise the religious families which in the previous decades had proliferated, the Holy See issued a Decree which ordained that a female Congregation of simple vows should in no way depend upon a male Congregation of the same nature. The fifth General Chapter of the FMA, which met in 1905, expressed some fear and anxiety in the face of this decision. While declaring their obedience to what the Church disposed, by a unanimous vote they said that it was their desire to depend upon the Successor of Don Bosco: under his direction the Institute had had its rapid and unexpected development, to the Salesians they had had recourse whenever any difficulty had arisen with the civil and religious authorities, in this they felt their safety rested for the future, in the spirit of the common Founder. But Rome replied obliging them to obey. When the General Chapter was informed about it, writes

<sup>43</sup> *Positio*, pp. 292-294.

<sup>44</sup> M. WIRTH, *o. c.*, p. 399.

Fr Ceria, it was like a bolt from the blue. Pope Pius X, receiving the Mother General and the Councillors, with great and almost heart-felt understanding said: "Don't worry: it is only a matter of a material separation and nothing else".

In 1906 the Holy See sent to Don Rua the modified text of the FMA Constitutions. In 1907 the text was given to the Extraordinary Chapter of the FMA. "The fundamental provision was concerned with the total independence of the two Congregations, with regard to both government and administration and financial accounting. The Salesians were to be involved with the FMA – limited to religious matters – solely if this were requested by the Bishops".<sup>45</sup>

Blessed Fr Philip Rinaldi, Rector Major of the Salesians, declared under oath regarding Don Rua: "I remember his submission without reserve to the Decree for the separation of the Sisters of Mary Help of Christians from the Salesian Institute. After this Decree he maintained such detachment that he did not dare to intervene in their affairs unless invited to do so by the Superiors, or unless consulted in more important matters. This reserve he maintained until Pius X told him that the Sisters still needed and always would the direction of the Salesians, particularly in the management of material affairs, and in scholastic matters, in order to preserve the spirit of Don Bosco. Then he took heart again and returned to being not only Father but also director".<sup>46</sup>

## Poverty

Fr Francesia tells how one day the cleric Rua, having found a strip of red carpet decided to put it under his desk. Don Bosco saw it and said with a smile: "Ah Don Rua! So you like elegance, eh?" Rua, confused, said it was only a remnant, but Don Bosco observed: "Luxury and elegance easily make their appearance, if we are not careful". Don Rua never forgot those words, and treasured them all his life.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> M. WIRTH, *o. c.*, p. 400.

<sup>46</sup> *Positio*, p. 979.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Positio*, p. 924.

Poverty was Don Rua's uniform. He dressed in a very poor manner, he never sought to be well-off, he economised in even the smallest things. And he took care to see that all Salesians loved and practised poverty in a spirit of faith, as Don Bosco wanted. His cassock was full of patches. A pair of shoes lasted him for years; yet he did a lot of walking so as not to take the tram and gave in alms the ten centesimi for the ticket. In the house, until he died, he used an old overcoat formerly worn by Don Bosco, and he wore it with devotion.

A Daughter of Mary Help of Christians who for many years used to repair the clothes of the Salesians at the Oratory said that only rarely was she given anything of Don Rua's; and when they gave her his cassock she was told to repair it urgently because Don Rua was working in his room wearing his overcoat since he had never wanted a second cassock.

During his journey to Constantinople in 1908, after making many visits in the city, he returned with his legs swollen and his feet wet through. He asked the Rector of the Salesians for a pair of woollen stockings to change into. In the whole house they could not find a pair of woollen stockings. Don Rua smiled and said: "I'm happy! This is true Salesian poverty".<sup>48</sup>

During the 23 years he was Rector Major, Don Rua sent the Salesians 56 circular letters. In them he summed up all his love for Don Bosco and all the Salesian spirit. Among these letters, his "masterpiece" is considered the circular letter entitled "Poverty". It contains twenty pages and has the heading: "Turin, 31 January 1907, the anniversary of the death of Don Bosco". I quote some passages from his very relevant letter,<sup>49</sup> to revive in us the true spirit of Salesian poverty.

*"It is natural to consider poverty a calamity"*

Poverty in itself is not a virtue; it is one of the consequences of original sin, intended by God for the expiation of our sins and the

<sup>48</sup> Cf. A. AMADEI, *o. c.*, III, pp. 104-121.

<sup>49</sup> All the passages below regarding poverty are taken from the *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani*, *o. c.*, pp. 430-445.

sanctification of our souls. It is natural therefore that man has a horror of it, considers it a disaster, and does everything he can to avoid it.. Poverty becomes a virtue only when it is voluntarily embraced for the love of God, as those who enter religious life do. Nonetheless, even then poverty does not cease to be bitter; for religious too the practice of poverty imposes great sacrifices as we ourselves have experienced thousands of times.

One should not be surprised therefore if poverty is always the most delicate factor of religious life, if it is used as a touch-stone to distinguish a flourishing community from a slack one, a zealous religious from a negligent one. Unfortunately it will be the stumbling block against which so many generous good resolutions, so many vocations which at the beginning and as they developed were so wonderful will come to grief. Hence the need on the part of Superiors to speak often about it and on the part of all the members of the Salesian Family to keep their love for it alive and put it into practice.

*“The first evangelical counsel”*

Poverty is the first of the evangelical counsels. From the beginning of his public life Jesus Christ makes the most terrible threats against the rich who find their consolations on this earth. On the other hand the sufferings of the poor move his most sweet Heart to pity, he consoles them, and he calls them blessed, assuring them that their's is the kingdom of heaven. To someone who asks what he ought to do to be perfect, he replies: “Go, sell what you have and follow me”. To his Apostles who offer themselves to follow him he makes the first condition that they leave their nets, the tax office and their possessions. And this voluntary stripping of all the goods of this earth is practised by all the disciples of Jesus Christ, all the saints who down the centuries have distinguished the Church.

*“Don Bosco’s poverty”*

Our revered Father lived a poor man until the end of his life. Having had in his hands huge amounts of money, one never saw in him the least concern about providing himself with any temporary



satisfaction. He used to say: "You have to have poverty in the heart in order to practise it". And God rewarded him abundantly for his trust and for his poverty, so that he succeeded in undertaking works which even the princes of this world would not have dared. Speaking of the vow of poverty, Don Bosco wrote: "Let us remember that on the observance of this depends to a large extent the well-being of our Pious Society and the welfare of our soul".

*"Not only are the poor evangelised, it is the poor who evangelise"*

Church history teaches us that there were those who the more they were detached from the world the more they were noted by their faith, hope and charity, whose life was a tissue of good works and a series of wonders for the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbour.

We would be working in vain if the world did not see and was not convinced that we were not seeking riches and comfort. We should keep firmly fixed in mind what Saint Francis of Sales wrote: Not only are the poor evangelised, it is the poor who evangelise.

Among us too, it is certainly not Salesians who are looking for a comfortable life who undertake really fruitful work, who go into the jungle of Mato Grosso or to Tierra del Fuego, or put themselves at the service of lepers. This will always be the boast of those who generously practise poverty.

*"The works of Don Bosco are the fruit of charity"*

Then it should also be borne in mind that the works of Don Bosco are the fruit of charity. It should be known that many of our benefactors, themselves poor or at least of modest means, make very great sacrifices in order to be able to help us. How heartless it would be to use that money to provide ourselves with comforts not suited to our state! Wasting the fruits of so many sacrifices, even just using them without due consideration is a real act of ingratitude towards God and towards our benefactors.

Allow me to let you into a secret. Many perhaps seeing our works growing more and more think that the Pious Society has many means available and that therefore my repeated and insistent exhortations to make savings, to observe poverty are inop-

fortune. How far from the truth! It would be possible to show these people just how many boys are entirely or in large part dependent for their food, clothing, books etc on the Congregation. Whoever gives a little thought to our expansion, can appreciate the houses and the churches that are being built, the damages suffered which need to be repaired, the missionaries' journeys which have to be paid for, the help that is being sent to the Missions, the huge expenses that are incurred in the formation of personnel.

Whoever does not live according to the vow of poverty, who in food, clothing, accommodation, travels, in the comforts of life goes beyond what our state of life permits ought to feel remorse for having deprived the Congregation of the money that was destined to provide bread for the orphans, foster vocations, spread the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. He should remember that he will have to give an account of it at the judgement seat of God.

*"The heroic times of the Congregation"*

The good Salesian will come to possess the spirit of poverty, that is, he will truly be poor in thought and desire, he will be seen to be such in his words, he will really behave as a poor man. He will willingly accept those privations and those inconveniences which are inevitable in community life, and will generously chose for himself the things less beautiful and less comfortable.

I conclude recalling the memory of those which we call the 'heroic times' of our Pious Society. Many years passed in which an extraordinary exercise of virtue was needed to remain faithful to Don Bosco and to resist the pressing invitations which were made to abandon him on account of the extreme poverty in which we were living. But we were sustained by the intense love we had for Don Bosco; his exhortations to remain faithful to our vocation in spite of the hard privations and the great sacrifices gave us strength and courage. So I am certain that the more lively our love for Don Bosco is the more ardent the desire to continue to be his worthy sons and to correspond with the grace of the religious vocation, so as to practise in all its purity the spirit of poverty.

## Chastity

John B. Francesia, a small working lad entered Don Bosco's Oratory at 12 years of age. There he met the student Michael Rua, who was 13. It was 1850. From then on they were companions and inseparable friends for sixty years until 6 April 1910. In the morning of that day John B. Francesia was sitting next to Michael Rua who was dying and suggested to him the first invocation which together as boys they had learned from Don Bosco: "Dear Mother, Virgin Mary, help me to save my soul". And Michael answered: "Yes, saving your soul is everything!"

When in 1922, at 82 years of age Fr John B. Francesia was called upon to say under oath what he thought about the holiness of Don Rua, at the word 'chastity' he was overcome and quietly gave a testimony which reading even today is very moving and enchanting: "The splendour of the angelic virtue appeared transparent from the whole being of Don Michael Rua. It was sufficient to look at him to understand the candour of his soul, It seemed that more than on the things of this world he had his eyes constantly fixed on those of heaven. Don Rua was the real image of Saint Aloysius, and I can attest that in all the time that I was close to him I never found in him a word, a gesture, a look that was not marked by this virtue. His way of acting and the way he behaved at all times and in all places always reflected the most exquisite delicacy and modesty. On this account he was always edifying whether in public or in private, in the playground or on the street, in church or in his room. In his long private interviews with whomsoever he might be speaking, he maintained such a reserved manner but at the same time one so paternal that he edified and won over all hearts... He was so full of delicacy and respect for the angelic virtue that in fostering it his words had an especial efficacy. The advice he used to give to the Salesians about how to behave among the boys is affectionate and full of wisdom: 'Love the boys entrusted to your care but do not let your heart be attached to them'... Other times he used to say... that we have to take care of all souls but not to let our hearts be stolen by anyone... When he

was preaching, the most gentle words flowed from his heart, and the beautiful and attractive images won the boys over to the beautiful angelic virtue so that he seemed a real Angel of the Lord... This virtue, for the testimony I can give from my own knowledge, he cultivated in a perfect manner from childhood until death".<sup>50</sup>

*The days of agony*

And yet it was precisely in the area of morality, which he rightly considered the most precious value for an educational institute, such as the Salesian Congregation, that Don Rua had to face the most ignominious attack, which literally turned his life upside down. Those dark times are remembered as the 'Varazze incident'. The Rector of the Salesian school in that city was Fr Carlo Viglietti, Don Bosco's last private secretary. On the morning of 29 July 1907 the police stormed into the house. The Salesians were arrested, the boys – only a few because the others had already left for the holidays – taken off to the police-station. Fr Viglietti had to listen to a slanderous accusation: a boy, Carlo Marlario, 15 years of age, an orphan adopted by the widow Mrs Besson, with a free place in the school, had written a 'diary' which was now in the hands of the police. In it the Salesian house is described as a disgusting centre of paedophilia. The vigorous denials of Fr Viglietti and the Salesians were of no avail, nor even the unanimous denials of the pupils subjected to insistent questioning.

The news was leaked. All the anticlerical press began an incessant campaign of defamation against the Salesians and priests' schools. Large groups of hooligans committed acts of violence in Savona, La Spezia and Sampierdarena. There were other attacks on priests and Catholic centres in Livorno and Mantova. It was hunt the priest time. There were calls for the closure of all the schools run by religious in Italy.

"During that terrible trial, some witnesses have reported that Don Rua was in deep depression, unrecognisable".<sup>51</sup> In those months he had been afflicted by a serious form of infection, he was

<sup>50</sup> *Positio*, pp. 928-930

<sup>51</sup> M. WIRTH, o. c., p. 273.

greatly weakened, and he was seen to weep like a child. But the whole set-up collapsed. Lawyers among the most famous in Italy offered their services free of charge to the Salesians. Members of Parliament, past pupils of the Salesians, came to the defence of the Salesian schools in Parliament. On 3 August, just five days after the beginning of the defamation, Don Rua, helped by the Superiors to overcome his dejection, went to court with an action for libel and calumny, with the assistance of three distinguished lawyers. When the case was completed, the Court of Appeal in Genoa declared that the diary was a tissue of fantastic fabrications, written as a result of "incessant instigation by outsiders wanting to create an anticlerical scandal".<sup>52</sup>

On 31 January 1908, when the storm had calmed down, Don Rua sent to all the Salesians a circular letter, the title of which said everything: "Vigilance". In it he gave a brief resumé of the events, invited them to thank God and Mary Help of Christians and asked everyone to reflect on two extracts from the words of Don Bosco, which he spoke on 20 September 1874, and on an article of the Constitutions: "The Public sometimes deplores immorality which has occurred resulting in the ruin of morals and terrible scandals. It is a great evil and a disaster; and I pray the Lord to ensure that all our houses are closed rather than that similar misfortunes should occur in them".<sup>53</sup> And again: "It can be established as an invariable principle that the morality of the pupils depends on those who teach them, assist them and direct them. One who does not have cannot give, as a proverb says. An empty sack cannot produce grain nor a bottle full of dregs good wine. Therefore before setting ourselves up as teachers of others, it is essential that we possess what we want to teach others".<sup>54</sup> Then he commented on article 28 of the Constitutions saying: "In spite of his (Don Bosco's) great desire to have many collaborators in his work yet he did not want anyone who does not have a well-grounded hope of being able, with divine help to preserve the virtue of

<sup>52</sup> A. AMADEI, *o. c.*, III, p. 348.

<sup>53</sup> *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani*, *o. c.*, pp. 464-465.

<sup>54</sup> *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani*, *o. c.*, p. 465-466.

chastity in word, in deed and in thought to make profession in this Society”.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. DON RUA: “THE EVANGELISER OF YOUTH”

In his homily at the beatification, Pope Paul VI – as I have already partly noted – at one point said: «Let us mediate for a moment on the characteristic aspect of Don Rua, the aspect which defines him... Son, disciple, imitator (of Don Bosco), he made the example of the Saint a school, and his personal work an institution, extended, it may be said, all over the earth;... he made the spring a stream, a river... The marvellous fruitfulness of the Salesian Family had in Don Bosco its origin, in Don Rua its continuation. It was this follower of his that served the Salesian work in its expansion, developed it according to the letter but with ever-inspired newness... What does Don Rua teach us? To be continuers... Imitation in the disciple is not passiveness or servility... Education (is) an art that guides the logical, but free and original expansion of the pupil's potential qualities... Don Rua is really qualified as the first continuer of the example and the work of Don Bosco... We are aware that we have before us an athlete of apostolic activity, which (operates) still in the mould of Don Bosco, but with growing dimensions of its own... We give glory to God who wished... to offer for his apostolic labours new fields of pastoral work, which the impetuous and disordered social development opened to Christian civilisation». <sup>56</sup>

#### New fields of pastoral work

Just reading rapidly the impressive number of Don Rua's letters, his circulars, the volumes which summarise his 22 years of work as the Successor of Don Bosco, one discovers most emphati-

<sup>55</sup> *Lettere circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani*, o. c., p. 467.

<sup>56</sup> PAUL VI, *Homily for the beatification of Don Rua*, Rome, 29 October 1974.

cally that what the Pope says is true: his fidelity to Don Bosco is not something static, but dynamic. He really is conscious of the changed times, of the needs of the young, and without fear directs Salesian work into new fields of pastoral ministry.

### **Among workers and the children of workers**

In the last decades of the 1800s and the first of the 1900s the struggles of the workers in the factories multiplied everywhere. The conditions of the workers are wretched: deadly hours of work, the worst possible unhygienic conditions, non-existent insurance and pensions. Urged on by Don Rua the Salesians and the FMA begin a variety of social works: orphanages, schools of arts and trades, agricultural schools, parishes on the outskirts, with oratories for the children of the workers families': oratories where they can play on the green grass and pray in chapels, three hundred, five hundred, a thousand youngsters. Don Rua was very happy with it and exhorted the Provincials to give special attention to these 'fundamental works of Don Bosco'.

In the final years of the century, Turin becomes the sorry cradle of the Italian proletariat. In May 1891 Leo XIII publishes his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. In it the Pope condemns the situation in which "a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery" (RN 3). Immediately the Encyclical makes a strong impact on the Christian world, and Don Rua feels that the time has come for Salesians to expand and intensify their social activity.

In 1892 at Turin Valsalice the 6th General Chapter of the Congregation is held. Among the questions to be considered Don Rua proposes the practical application of the teaching of the Pope regarding the question of workers. The Salesians accept the task of introducing into the school programmes of the young students teaching about capital and labour, the right to property and the right to strike, wages, rest, savings. It is suggested that Past Pupils be encouraged to join the *Catholic Workers Society*.

## **Among miners in Switzerland**

In 1898 work began on the Simplon tunnel between Switzerland and Italy: one of the longest tunnels in the world, two parallel galleries 19,800 metres long. On the Swiss side a camp was set up for over two thousand Italian workers: Piedmontese, Lombards, Venetians and above all Abruzzesi and Sicilians, with their wives and children. Don Rua did not hesitate to send among these workers Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. They stayed there seven years, that is until the work was finished. Information about how they attended to the needs of those poor families is scarce: they got on with the job and no one had time to keep a record. One day a Socialist member of Parliament, Gustavo Chiesi, went to observe the situation. He saw what the Salesians and the Sisters were doing, the Workers Centre they had started which was the favourite place for the Italians to meet together. He sent a letter which was published in the *Tempo* newspaper of Milan. There one reads: "We have said a great deal about the conditions of our workers at Simplon, we have written and complained a lot. But nothing practical has been done for them until now. What little has been done so far has been done by the priests... On every occasion they are the first to do something, to help, to relieve the sufferings of others. It is like that at Simplon, it is like that everywhere".

## **Emigrant among the emigrants**

Other even more numerous waves of emigrants left Italy to escape the poverty of the south. For North and South America, in the decade 1880-1890, according to the statistics of the economist Clough, each year on average 165,000 people emigrated. To Argentina alone 40,000 Italians emigrated each year. In the next decade the number of emigrants increased: it reached and surpassed half a million each year. Referring to the extreme poverty in the south, the Hon Giuseppe Toscano in 1878 told the Chamber of Deputies: "Driven to desperation, what do you want the proletariat to do? There are only two paths open to them: the path of



crime and brigandage or that of emigration". Twelve years later the situation had not changed and the Hon Vittorio E. Orlando, from Palermo, cried out in Parliament that for his fellow countrymen their dilemma could be summed up in two words: "Either emigrants, or brigands!"

Don Rua, while he was covering Italy with a net-work of works for the children of working -class families sent Salesian missionaries to North America in 1897 and 1898. In New York, Paterson, Los Angeles, Troy our confreres set to work to welcome the emigrants who did not know the language, did not know where to find lodgings nor where to find work. Side by side with the heroic Sisters of Mother Cabrini and many other men and women missionaries, they tried to help them find accommodation, to join the unions. They took their children into their schools and provided religious assistance. At the same time the presence of the Salesians in South America was consolidated and multiplied, and prospered under the guidance of Bishop Cagliero and the new Salesian Bishop Luigi Lasagna.

The Salesians made an appearance in new continents. Social works, orphanages, schools of arts and trades, parishes and oratories on the outskirts, were opened in far off lands: Cape Town, Tunisia, Smyrna, Constantinople. New works were opened in clusters in northern and western Europe. One of the beneficial consequences was that the Salesian missions could soon count on confreres of different nationalities. Polish emigrants in Buenos Aires could find a Polish Salesian in charge of a secretariat set up for them; in London the Polish community had a church available to them at which a Polish Salesian officiated; German emigrants in the central Pampas or in Chile could find German Salesians there. In Oakland, California, a whole district of Portuguese had the assistance of a Portuguese Salesian.

### **Risking everything that can be put at risk like Don Bosco**

Apostolic boldness led Don Rua to give his support to the most difficult enterprises. With the same courage as Don Bosco he was

ready to risk everything that could be put at risk to bring the Kingdom of God and the love of Mary Help of Christians everywhere.

In Palestine he had no hesitation in accepting among the Salesians the well-established religious Family of Fr Antonio Belloni, which was dedicated to the poorest children. In Poland he did not go against the difficult and questionable personality of Fr Bronislaw Markiewicz, who seemed to want to rebel against the authority of the Superiors, but who today is venerated as a Blessed and the founder of a Congregation which forms part of the Salesian Family. In Colombia he supported the new apostolate, which some people were uncomfortable with, among the lepers in Agua de Dios, started by Fr Unia and continued by Fr Rabagliati and Fr Variara. He supported Fr Balzola and Fr Malan who were trying to penetrate among the *Bororo* Indians of Mato Grosso in Brazil. He encouraged the extremely difficult attempts to establish a mission among the *Shuar* Indians in Ecuador. He sent seven Salesians to open an oratory and schools in Oran, in Algeria, where many children were wandering the streets.

In 1906 he blessed the first Salesians who were leaving to found missions in India and in China, these latter led by the young Fr Versiglia, whom we venerate today as a martyr and a saint. It was a very tentative start, almost reckless, but now the work of Don Bosco in India, in China and in the whole of Asia arouses wonder in everyone.

On the eve of his 'Golden Jubilee of ordination', announced in the *Bollettino Salesiano* and anticipated by all the Salesians, a serious infection which had troubled him for years and had led to his being covered with painful sores, cut short his life. God came to meet him on the morning of 6 April 1910.

**“That simplicity with which he tried to accompany what he did”**

Anyone who examines just the last 20 years of the life of this slight priest, has the overwhelming impression of tireless and gigantic-scale activity. Truly, as Paul VI declared in his homily at

the beatification, “we will never be able to forget the operative aspect of this small but great man, all the more so in that we, in the mentality of our times which is inclined to measure the stature of a man by his capacity for action, are aware that we have before us an athlete of apostolic activity”.

And yet, Don Rua undertook all this human and spiritual activity in silence and in humility. So much so that his dear friend Fr Francesia, settling down to write his biography using, as was then the custom among authors, the “royal we” wrote: “We who were accustomed to living with him, who almost always heard him speak, who were used to dealing with him as one does with a close intimate confidant, found it all so natural and unremarkable. ‘This, he used to say, is what I would do! This is what Don Bosco would have done. What is extraordinary about that? Nothing, it seems to me!’ And yet, thinking about it, one would have to say that that simplicity, with which he tried to do everything, that constant expression: ‘everything for the Lord, and nothing else but for the Lord’, already caused us to marvel, just as it will always be the finest commendation of the hard-working and humble life of Don Michael Rua”.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

As a conclusion, I should like to take up again what I wrote in the letter of 24 June 2009, entitled “Remembering Don Rua”. I said there that we want to spend the year 2010 especially as a *spiritual and pastoral journey*. So as to make this year dedicated to the first Successor of Don Bosco a fruitful one, in the letter I indicated “some focal points, to be borne in mind for your spiritual and pastoral planning for the coming year, at personal, community and Province level”.

The first is that of re-enforcing our sense of being the faithful disciples of Jesus, the model for Don Bosco, re-discovering the

<sup>57</sup> G.B. FRANCESIA, *Don Michele Rua*, Torino 1911, p. 6.

ways in which to preserve **fidelity to the vocation of consecration**, with a practical invitation to draw deeply from the wells of the life of the disciple and of the apostle, from the daily fountains of fidelity to our vocation: Sacred Scripture, through “lectio divina”, and the Eucharist in its celebration, in adoration and in frequent visits.

The second point to bear in mind is that of adopting the attitude of Don Rua who, sent to Mirabello, summed up all the advice received from Don Bosco in a single expression: “In Mirabello I shall try to be Don Bosco”. And the whole of Don Bosco can be found in our **Constitutions**. Becoming Don Bosco, day after day, is precisely what the Constitutions set before us in practical terms. Moved by the special witness given by the first successor of Don Bosco, I invite you this year, especially on the occasion of the Retreat, to re-discover the importance and the spirit of our Salesian Constitutions and to look again at your personal Plan of Life, with particular reference to Chapter four: that which deals with our mission and is entitled “sent to the young”.

In the third place, recalling how Don Rua, moved by the passion of the *Da mihi animas*, gave a great impetus to the Salesian mission, I invited you to imitate him in his dedication to responding to the needs of the young and to find pastoral ways suited to reaching them with the proclamation of the gospel. Don Rua’s apostolic zeal, therefore, demands that we too during this year express in practical terms the commitment to **evangelising the young**. The second key issue in the GC26 requires it from us; the 2010 Strenna sets it before us as it invites us to let ourselves be caught up in the commitment to evangelisation as the Salesian Family of which Don Rua was a convinced promoter.

In this Year of the Priest let us all turn to Don Rua also as the model of the Salesian priest. Let us rediscover and examine more thoroughly his identity, composed of spiritual fervour and pastoral zeal, in the exercise of the ministry, characterised by experience of apostolic consecrated life.

May the Spirit of Christ animate us in our journey of pastoral renewal, and may Mary Help of Christians support us in our apostolic commitment. As always, may Don Bosco be our model and guide.

Cordially in the Lord,

*Pascual Chávez V.*  
Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva  
*Rector Major*

### **Prayer to intercede for the canonisation of Blessed Michael Rua**

Almighty and merciful God,  
you placed in the footsteps of Saint John Bosco  
Blessed Michael Rua, who imitated his example,  
inherited his spirit and spread his works;  
now that with his beatification you have raised him  
to the glory of the altars,  
be pleased to multiply his patronage to those who invoke him  
and to hasten his canonisation.

We ask you this through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians,  
whom he loved and honoured with a son's heart,  
and through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

#### – *March 2009*

The Rector Major began the month of March presiding at Mass with the community of the Generalate to mark the 97<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bro Egidio Brojanigo and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Fr Carlos Garulo and Fr Antonio Domenech. In the evening there was a Council Meeting.

The following day, Monday 2 March at the “Salesianum” he began preaching a Retreat for the Provincial Councils and Rectors of the Provinces of Piedmont-Val d’Aosta (ICP), Central Italy (ICC) and Sicily (ISI).

On Saturday after lunch at the conclusion of the Retreat, with Fr Adriano Bregolin and Fr Gianni Pellini, Fr Chávez left for Venezia-Mestre to take part in the a “Youth Festival”, held at Jesolo. In the evening after being greeted on his arrival by the Provincial Fr Eugenio Riva, he visited the community of Mogliano Veneto. Then returning to Venezia da Jesolo, he went to see the confreres in the “Artemides Zatti” community and had supper with the community of the Saint Mark Institute and giving

the “Good Night”, On Monday morning 9, he greeted the youngsters in the St Mark Institute and then went to the Islands of Murano and Torcello. He had lunch with the community of Venezia-Castello and then began the return journey to Rome.

On Tuesday 10 he had a meeting with the Councillors in residence.

On Wednesday morning 11, he went to the Offices of the Union of Superiors General (USG), of which he is President. In the afternoon he took part in the presentation of a book by the Deputy Director of the *Osservatore Romano*, Carlo Di Cicco, in the Chapter Room of the Library of the Senate of the Republic.

On 12 and 13 he had various meetings with Councillors, confreres (including the Rector Magnificus of the UPS, Fr Mario Toso) and others.

On Friday morning 13, the Rector Major had a meeting with Fr Adriano Bregolin, and later went to the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. In the afternoon he received Prof. José Correa, from the Don Bosco University in

Campo Grande. Afterwards he wished the Rector of the Generalate community Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi a happy feast-day.

On Saturday morning 14, he left for Mexico, where he was welcomed by the Provincial Fr Miguel Agustín Aguilar. The following day he held a meeting with the Provincial Council and met the Salesian Family. On Monday 16 he met the confreres of the Province at Huipulco, in the postnovitiate house. Present at lunch were the Nuncio Apostolic and Bishop Héctor Guerrero SDB. In the evening he left for Saltillo and spent a couple of days with his family. On Friday 20 and Saturday 21, at *León*, Fr Chávez presided at the celebrations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians in the city. On Friday 20, in the house attached to the Don Bosco National Sanctuary, he was welcomed by the staff and students of the School and then had a meeting with Confreres of the Province and then with the Salesian Family. Attending the lunch were the Governor of the State of Guanajuato, Archbishop José Guadalupe Martín Rábago and Bishop Héctor Guerrero. In the evening he presided at a solemn Jubilee Concelebration. The next morning he was at Boys' Town meeting benefactors and friends of

the work. Then he said Mass for the young people of the Salesian Youth Movement in Mexico who were taking part in the Youth Congress on Education and Human Rights. Afterwards he returned to Guadalajara, from where he left the next day.

On Monday evening 23 Fr Chávez was back in Rome, where he took up his work again. Among his visitors was His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Zen.

On Wednesday 25, with his Vicar, the Rector Major went to visit Fr Antonio Domenech in Barcellona, Spain.

On Thursday morning 26, he received Dr. Magdi Cristiano Allam, who also stayed for lunch. In the afternoon he met the Directors of the Mission Offices dependent on the Rector Major, who were meeting at the Generalate. He had another meeting with them on Saturday 28.

On Monday 30, after presiding in the morning at a meeting of the Council gathered for the "intermediate session" (30 March-8 April), in the afternoon he left for Venice. He made a short visit to the FMA community in Legnaro, and then continued to Padua, where he was welcomed by the Provincial Fr Eugenio Riva. He spoke to the young university students living in the

Hostel and after supper in the city's "Verdi" Theatre he attended the Musical "*Kairós*", the cast being made up of youngsters from the oratory in Padua. The Rector Major gave the concluding "Good Night".

#### **– April 2009**

Having returned to Rome on the morning of Tuesday 1 April, the Rector Major chaired a meeting of the Council. In the evening after a second session of the Council he presided at a community concelebration for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the canonisation of Don Bosco.

During the following days, in addition to daily meeting of the Council the Rector Major was engaged in a number of meetings and discussions including those with the Provincials of ILE, Fr Agostino Sosio, of ICP, Fr Stefano Martoglio, of ICC, Fr Alberto Lorenzelli. He also met Magdi Cristiano Allam, Sr Celestina Corna FMA and various professors and academic authorities of the UPS.

On 5 March, Palm Sunday, the Rector Major presided at the community Concelebration. During Holy Week the intermediate meetings of the Council continued. At the same time the Rector Major was busy with other meetings and

discussions. Among other things on Wednesday afternoon of Holy Week he presided at Mass at the end of a Retreat for some confreres being held in the 'Salesianum'.

On Holy Thursday at 18.00 he presided at the community Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Even on Good Friday and Holy Saturday the Rector Major received various confreres and others – in addition to the Vicar and some Councillors – who came to visit him and wish him Easter greetings. On Holy Saturday afternoon he went to the Generalate of the FMA to offer good wishes to the Mother General Yvonne Reungoat. In the evening he presided at the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

The Rector Major then spends Easter Sunday and the first days of Easter week at home working in his office and receiving confreres.

On Thursday 16, with his Vicar Fr Adriano Bregolin, he goes to the Vatican for an appointment with His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State and has supper with the confreres of the Vatican community.

On Friday 17, with his Vicar and Fr Giuseppe Nicolussi he has a meeting with Fr. Ivan Rupnik, SJ, and an architect from the Alletti Studio. In the afternoon he leaves for Milan with Fr Adriano Bregolin



and is welcomed by the Provincial Fr Agostino Sosio.

Early next morning he goes to the Duomo of Milan. There on one of the terraces of the Duomo, the Rector Major presides at the prayer of entrustment to the Madonna by the school staff of the middle school section of the Saint Ambrose Institute, which is followed by a thanksgiving Mass in the Duomo for the FMA in the "Holy Family" Province of Lombardy. He then attends the dance performance in the square beside the Duomo expressing thanks to the Provincial Sr Gabriella Scarpa who was completing two six-year periods and then goes to the Provincial House.

In the evening Fr Chávez and Fr Bregolin continue their journey to Warsaw, where they are welcomed by the Provincial Fr Sławomir Łubian.

On Sunday 19 and Monday 20 the Rector Major, accompanied by Fr Adriano Bregolin and the Regional Councillor for North Europe Fr Stefan Turanský, presides at a meeting for the Provincials of Poland and the East Circumscription, accompanied by their Vice Provincials. Present at Mass and at lunch on Monday 20 are the Superior General of the Congregation of Saint Michael the Archangel and

the Superior General of the corresponding female branch. In the afternoon, Fr Chávez, Fr Bregolin and Fr Giuseppe Pellizzari, Provincial of the East Circumscription continue their journey to Moscow.

On Tuesday 21, the Rector Major starts the day celebrating Mass in Moscow's Catholic Cathedral, with the Salesians, and then holds a meeting with the Provincial Council of the Circumscription, in which Fr Onorino Pistellato, Provincial Delegate for the Ukraine Byzantine Rite Delegation takes part. In the afternoon Fr Chávez, accompanied by his Vicar and the Provincial reach the Salesian house for street children in the Fili district of Moscow. The Rector Major watches a performance put on by the youngsters from the centre and also from the Cathedral parish and meets the Councils of the groups of the Salesian Family in the East Circumscription.

On Wednesday 22, Fr Chávez, with his Vicar and the Provincial Fr Pelizzari, goes to Oktyabrskiy where he meets the Rectors, parish priests and other confreres. After lunch he briefly visits the Kremlin and then from the Dodomyedovo airport leaves for Saint Petersburg, spending the night in the Salesian house.

The following day Fr Chávez, Fr Bregolin, Fr Pelizzari and Fr Pistellato go to *Gatchina*. They visit the house, say Mass in the Salesian parish, take part in a commemoration for the *Jubilee of the Salesian Centre*, in the presence of local civil authorities. After refreshments they leave for Pulkovo airport and take a flight to Munich before going on to Rome.

On Friday 24 April, with the Vicar and Fr Juan José Bartolomé, the Rector Major leaves for Turin. They are met at the airport by the Provincial Fr Stefano Martoglio, and immediately go to *Bra*. Fr Chávez meets the young people from the Salesian Institute, which is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and then goes to the house of Saint Joseph Benedict Cottolengo. Afterwards in the Town Hall he is made an honorary citizen by the Mayor Camillo Scimmone. At the end of this ceremony he returns to the Salesian Institute, presides at Mass and has supper with the Salesian community, and gives a message for all the Staff, at the end of which he goes to Turin-Valdocco.

On Saturday morning 25, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians he presides at Mass commemorating the the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Sale-

sian Congregation, which concludes with the *blessing of the new casket containing the relic of Don Bosco*, which will make a pilgrimage around the whole Congregation. In the afternoon in the Auditorium of the RAI, the Rector Major attends a Concert, and halfway through is interviewed. At the end of the concert the Rector Major greets the authorities and returns to Valdocco for supper with the two communities.

On Sunday morning 26, Fr Chávez and his companions are welcomed in the Sacred Heart house of the Valdocco Oratory, where they take part in an academy on the family, prepared by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians on the occasion of the Thanksgiving Feast of the Province of Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta for Sr Celestina Corna, at the end of her term of office as Provincial. After lunch in the FMA Provincial House, he presides at Mass and attends a concert prepared by the various houses in the Province. He ends the day with supper and the Good Night in the FMA Provincial House.

Having returned home on Monday morning 27, he takes up his usual work with various meetings and discussions. In the afternoon of Wednesday 29 he chairs a meet-

ing with the Council members in residence. On Thursday morning 30 he goes to the Offices of the USG for a meeting with the Secretarial staff.

### – May 2009

On the afternoon of Friday 1 May, Fr Chávez goes to the Church of Don Bosco at Cinecittà, where he takes part in a *Forum* of the SYM of the Central Italy Province (ICC). He stays for supper with the community to whom he then gives the “Good Night”.

On Saturday afternoon 2, he leaves for Alicante (SVA), Spain, where he is welcomed by the Regional Councillor Fr José Miguel Núñez, the Provincial Fr Juan Bosco Sancho and other confreres of the community.

On Sunday 3, after morning prayer he speaks to the community and after breakfast meets those attending the *VII National Congress of Mary Help of Christians*, and gives the closing address to the Assembly. Afterwards he presides at Mass in the Co-Cathedral of St. Nicolás of Alicante, which is followed by lunch. In the evening the Rector Major travels on to Godelleta, where he begins preaching a Retreat for the members of the Provincial Council, the Rectors, parish priests and other SDB.

On Friday evening 8, the Rector Major has a meeting with the teachers from the houses in the Province. In addition to this, during the retreat Fr Chávez gave an interview to the newspaper *El Mundo*, another for the Province media, had a meeting with the Provincial Council, had a visit from the Archbishop of Valencia, Mgr. Carlos Osoro, and his Auxiliary, Bishop. Salvador Giménez, who had supper with the community, and spoke with various confreres.

The Retreat ended on Saturday morning 9, with the Provincial Feastday celebrated in Valencia - S. Antonio Abad, and a meeting with young people at Valencia S. Juan Bosco. In the evening the Rector Major left for Seville (SSE), where he was welcomed by the Regional, Fr José Miguel Núñez, the Provincial Fr Francisco Ruiz, and some of the confreres of the Province.

He spent Sunday 10 at Córdoba. There he took part in the celebration for the pontifical coronation of the statue of Mary Help of Christians during a Mass at which Archbishop Juan José Asenjo Pellegrina, the Archbishop Coadjutor of Seville and Administrator Apostolic of Córdoba presided. On the same occasion the Province Feastday was celebrated during which

the Rector Major met the confreres of the Province, and also the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Don Bosco Project" Foundation which gave Fr Chávez the opportunity to meet the youngsters involved in the various aspects of the project, the teachers, co-workers and volunteers. After all these celebrations he returned to Seville.

On Monday 11, the Rector Major, again accompanied by Fr José Miguel Núñez, by the Provincial, by his secretary and other confreres from the Provincial House called on the Archbishop of Seville, His. Eminence Carlos Amigo, at the Seminary. They then returned to the Provincial House where he gave a Television interview, a press conference and held a meeting with the Provincial Council. In the afternoon he met a representative group of the leaders of the SYM and then blessed the "Pinardi" section of Trinity House and then in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians he presided at Mass during which he received the perpetual profession of some confreres.

On Tuesday morning 12, after morning prayer and breakfast, Fr Chávez left for Cádiz, where he visited the College, and met the Mayor Teofila Martínez, who expressed gratitude to the Salesians on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> an-

niversary of the founding of the Congregation. Afterwards he went to the Cathedral where the Bishop Antonio Ceballos, blessed a statue of Don Bosco, which is being placed in the Cathedral. In the afternoon with his companions the Rector Major went on to *San José del Valle*, where he had a meeting with the school community and in the Town Hall was presented with the Gold Medal for the Salesian Congregation marking the *centenary of the presence on the Salesians* in this small place. The Rector Major then blessed a monument to Mary Help of Christians and concluded by saying Mass in the parish church.

On Wednesday morning 13, Fr Chávez left for La Línea de la Concepción. With his companions he was welcomed by the Mayor Mr. Juan Carlos Juárez in his office. Then during a session of the Council in the presence of civil, military and religious authorities and a large number of teaching staff, the Salesian Family and young people the title of "Distinguished Citizen" was conferred on him. Then having arrived at the Salesian House, Fr Chávez inaugurated a monument to Don Bosco, commemorating the visit of the Rector Major. This was followed by Mass and a meeting with

the Educative Pastoral Community. After lunch, Fr Chávez and his companions went on to *Algeciras*, for the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presence of the Salesians. There was a celebration of the Word in the Church of Mary Help of Christians, an interview with Television and a newspaper, followed by an official ceremony at which the local authorities present the Rector Major with a scroll. After supper he goes to Málaga, where he is welcomed by the confreres of the community and some youth leaders.

On Thursday 14, after celebrating Mass with the confreres of the Málaga community, Fr Chávez visited the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians, greeted members of the Salesian Family and the Educative Community and then had breakfast with them. He then met the pupils of the College, and had visits from the Bishop Jesús Catalá, and the Mayor, Francisco De la Torre Prado. With them he went into the square where a monument to Don Bosco was blessed. At the end of the ceremony, with the Mayor he gave a press conference and then left for the airport to begin his return journey to Rome.

During the next few days he continues with his usual work receiving a number of confreres and oth-

er people. On Monday morning 18, he presides at Mass with the confreres who have come for a meeting of the Editors of the Salesian Bulletin and with those attending an updating course for Provincial Economers. In the afternoon of the same day Monday 18 he has a meeting with the Editors of the Salesian Bulletin. He greets the group of Economers and gives them a Good Night on the evening of 19. While they are staying at the Generalate he has a personal meeting with some of them. Among other visitors who came to see him on Tuesday 19 were Bishop Bruno Pedron SDB of Jí Paraná (Brazil) and Bishop Gaetano Galbusera SDB, Vicar Apostolic of Pucallpa in Perú.

On Friday 22 the Rector Major has a day of meetings at the Vatican. In the morning at the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life there is a meeting of the "Council of 16" (the members of the two Executive Committees of the USG and UISG with some members of the Vatican Congregation). In the afternoon there is a special meeting of the two Executive Committees. On his return to the Generalate the Rector Major meets the preparatory group for the Days of Spirituality of the Salesian Family gathered there.

On the evening of the 22 the Rector Major left for Turin. On Saturday 23, after greeting Fr Silvio Galli and his 'Auxilium' Group from Chiari, accompanied by the Provincial Fr Stefano Martoglio, he arrives in *Alessandria*, where he spends the whole day. On his arrival he goes straight to the Town Hall where he is *made an honorary citizen* by the Mayor Dr. Pier Carlo Fabio, and the Town Council. He then goes to the Salesian community in the Christ district. Here he receives a visit from the Bishop, Mgr. Giuseppe Versaldi, who stays for lunch. In the afternoon the Rector Major had a meeting with the Vice President of the European Parliament, the Hon. Mario Mauro, after which he met the Educative Community of the CNOS and of the Oratory and the parish. This was followed by Mass, a visit to the Vocational Training Centre, the blessing of the new playground and supper. He then returned to Valdocco.

On Sunday 24 the solemnity of the Ascension was celebrated coinciding this year with the feast of Mary Help of Christians. In the first part of the morning Fr Chávez recorded a video for Missioni Don Bosco. At midday he had a talk with His Eminence Cardi-

nal. Severino Poletto. After lunch he met the novices from Europe, and then a group of confreres from the Interamerica Region, from the Salesian Regional Ongoing Formation Centre in Quito. Later he went to the Provincial House of the FMA to meet the Sisters who had come to Turin for the feast of Mary Help of Christians and afterwards presided at Mass in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, after which he left for Rome.

On Monday morning 25, he went to the Offices of the USG for a meeting of the Executive Committee. In the evening he presided at the community Mass of the Generalate for the liturgical feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Between Wednesday 27 and Friday 29 May the Rector Major took part in the Six Monthly Assembly of the USG, being held at the "Salesianum".

On Saturday he met the Consultative Committee of the Salesian Family to whom he presented the Strenna for 2010.

On Sunday morning 31 he received some of the members of the Council. In the afternoon he had a visit from Bro. Jesús García, who was completing his period of service in the Social Communication Department at the Generalate.

On Tuesday 2 **June** the Rector Major opened the summer plenary session of the General Council. The previous day, 1 June, the whole Council had been to the San Tarcisio community, for Mass with the confreres of the Salesian Communities in the Complex of St Callixtus, in the presence of the casket of relics of Don Bosco, which had arrived there on its pilgrimage around the Salesian houses in Lazio.

## 4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

### The Vicar of the Rector Major

When the winter session of the General Council finished, on 29 January the Vicar of the Rector Major went to the Church of Don Bosco in Rome for a meeting with the local Salesian Family and to present the Strenna of the Rector Major. The following day, the Feast of Saint John Bosco, in the Gerini - Theologians Community he celebrated Mass and received the perpetual profession of some young Confreres.

On 2 February he left with the Rector Major for Frankfurt. After spending the evening and the night at the Salesian Community in Mainz, he journeyed on to Chennai (India). On 4 February with the Rector Major he visited Archbishop Chinnapa Malayappan SDB, took part in a meeting with the Rectors of the Chennai Province (INM) and in the celebration and Mass at the Citadel. In the afternoon he spoke to the Provincial Delegates for the Salesian Family from all over India. He then re-joined the Rector Major to visit the 'Beatitudes' Centre, founded by Fr Mantovani. On Thursday 5, still with the Rector Major he left for Tirupattur, where the celebration of the *Platinum Jubilee of the Chennai Province* was to take place. On the way he stopped off at the Bishop's House in Vellore and visited the St Joseph's Boy's Home. He then continued on the way to the novitiate in the Yellagiri Hills. After lunch he visited BICS, the University Centre for Computer Studies. In the evening he arrived in Tirupattur. At the 'Sacred Heart College' in Tirupattur with the Rector Major he took part in the celebration of the Platinum Jubilee. The following day, 6 February, after visiting Dominic Savio School, he met the Provincials of the Region and

spoke to them about the subject of religious discipline. In the evening he returned to Chennai, stopping off at the FMA house in Vellore.

On 7 February he left for Sri Lanka to make a visit. Arriving in Colombo he immediately went to the Provincial House in Dungalpitiya. After a welcoming ceremony with the youngsters and the staff of the local Oratory, he held a meeting with the Provincial Council. The afternoon was spent meeting other Confreres and then a meeting with the Superiors of the Salesian Communities followed by supper. On 8 February, Sunday after a short visit to the Community of Uswetakeiyawa which looks after children who have suffered from abuse and violence, he took part in a day for the Salesian Family at Negombo. He presides at Mass in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians and after a festive lunch he goes to Kotadeniyawa, where he meets the novices and the Salesian Community. During the journey he also takes a look at the new vocational training school which is being built at Metiagane.

On Monday morning 9 February, he has two further meetings with Confreres of the Vice Province and in the afternoon visits the parish at Palliywatta and ends the day at the Aspirantate at Dankotuwa.

On 10 he leaves to go to Chennai and Bangalore where he meets up with the Rector Major and together they make the return journey to Rome.

On 15 February he goes to Venezia-Mestre, to the Provincial House of the North East Italy Province (INE) for a Rectors' meeting. With them he deals with some issues relating to religious discipline and to the animation of the Salesian Family. In the following days he is resident at the Generalate.

On 7 March he accompanies the Rector Major to Venezia - Mestre, to the INE Provincial House. With the Rector Major and the Provincial Fr Eugenio Riva he takes part in a meeting with the Salesian Community of Mogliano Veneto and has supper with them. The following day he is present at the Provincial 'Youth Festival' (the Rector Major is the Guest of Honour), attended by about 6,000 boys and girls from the Province and all the centres involved in our Youth Ministry in the Region.

On 9 he returns to Rome with the Rector Major. On Tuesday 10 March he leaves for Lisbon (Portugal), where he meets the Provincials of the West Europe Region. The meeting is devoted to the subject of religious discipline. On 13 he returns to Rome.



On Saturday 14 March he goes to Pacognano, near Naples (IME), for a meeting with the Salesian Family. On the afternoon of 15 he is back in Rome and on 16 begins the *Canonical Visitation of the Blessed Michael Rua Community* which occupies him during the fortnight until the end of the month. Between 30 March and 8 April he takes part in the Intermediate Session of the General Council.

On 18 he goes to Milan, where with the Rector Major, he takes part, first in a meeting with the youngsters from the Saint Ambrose Salesian Institute and then the Thanksgiving celebration of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: Mass in the Duomo and then lunch in the FMA Provincial House. In the evening he leaves with the Rector Major for Warsaw.

On Sunday 19 and Monday 20, with the Rector Major and the Regional Councillor for the North Europe Region Fr Stefan Turanský, he takes part in a meeting with the Provincials of Poland and the East Circumscription, accompanied by the Vice Provincials. In the afternoon with Fr Chávez and the Provincial Fr Pellizzari he goes to Moscow, in Russia.

On Tuesday 21, the day begins with Mass in the Catholic Cathedral of Moscow with the Salesians,

followed by a meeting with the Provincial Council of the Circumscription. In the afternoon with Fr Chávez, he goes to the Salesian house for street children in the Fili district of Moscow. He watches a show put on by the youngsters of the centre and of the Cathedral parish, and with the Rector Major, meets the Councils of the groups of the Salesian Family in the East Circumscription.

On Wednesday 22, with Fr Chávez and the Provincial he goes to Oktyabrskiy, where he takes part in a meeting of Rectors, parish priests and other confreres. In the evening with the Rector Major he leaves for Saint Petersburg.

The following day 23 April, he goes to Gatchina. Here he visits the local house, celebrates Mass in the Salesian parish and with the Rector Major assists in the celebration for the Jubilee of the Salesian Centre, in the presence of the civil authorities of the city. After refreshments they return to Rome.

On Friday 24, with the Rector Major he leaves for Turin. Immediately they go on to Bra, where Fr Chávez meets the young people in the Salesian Institute, which is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On Saturday 25, at mid-morning in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians he takes part in the Mass

commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Salesian Congregation.

On Sunday 26, with the Rector Major he takes part in the Thanksgiving Celebration of the FMA Province of Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta. On Monday morning 27, he returns to Rome.

On 1 May he goes to Krakow in Poland, where the following day he meets all the Provincials of the North Europe Region. With them he considers the subject of religious discipline. On 4 he returns to Rome.

On 5 May he leaves for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He stops off in Nairobi for the night and arrives in Lubumbashi on 6. After a joyful welcome and lunch, in the afternoon he pays a courtesy call on Bishop Jean Pierre Tafunga SDB, Coadjutor Bishop of Lubumbashi. In the evening at the 'Theologicum' he meets the students of Theology and stays for supper with them.

On 8 he meets all the Rectors and with them considers the subject of religious discipline. In the afternoon he is accompanied by the Provincial to the Agricultral School at Jacaranda, where he meets the Salesian community.

The morning of 9 May is dedicated to a visit to the novitiate and the

postnovitiate at Kansebula. In the afternoon at the 'Theologicum' he meets all the Confreres of the area. The Vicar speaks to them about the main themes of the General Chapter and about the current situation of the Congregation in the various regions of the world.

On 10 May he takes part in the great celebration of the *Golden Jubilee of the Province*. In the presence of the Salesians, young people, parents and local authorities he presides at Mass. In the evening he is the guest of the FMA, at their Provincial House in Lubumbashi.

On Monday 11 he leaves for Kinshasa and in the evening is welcomed by the Confreres of the Salesian Community in Masina. The following morning after greeting the young people in the Masina Centre, the youngsters in the high and primary schools of Kingabwa, he meets the Salesians in the Vocational Training Centre of the FMA, called "Café Mozart".

On 13, after greeting the youngsters and the teachers in the Primary School of Masina, he begins his return journey to Rome.

On 16 he leaves for Malta, where in the evening he presides at Mass in the house in Dingli receives the promise of a good group of Salesians-Cooperators. The following Sunday he visits the Salesian hous-

es in Sliema and then returns to Rome.

On 22 he goes to Taranto for the Feast of Mary Help of Christians: on 23 he presides at Mass with all the Salesian Family and then takes part in the evening procession. From Taranto he travels to Turin where on 24 May he takes part in the Feast of Mary Help of Christians and takes the place of the Rector Major (who is unable to take part) in the procession.

27, 28 and 29 are spent at the USG Assembly. From the afternoon of 29 he attends and leads the World Consultative Committee of the Salesian Family which concludes its work early in the afternoon of 31.

### **The Councillor for Formation**

Between 29 and 31 January the General Councillor for Formation took part in Don Bosco's Feastday for the "Astori" Salesian community and school in Mogliano Veneto (INE); it also provided an opportunity to visit the vocation community and the prenovitiate in the same city.

1-7 February, at the Generalate in Rome, there was a meeting for the Coordinators of the Regional

Formation Commissions. With them he examined the forward-planning for this six-year period in the formation sector; he noted the programme of commitments for the Department in the period 2009-2010; he assessed the functioning of the Regional Commissions; he studied further the topic of the formation of the initial formation personnel and its implications in practical terms.

9-16 February he visited the formation communities in the East Africa Province (AFE): in Nairobi the theologate at Utume, the 'Bosco Boys' prenovitiate, the community for the specific formation of Salesian Brothers in 'Boys Town'; at Moshi, in Tanzania, the novitiate and the postnovitiate. He took part in the opening of the new novitiate in Morogoro; he visited the aspirantate in Dodoma and the community in Dar es Salaam. There were important meetings of the 'Curatorium' in three communities.

18-22 February he was in the 'Ratisbonne' international community in Jerusalem and chaired the "Curatorium". Between 24 February and 1 March he conducts various formation occasions for groups of confreres from the Delegation of Greek Catholic Rite of the Ukraine, also visiting the aspirantate and

the prenovitiate at Vynnyky and taking part in a meeting of the Council of the Delegation. Between 4 and 8 March he took part in a meeting of Rectors from the Middle East Province (MOR) in Cairo. On 11-13 March he took part in a meeting of the Provincials of the West Europe Region in Lisbon.

Between 15 and 27 April he visited the formation communities in the São Paulo Province Brazil, and the two Provinces in Colombia, giving special attention to the communities of the students of theology. In São Paulo he spent two days in the Pius XI studentate of Lapa, and took part in the 'Curatorium'. Other houses visited in BSP were the novitiate at São Carlos, the prenovitiate and the postnovitiate at Lorena and the aspirantate at Piracicaba; finally he met the Provincial Formation Commission. In Colombia, at Bogotá, he visited the new communities for the students of theology of the four Andean Provinces: BOL, PER, COB and COM. He also visited the aspirantate and the postnovitiate in Bogotá, and the prenovitiate at Mosquera. In the Medellín Province his visits included the novitiate at La Ceja, the aspirantate and the prenovitiate at Rionegro, the postnovitiate at Copacabana. In the Bogotá

Province he had a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission; in the Medellín Province he presided at a session of the Provincial Council.

Between 2 and 4 May he took part in a meeting of the Provincials of the North Europe Region; and on 14 June he chaired the 'Curatorium' of the Rome "Gerini - UPS Students".

### **The Councillor for Youth Ministry**

After the conclusion of the plenary session of the General Council, the first engagement of the Councillor for Youth Ministry (YM) was a Regional Meeting of YM Delegates from the East Asia - Oceania Region held at Hua Hin, Thailand, between 12 and 16 February 2009. This was followed by a visit to Manila for a study day with the YM and Formation teams of the North Philippines Province.

At the beginning of March between 4 and 8, the YM Councillor made a short visit to the Piła Province in Poland and afterwards held a meeting of the YM Delegates of Poland and the Ukraine at Częstochowa. As in the other Regions, the purpose of these two meetings was forward-planning for

the six-year period according to the lines indicated by the GC26.

On 9-10 March 2009, in the name of the Rector Major, the Councillor took part in the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council on Human Rights. The invitation, through IIMA and VIDES, gave the opportunity to make a contribution which described Don Bosco's view and educational approach to the young in a talk *Human Rights-Based Approach*.

Between 11 and 15 March 2009, the Councillor was in Malta as *rapporteur* at a conference *Where Is Home?* which was a reflection on the current situation of childrens-homes in Malta. The conference was organised by the Salesians in *Saint Patrick's Salesian School* with our professional lay collaborators for all *social workers* and professional staff on the island. People invited to speak were from Ireland, England and Denmark.

The Councillor, as well as the "Commissioner for Children" and the Director of the *Institute of Family Studies*, who is a female psychologist very much involved in Salesian thinking and ministry, offered some concluding reflections.

Between 16 and 23 March 2009, the Councillor preached a Retreat to the FMA from the Lombardy Province, at Zoverallo.

On Friday 27 and Saturday 28 March, at the UPS there was a third Seminar on Re-thinking the DPGC, in which the Councillors for Formation and YM took part.

Between 30 March and 8 April the Councillor took part in the Intermediate Council.

On Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 April a limited group of Salesians, engaged in the area of vocational training worked on part of the agenda for the first Consultation on the subject of Technical and Vocational Schools and Centres (SCTP). This Consultation took place between 5 and 7 June 2009, with the participation of two Salesians from each region.

On 11 April 2009 in the name of the Rector Major, the Councillor began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Great Britain Province*, which he concluded on 21 May 2009.

During the month of April the Councillor also had the occasion to attend a study day in Dublin for the Salesians of the Irish Province and with the Salesians of North Belgium to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Jeugddienst Don Bosco* (Don Bosco Youth Service), which is very much involved in training youth leaders.

On 16 and 17 May 2009, with the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Adri-

ano Bregolin, the Couuncillor was in Malta on the occasion of 40 Salesians-Cooperators making their promise before the Vicar of the Rector Major.

Between 25 and 28 May 2009, in Barcellona, Spagna, there was a Regional meeting of PG Delegates from West Europe. As in the other Regions, here too the implementation of the GC26 was discussed and there was an exchange of reports about what work was being done in the various Provinces.

On Friday 29 May 2009, the Councillor took part in a Congress on the Sacred Heart organised by the Sacred Heart Community in Rome. He spoke on the subject *The heart of Christ the source of genuine humanity*.

Finally on Friday 19 June 2009, at the studentate of the Crocetta, Turin, the Councillor was invited to take part in a research project on "evangelisation and education", which over the coming months will entail several occasions for sharing ideas.

### **The Councillor for Social Communication**

Between 6 and 15 February the Councillor for Social Communication preached a retreat to the

Councillors and Rectors of the two Mexican Provinces MEG and MEM. Between 22 and 26 he chaired a meeting of World Consultative body for Social Communication in Madrid, accompanied by Fr Julian Fox and Fr Donato Lacedonio.

During the month of March between 6 and 8 he chaired a meeting of the Department with the Italy - Middle East Region at the Generalate. Between 20 and 27 with Fr Julian Fox and Br Hilario Seo he takes part in a meeting of Provincial Delegates for Social Communication from the East Asia - Oceania Region in Seoul, Korea. In this city he visits the Provincial House of the FMA and says Mass with them; he visits the community and the work of the Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki, their aspirantate and prenovitiate; in addition he preaches a day of recollection for the community of the SDB prenovitiate.

During the month of April, between 15 and 20, he visits the Province of Bolivia. On 16 he visits some radio and TV stations. In San Carlos he visits "Radio TV Ichilo Canal 13"; he also meets the local Bishop. In Sagrado Corazón he visits the radio and TV station with the same name. In Montero he visits the community and the school

at Muyurina, giving the "Good Evening" to the students. In Montero - La Floresta he visits Radio "Maria Auxiliadora". On 17 in Cochabamba he visits the parish of "Mary Help of Christians" at Las Villas, celebrates Mass at Fatima with the prenovices, novices, post-novices, some theologians and some other confreres from the city of Cochabamba. In the afternoon he has a meeting with the Provincial and the Provincial Council. On 18 in El Alto (La Paz) he meets the community responsible for the Don Bosco publishing house and bookshop. In La Paz he meets various communities in the Don Bosco College. He visits the book-shop and cinema, the parish of Mary Help of Christians, the Salesian University of Bolivia (USB) and the radio station "89.7 FM Salesian Radio", the CTV, Catholic Television Station of Bolivia. On 19 he visits the mission of Kami, the Don Bosco radio and television station; in the same place he has a meeting with the personnel of the "Dominic Savio" TV and Radio di Indipendenza 5.

He then went to Argentina where between 20 and 25 April, he visited Buenos Aires and Córdoba. On 20 and 21 he went to the San Justo Theologate, where he said Mass and spoke about the Mission

and SC. He visited the parish of the Sacred Heart and the Don Bosco Oratory. In the Buenos Aires Provincial House he had a meeting with the team of the "EDEBE Argentina" publishing house and "Don Bosco Argentina", and with the management team of the "Instituto Terciario de Formación en Comunicación Social". On 22 he meets the personnel of the "Red Don Bosco Grafica", and the Provincial Delegates and Secretaries for SC. On 23 he meets the "Consejo de Dirección del Boletín Salesiano". On 24 in Córdoba he visits the postnovitiate and in Alta Gracia the novitiate. On 25 in Buenos Aires he meets the JIAR in the Provincial House where he speaks about SC and also the visit to Argentina of Don Bosco's casket.

Between 25 and 30 April in Brazil he visits São Paulo, Brasília and Campinas. On 25 he goes to the house of São Paulo - Mooca, the location of the Salesian Publishing House. On 26 he meets the Provincial Fr Marco Biaggi, greets a group of 400 young people gathered together for a vocation meeting and says Mass with them. On 27 he meets the National Committee of the Salesian Bulletin of Brazil in the house of the CIS-BRASIL in the city of Brasília. On 28 he greets the youngsters of the

technical school in Mooca, and in the same place meets the Council and the management of the Salesian Publishing House; then in the Provincial House he has a meeting with the Provincial and the SC team. On 29 he meets the Salesian Bishops in Brazil at Campinas to speak about the pilgrimage of the Casket of Don Bosco, and has an appointment with Bishop Tarcisio Scaramussa. On 30 he completes his visit and returns to Rome.

During the month of May on 4, with the Social Communication Department team coordinated by Fr Donato Lacedonio, he conducts a SC course for the novices from Genzano (ICC) and from Pinerolo (ICP), and presides at the closing Mass. Between 10 and 13 he chairs a meeting of Editors of the Salesian Bulletin in Europe, coordinated by Fr Giancarlo Manieri, at the Provincial House and the 'Salesianum' in Munich, Bavaria. Between 17 and 20 he chairs an international meeting of Editors of the Salesian Bulletin, again coordinated by Manieri, at the Generalate and the 'Salesianum' in Rome. On 24 at Vasto he presides at the parish Blessed Sacrament procession on the feast of Mary Help of Christians.

During this month in the Department work continued on vari-

ous joint projects: the *make over* of *sdb.org*, the updating of ANS, improvement of the SB, the "Memoirs of the Oratory continued" a Salesian Annual, etc.

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

After the winter session Fr Klement left for a short visit to Hong Kong (CIN) between 28 January and 2 February followed by a visit to the doctor in South Korea (KOR) on 3-5 February.

With the Regional for Latin America - South Cone, Fr Natale Vitali, he made a journey visiting the first missions in Latin America, in Chaco Paraguayo (7-13 February), in Chilean Patagonia (14-16 February) and then continuing in the footsteps of the first missionaries in Argentine Patagonia in the Bahía Blanca Province (17-22 February) from Trelew to Neuquén. In this way he was able to follow the path of Don Bosco's missionary dream from China to Chile in the opposite direction.

On the way back to Rome he took part for two days in a Social Communication International Consultative meeting (Madrid-Carabanchel, 23-25 February), as an indication of the greater coop-



eration between the two Departments for the Salesian mission.

In the course of a few days spent in his office he was able to meet the Executive Secretariat of the Association of the Salesians-Cooperators, with Mr Rosario Maiorano and the World Delegate Fr Stjepan Bolkovac, reflecting on areas of possible missionary collaboration and animation.

Afterwards the Councillor left for a fact-finding visit to the Vicariate of Puerto Ayacucho in Venezuela (2-14 March), which he made with the Provincial Fr Luciano Stefani and Bishop Ángel Divasson. The visit ended with a missionary promotion evening with all the confreres in formation of the Province in the theologate at Caracas.

He continued his travels on the way to the Mission Procurement Office of New Rochelle (SUE) (15-20 March), so as to get to know at first hand the development of the oldest of these Offices in the Congregation, and our Delegation at the United Nations. At the end of his stay, Fr Klement spoke about the missions to the young candidates and confreres and had a meeting with the Provincial Council.

On his return he made a very short visit (23-24 March) to Košice-Lunik IX (SLK), to see how prepa-

rations were progressing for the International Congress on the Salesian mission for the Gypsies, in the context of the 2010 Salesian Missions Day.

In Rome, with the Economist General, the Councillor for the Missions devoted three days to a meeting of those responsible for Missionary Procurement Offices called by the Rector Major at the Direzione Generale (25-27 March). The meeting produced practical results for a more effective/efficient coordination of missionary. Solidarity.

After having taken part in the intermediate session of the Council (29 March-8 April), the Councillor visited the three communities in the south of Sudan (AFE) – Wau, Juba and Tonj – to assess progress in the development of the Sudan Delegation (9-17 April).

After this, thanks to the initiative of some of the Delegates of the South Asia Region, the Councillor was able to direct a Seminar on Missionary Promotion at the Provincial House in New Delhi (19-24 April). The 30 people taking part shared their enthusiasm for primary evangelisation, exchanging information about their experiences for a more effective missionary promotion in the Provinces.

During a brief return to Europe, Fr Klement contributed to the Provincial Feast Day of the INE Province at Verona-San Zeno (25 April), and a meeting of the SYM with the various groups of the Salesian Family in the ILE Province at Treviglio (25-26 April). Afterwards he took part in the VII General Assembly of the *DB Network* in Bruxelles (27-28 April) at which a further step forward was taken towards a global network of Salesian missionary NGO, with the participation of some new members-observers. Having returned to Rome, he then on 29 April made a short visit to the community of the Crocetta (ICP-Turin) and to the audiovisual Centre of the Missioni Don Bosco at Valdocco.

On 1-3 May the Councillor took part in the Provincial *Harambee* in Albania (IME), and visited the two Salesian communities in Scutari and Tirana.

His last journey in the first term of 2009 was to Africa, to assess some situation regarding the needs of the missionaries in the three Provinces of MOZ, MDG and AGL (5-27 May). In addition to missionary promotion in the communities of initial formation, Fr Klement spent more time in the places of first evangelisation at Tete (MOZ),

at Tulear and Ankililoaka (MDG) and in Uganda (AGL) where he visited all the houses.

Finally with the Economist General, he took part in the Council of Missionary Procurement Centre in Turin (29 April) in view of the drawing up of new Statutes (Regulations, 24).

In all the Provinces, as far as possible, Fr Klement spent time in the initial formation communities promoting the missions explaining the missionary needs of the Congregation. In this way in the first term of this year 25 requests to go on the missions were sent to the RM; thanks to this increase in generosity the missionary expedition for 2009 could include 32 confreres.

Starting in January the Department for the Missions launched a monthly Bulletin for missionary promotion '*Cagliero 11*', sent out in six languages – via *e-mail* – to all the Provinces as a formation means of helping to celebrate on the 11 of each month a day of prayer for missionaries.

## **The Economist General**

When the winter session of the Council had finished, between 27 February and 13 March the

Economer General, Brother Claudio Marangio went to Ecuador to visit the Province, coinciding with the Extraordinary Visitation by the Regional.

Having returned to Rome, on 18 March he left for Vienna to meet the Provincial and the Provincial Council of Austria.

Back in Rome, between 26 and 28 March with the Councillor for the Missions, he took part in a meeting of the Missionary Offices at the Direzione Generale.

On Monday 30 March he went to Turin to take part in the Council of Administration of the SEI publishing house.

Between 2 and 8 April he took part in the intermediate session of the General Council.

After Easter, on Friday 17 April he left for a visit to the two Provinces of Mexico, a visit which lasted until 1 May.

Having returned to Rome the following day, on 8 May he left for Bethlehem, to meet the Provincial and Provincial Economer of the Middle East (MOR) and he was then also able to make a short visit to the Salesian houses in the Holy Land.

Having returned to Rome on Sunday 10 May, with the Councillor for Formation the next day he took part in a meeting of the Coun-

cil of Administration of the Salesian University.

Between 17 and 25 May with the confreres and collaborators of the Economer General's Office he led a course for recently appointed Provincial Economers held at the Generalate; on account of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our Congregation the course concluded with a pilgrimage to the places of Salesian interest, which gave some of the confreres concerned their first opportunity to take part in the feast of Mary Help of Christians in Turin itself.

Having returned to Rome he took up his ordinary activities again.

### ***The Councillor for the Africa - Madagascar Region***

The following are the main activities undertaken by the Councillor for the Africa-Madagascar Region, Fr Guillermo Basaños, in the period February-May 2009.

Between 31 January and 7 February the Regional Councillor visited the Central Africa Province (AFC), going to Lubumbashi, where he took part in the Curatorium of the 'Theologicum'.

On 8 February at Lomé he began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the*

*West Africa French-speaking Province (AFO)*, preaching the Retreat to the confreres. On 14 he took part in the Feast of the Vice Province Community at 'Maison Don Bosco' in Lomé and immediately afterwards in a three day meeting for the Rectors.

On 20 February he began to visit each of the 22 Salesian Communities of the Vice Province beginning with that of Tambacunda, in Senegal, and finishing with the Postnovitiate in Lomé. Around the territory of the Vice Province he travelled 12.527 Kilometres in order to reach each of the 154 confreres. Particularly significant was the visit to the community of Touba, in Mali, where on 16 April 2006 Fr Valentín de Pablo, the second Regional Councillor for Africa - Madagascar, died, leaving that Visitation Extraordinary unfinished. Fr Basañes left in that community the missionary crucifix that belonged to Fr Valentín.

On 24 May, at the conclusion of the Visitation, the Regional Councillor presided at the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians celebrated in the parish of Gbényedzi, in Lomé.

On 25 and 26 he took part at 'Maison Don Bosco' in Lomé in the work of the 'Curatorium' of the Novitiate and Postnovitiate. And

on 28 and 29 that of the Theologate at Yaoundé, in Camerun.

On Pentecost Sunday the Regional Councillor returned to headquarters in Rome.

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

After the winter session of the General Council, the Councillor for the Latin America - South Cone Region, Fr Natale Vitali, left for *Chile*, where on 31 January the Solemnity of St John Bosco he presided at Mass for the Salesian Family in the National Sanctuary of Don Bosco, La Cisterna, built by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez SDB.

Between 6 and 11 February, with the Councillor for the Missions and the Salesian Provincial Fr Walter Jara, he visited the Salesian missionaries who are living in the *Chaco Paraguayo*. From Puerto Murtihno, Brazil, after 7 hours journey along the river Paraguay, he arrived at Puerto Casado. There are 30,000 people in the Vicariate of Chaco and the Salesian missionaries are working with the local Indians: Ayoreo, Angaité, Maskoy, Tomarahao and Yoytoso. He also visited Carmelo Peralta. There was

a meeting with the 8 Salesians and the 13 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Bishop Edmundo Valenzuela SDB.

In the capital of Paraguay, Asunción, Fr Vitali held a meeting with the young Salesians from the houses of formation and took part in a meeting with the Provincial Council.

On 17 February he began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Belo Horizonte, Brazil Province*. He visited the 28 Salesian community and had two meetings with the Provincial Council.

On 29 March he was in Rio do Sul, in the Porto Alegre Province to assist at the episcopal ordination of Bishop José Valmor César Teixeira, former Provincial of Porto Alegre.

On 17 April there was a meeting of the *CISBRASIL* and the following day with Fr Francesco Cereda he took part, in the 'Curatorium' of the Theologate in Lapa, São Paulo, where students from the five Provinces of Brazil are studying.

Between 20 and 28 April he was in the *Manaus Province* for the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial. He held four meetings with the Salesians: Manaus, Puerto Velho, São Gabriel and Belém.

On 29 he took part in the *Provincial Council* of the two Provinces on Northern Argentina *Córdoba and Rosario*. On 30 April and 1 May he was in Vignaud for a meeting of the Salesians in these two Provinces. There were more than 200 Salesians present, to prepare together for the beginning of the new Province of Northern Argentina.

On 2 May he took part in the city of La Plata, in the *National Congress of the "Exploradores Salesianos"* and on 3 in the *National Congress of Salesians-Cooperators*.

On 4 May he began consultations in the *Provinces of Buenos Aires, La Plata and Bahía Blanca*, with meetings in Buenos Aires, Ushuaia, Río Gallegos, Comodoro Rivadavia and Stefenelli. During the same period he got to know almost all the Salesian centres in Southern Argentina.

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

After the winter session of the General Council concluded, Fr Esteban Ortiz González, Councillor for the Interamerica Region, on Sunday 1 February travelled to New York (USA) to meet the Provincial of the United States

East (SUE), Fr. James Heuser, the Superior of the Vice Province of Canada (CAN), Fr. Richard Authier, and the new recently appointed Provincial of SUE, Fr. Thomas Dunne, to speak about the preparatory process for the unification of CAN with SUE.

On Wednesday 4 February he went to Guatemala for a meeting with the Provincial Fr Luis Corral, and the Provincial Council of Central America (CAM), for the purpose of assessing the implementation of the guidelines given by the Rector Major after the last Extraordinary Visitation (2007). His presence in Guatemala was also in view of a visit to the community of the CRESCO, which had just started a new year of work. Fr Esteban Ortiz met the formation team, the group following the formation courses (4 in the first and 9 in the second) and spoke personally with each of them.

On 9 February the Regional Councillor took part in Richmond (CA) in the installation of the new Provincial of the United States West (SUO), Fr Timothy Ploch, and held a meeting with the Provincial Council to talk about the situation of the Province.

On 11 February he was in Bolivia to take part in Cochabamba in a Rectors' meeting; on Friday 13 he

met the Provincial Fr Juan Pablo Zabala, and the Provincial Council of Bolivia (BOL), for the purpose of assessing the implementation of the recommendations which the Rector Major had sent after the last Extraordinary Visitation (2007).

On 14 February in Lima Fr Esteban Ortiz met the Provincial Fr. Vicente Santilli, and the Provincial Council of Perú, for the purpose of reflecting on the letter of the Rector Major which he had sent to the Province after the last Extraordinary Visitation, which had taken place the previous year.

On Sunday 15 February he arrived in Quito to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation* of the "*Sacred Heart of Jesus*" Province of Ecuador. The following day he had a meeting with the Provincial, Fr Marcelo Farfán, and his Council. On Tuesday 16 February he began going round the Communities (27) of the Province.

As part of the programme of the Extraordinary Visitation for a period of two weeks the Economist General, Brother Claudio Marangio was in the Province to assess the economic situation.

On Friday 6 March at the end of the visit to the Missionary Communities of the Vicariate of Mén-

dez, there was a meeting at Macas with all the missionaries and the presence of Bishop Néstor Montedecoa SDB, Vicar Apostolic of Méndez, and of Bishop Pedro Gabrielli SDB, Bishop emeritus.

During the months of March, April and a good part of May the Regional continued the visits to the communities and to the "Provincial works", including the Salesian Polytechnical University (UPS).

On Monday morning 25 May, the Regional Councillor presented the final report of the Extraordinary Visitation to an assembly of the Confreres including the Provincial, the members of the Provincial Council, the Rectors of the Communities and a good number of Confreres; in the afternoon he had a meeting with just the Provincial and his Council.

On 26 May, Fr Esteban Ortiz travelled to Caracas to visit the students of theology from Ecuador and held a meeting with the Provincial, Fr. Luciano Stefani, and his Council, for the purpose of studying a proposal for the restructuration of the Province of Venezuela. On this occasion he took part in a Solemn Mass in Caracas in the house of Sarria for the centenary of the church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians.

Finally on Saturday 30 Regional Council returned to Rome to take part in the summer Plenary Session of the General Council.

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

When the plenary session of the Council finished, the Regional Councillor for the East Asia - Oceania Region Fr Andrew Wong, left Rome on 29 January to take part in the annual meeting of Salesian missionaries in China, which was held in Hongkong between 29 January and 2 February. The Provincial Fr Simon Lam, and Fr Carlo Socol, Delegate for the project chaired and directed the meeting. Also present was the General Councillor for the Missions, Fr Václav Klement.

From Hongkong the Regional went to the Philippines to carry out the process for the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial for Philippines South (FIS). He did this in the period between 3 and 10 February with meetings in three places in the Province: Davao, Bacolod, and Cebu.

The Regional continued his journey to Thailand, to take part in a meeting of Youth Ministry Delegates from the Region and for the annual meeting of the Provincials.

Fr. Fabio Attard, General Councillor for Youth Ministry and Fr Dominic Sequeira, his collaborator, led the discussions and the organisation of the meeting which took place between 12 and 18 February.

Between 20 February and 20 March Fr. Andrew Wong undertook the first part of the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Australia*, beginning with some communities in Melbourne and Sydney. He interrupted the Visitation to travel to Korea, to take part in the meeting of the Social Communications Delegates of the Region. This meeting was held in the Provincial House between 22 and 26 March led by Fr Filiberto González, General Councillor for Social Communication with his collaborators, Fr Julian Fox and Bro Hilario Seo. Immediately afterwards the Regional Councillor returned to Australia, to visit the communities in the Province he had not yet visited: in the Pacific (Samoa and Fiji), Adelaide and Tasmania, Australia. The Regional concluded the Extraordinary Visitation in Melbourne on 13-14 April with a meeting with the Provincial, the Provincial Council and all the Rectors of the communities.

Between 16 and 21 April, the Regional visited the two communities in Pakistan, one in Lahore and the

other in Quetta. Having left Pakistan, he went to Vietnam to organise the consultation for the appointment of the new Provincial. He did this in three places in the Province: at Saigon, at Dalat and finally at Hanoi. He was also able to visit the communities he had not been able to visit the previous year. Altogether he was in Vietnam between 23 April and 3 May.

The final stage of his journey was to the Philippines, to Manila. Here the Regional took part in an updating course on "management", between 4 and 26 May. He returned to Rome on 27 May.

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

At the end of the winter session of the Council, Fr M. Arokiam Kanaga left for Chennai, India, and he celebrated the feast of Don Bosco with the Don Bosco community, Egmore, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the house. In the evening of 31 he celebrated the Feastday Mass for the St John Bosco parish, at Ayanavaram, Chennai.

In the first days of *February* the great event was the visit of the Rector Major to the three Provinces of Southern India. The main occasion



was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Chennai Province (INM). The Regional Councillor accompanied the Rector Major during the whole of his visit. The Rector Major was solemnly welcomed at the aeroport of Chennai, with many Salesians and friends present. The Rector Major was accompanied by his Vicar, Fr. Adriano Bregolin and his secretary Fr. Juan José Bartolomé. 3 and 4 February were spent in the city of Chennai with Masses, meetings with the confreres and members of the Salesian Family and family celebrations, (the Rector Major's chronicle for February gives a detailed account of all these events). The Vicar had a meeting with representatives of the Salesian Family in the afternoon of 3 February. The Jubilee Celebration in the city took place in the evening of 4 February at Don Bosco, Egmore.

On 5 February the group travelled to Tirupattur. On the way they stopped at Don Bosco, Vellore, and met the Salesian Bishop of Vellore. During the day there was Mass to which the novices from Yellagiri Hills made their contribution, a visit to 'Don Bosco' in the same place and then the great concluding celebration of the Jubilee of the Province at the 'Sacred Heart College' in Tirupattur in the

evening. The following day, 6 February, the Regional was with the Rector Major and the Vicar for a meeting of all the Provincials of India, who spent the day together. In the evening the Vicar returned to Chennai, while the Rector Major, Fr. Bartolomé and Fr. Arokiam moved on to Yercaud, the postnovitiate of the Tiruchy Province. They spent 7 and 8 February at Yercaud with talks and celebrations. Having moved on to Mannuthy, Kerala, in the Bangalore Province, the Rector Major spent the next two days with talks and celebrations at Mannuthy, Irijnalakuda and Angamali. After this intensive programme, the Rector Major with his companions returned to Rome.

Then on 11 and 12 February Fr Arokiam visited the four communities of Trivandrum, Kollam and Kottiyam. On 13 he made a fact-finding visit to the two communities in the Andaman Islands, which are part of the Chennai Province. After a day spent with his family, on Sunday 15 he presided at Mass on the occasion of the parish feast at Perambur. From here he travelled to New Delhi to work with the community of the SPCI House. On 18 he flew to *Dimapur* and began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province* on 20 February with Mass and a meeting with the con-

freres. He held a meeting with the Provincial Council on 21 and the following day he travelled to Arunachal Pradesh West to visit the communities.

The Extraordinary Visitation continued during the months of *March* and *April*. On 6 March Fr Arokiam gave the quarterly day of recollection to the confreres in the area, and gave a reflection on the state of the mission in the area. For the following two days he travelled to New Delhi to attend and speak at the National Meeting for Vocational Training Schools, at the 'Don Bosco Tech', India. Having returned to Dimapur he chaired the six-monthly meeting of the Provincials' Conference of South Asia - the SPCSA, between 9 and 11 March. He continued the Extraordinary Visitation returning to Harmutty in Assam and spent the following days in the houses of Upper Assam and Arunachal, i.e. Harmutty, Paglam, Doom Dooma, Tongna, Wakhro, Rajanagar, Bordumsa, Tinsukia, Amguri, Dibrugarh, Dergaon, Tuli, Jorhat and Golaghat. He made a visit to the Salesian Bishop of Miao, Bishop. P.K. George, on 21 March, and to Bishop Joseph Aind of Dibrugarh, on 30 March. He gave the quarterly day of recollection to the confreres in the area on 2 April at Jorhat.

Having returned to Dimapur, Fr Arokiam took part in the Holy Thursday Liturgy in the 'Holy Cross' parish, which was cared for by the Salesians some years ago. Continuing his travels, on Good Friday, 10 April, he went to the houses of Mao, Maram, Imphal, Khoupum Valley, Tamenglong, Shajouba, in the State of Manipur, and then Kohima, Wokha, Mon, Tizit, in Nagaland, and Borduria, Kheti, Longding, and Mintong, in Arunachal Pradesh, until 7 May. In the meantime he gave the quarterly day of recollection to the confreres at Imphal (23 April), and Kheti (7 May).

Once again back in Dimapur on 8 May, Fr. Arokiam continued his visits to the houses of Zubza, and Dimapur, and chairing a quarterly meeting of confreres in the area on 12 at Zubza. He held a meeting with the Provincial Council on 22, and concluded the Extraordinary Visitation on 23 May, speaking to the Rectors and other confreres of the Province meeting in the Provincial House of Dimapur. On the Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians he went again to Zubza to celebrate Mass and to receive the perpetual profession of three confreres and the first profession of 15 new Salesians in the Emmaus novitiate. That evening he flew to

Chennai from Dimapur. He was back in Rome on 30 May.

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

Already during the winter session of the General Council, Fr Stefan Turanský had gone to Banská Bystrica - Donovaly (Slovakia), between 15 and 19 January, for a meeting with the two Provincial Councils and the Rectors of the Provinces of Prague (CEP) and of Bratislava (SLK) (about 45 confreres). During the three days he presented the recent Instruction of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies Apostolic Life on "The service of authority and obedience" (11 May 2008).

On 29 January Fr. Turanský left for Poland to undertake the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Pila Province*. He was able to see that the Province, after having opened 23 schools in the last 19 years, in some way during the last few years had "anticipated" the conclusions of the GC26. In a short time it had opened various houses for youngsters in difficulty and at risk, to the great appreciation of both the local Church and the civil Authorities. The confreres are full of energy

and apostolic zeal, and giving attention to their qualification and many are open to the *Project for Europe*.

During the month of February he made a trip to the city of Košice, in Slovakia, and took part in the opening of a new oratory-youth centre in the Tri Hôrky district. In the city there are already two Salesian foundations: the FMA with a school from nursery to middle school level and an oratory, and the Salesians in another district with a centre for *Rom*.

Between 6 and 8 March in Czestochowa he took part with Fr Fabio Attard, Councillor for Youth Ministry in a meeting with the Youth Ministry Delegates from Poland and the East Europe Circumscription.

During Holy Week between 5 and 8 April, Fr. Turanský visited the community of the Polish confreres who are working in Sweden, in Stockholm, both with the Polish mission among their co-nationals (living in the capital in recent years there are more than 20,000 Polish immigrants), and in the new and brave presence in *Stockholm-Fittia* (parish and oratory), which cares for Catholics from about 23 different countries.

Very pleasant was the visit to the local Bishop Anders Arborelius

OCD, who spoke with esteem and very appreciatively of the work of the Salesians.

On 19 and 20 April the Regional was in Warsaw, Poland to accompany the Rector Major and his Vicar during a meeting with the Provincials and Vice Provincials of Poland and the East Europe Circumscription.

At the centre of the meeting were the topics of the last General Chapter. The Provincials shared with the Rector Major the ways of implementing the themes and the working guidelines of the GC26. Special attention was given to the *Project for Europe*.

On the first of May Fr Turanský went to Krakow, Poland, for a meeting with the Provincials of the North Europe Region which was held at the Salesian studentate of theology in Krakow between 1 and 4 May. The meeting, chaired by the Regional Councillor, was also attended by Fr Adriano Bregolin, Vicar of the Rector Major and Fr Francesco Cereda, Councillor for Formation. During the four days the Superiors of the 15 Provinces and the two Delegations were able to take into consideration the talks by Fr Bregolin and Fr Cereda, which dealt with organisation and the quality of Religious Life and of Salesian Formation in this part of

the Congregation. The meeting was enlivened by participation on Sunday 3 May, in "*Savionalia*" 2009, a Youth Festival with about 400 young people present which was taking place those days at the theological studentate. Also appreciated was the visit to the places where Karol Wojtyła, the future John Paul II, lived and worked in Krakow.

On 29 May he returned to Rome for the summer session of the General Council.

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

At the end of the winter session of the General Council, the Regional Councillor Fr José Miguel Núñez, left Rome on 30 January to go to Madrid, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CES Don Bosco. On 31 he was in Cadice for the opening of the centenary of the Past Pupils' Association. He celebrated the feast of Don Bosco in that Salesian house.

On 1 February Fr José Miguel returned to Madrid to take part in various meetings in the National Youth Ministry Centre and the Missions Procurement Office.

Between 9 and 11 February he presides at the Iberian Seminar on

Vocational Ministry attended by representatives of the Salesians and of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians of all the Provinces of Spain and Portugal.

After this, between 15 and 21 February, he preached a retreat for the Postnovices of Spain at Burgos, on the contents of the GC 26.

On 21 the Councillor went to Lisbon to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the "São António" Province of Portugal*. The Visitation continued until the end of May.

In March between 10-12, in Lisbon, with Fr Adriano Bregolin and Fr Francesco Cereda, he took part in a meeting of the Iberian Conference and the annual meeting of the West Europe Region with the presence of all the Provincials and Delegates of all the Provinces.

On 6 April he left for Lyon, France for the third meeting of the 'Reflection Group' of the Region, which continued on the next two days.

Also in April, between 25 and 30, he preached a retreat to the students of Theology of Spain in the city of Chipiona (Cádiz), on the contents of the GC26.

In May, between 1 and 3, he was in Alicante to take part in the Iberian Congress of Mary Help of Christians in the presence of the Rector Major. Afterwards

between 9 and 13, Fr José Miguel accompanied the Rector Major on his visit to the Seville Province.

Finally the Councillor took part in a meeting of the Youth Ministry Department and Provincial Delegates for Youth Ministry from the Region, in Barcellona, 25-27 May.

On 28-29 May he was in Lisbon to conclude the Extraordinary Visitation with a meeting with the Provincial Council and the Rectors.

On 31 May he returned to Rome to take part in the summer session of the General Council.

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

After the conclusion of the winter session of the General Council, Fr Pier Fausto Frisoli took up again the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Southern Italy Province*. In turn he visited the communities of Salerno, Vietri sul mare, Corigliano calabro, Locri, Bova marina, Napoli - Rione amicizia and Naples Provincial House.

He then took part in the annual formation Seminar organised by the CISI National Office for Vocations. Between 27 February and 7 March he directed the Retreats for the Rectors and Provincial

Councils of ICP, ICC and ISI, preached by the Rector Major at the Generalate.

He then returned to the Extraordinary Visitation meeting the communities of Napoli - Vomero, Torre Annunziata, Caserta, Bari, Foggia - Emmaus, Foggia - Sacro Cuore, Andria. After Easter he visited the formation communities of Turin - Crocetta, Pinerolo, Nave, Rome - San Tarcisio, Genzano and Messina. On 25 April he took part in the Provincial Feast of the Southern Province at Cerignola. Between 4 and 7 May he chaired the CISI in Rome. He then visited the communities of Napoli - Don Bosco, Mandria, Cisternino, Brindisi and Lecce. He celebrated the Feast of Mary Help of Christians at Cisternino. On 26 and 27 May he met the Provincial Council of IME and on 28 concluded the Extraordinary Visitation meeting at Santeramo in Colle the members of the Provincial Council, the Rectors and a number of the confreres. He gave them the final report.

On 29 May Fr Frisoli returned to Rome.

### **The Secretary General**

Implementing the guidelines for the planned programme of the six-

year period, the Secretary General in agreement with the Rector Major and the respective Regional Councillors organised in this period *two meetings for Provincial Secretaries*, respectively:

– in Rome - the Generalate, for the Secretaries of the *North Europe Region*, between 11 and 15 May;

– in Sanlúcar la Mayor, Spain, for the Secretaries of the *West Europe Region*, 18-22 May.

As was indicated in the letter calling the meetings, their purpose was updating and an exchange of ideas. Subjects on the agenda were those of particular interest to the Secretary and the Provincial Secretariat with regard to documentation, to the statistics, juridical aspects, the archives and libraries. Special attention was given to the archives and to the various juridical issues. The active participation of the Secretaries and the fraternal atmosphere of the meetings should be mentioned, as well as the value of the opportunity to get to know the situations each one faces. A special word of thanks is due to the community of the Generalate and of the Seville Province, which hosted the Secretaries in a spirit of Salesian welcome.

### 4.3 Chronicle of the General Council

On 2 June 2009 the *summer plenary session* of the General Council began and occupied the Councillors until 31 July 2009. In addition to the plenary sessions, 31 in all, there were other meetings of groups or commissions for the study of various topics. During this session, there was also the gathering of new Provincials – between 9 and 24 June – who had meetings with the Rector Major and the Council. The Councillors also made their contribution to other meetings especially those held at the Generalate. As always in addition to the more pressing issues or problems for the animation and guidance of the Congregation, sufficient time was given to the ordinary matters of business coming from the Provinces, such as: appointments of Provincial Councillors and the approval of the appointments of Rectors, the opening and canonical erection of houses and/or activities, matters regarding confreres and economic-administrative issues. The following is a summary of the more important items on the agenda.

#### 1. Appointment of Provincials

In this session Superiors were appointed for four Provinces. Following a careful process of discernment, and taking special account of the results of the consultation held in the Province the General Council made the necessary provision. This is the list in alphabetical order of the Provincials appointed in the course of this session: Manuel Cayo, for the Province of North Argentina; Ángel Fernández Artime for the Province of South Argentina; George Militante for the Province of South Philippines; Joseph Tran Hoa Hung, for the Province of Vietnam.

In **n. 5.8** of this number of the AGC there are some biographical details of the Provincials appointed.

#### 2. Report of the 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. This

study 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 the session reports from the following nine Provinces or Vice Provinces were considered: the Province of Brazil - Belo Horizonte, the Vice Province of French-speaking West Africa; the Province of India - Dimapur; the Province of Southern Italy; the Province of Poland - Piła; the Province of Australia; the Province of Portugal; the Province of Ecuador; the Province of Great Britain.

### **3. Topics of study and practical decisions**

In the course of the session, as well as matters concerning the Provinces and Regions, the Council considered some issues connected more generally with the government and animation of the Congregation, paying particular attention to the Project of animation and government for the six-

year period and to the life and activity of the Council itself. Some practical decisions were made regarding matters discussed. The main topics considered were as follows.

– **The Strenna of the Rector Major for 2010.** At the beginning of the work of the plenary session the Rector Major and his Council approved and presented the Strenna for 2010:

**“Sir, we want to see Jesus”  
In imitation of Don Rua,  
as authentic disciples  
and zealous apostles  
let us bring the Gospel  
to the young**

Introduced by the request of the Greeks to Philip (Jn 12,21) who wanted to meet Jesus, the Strenna for 2010 invites the various groups of the Salesian Family to dedicate themselves with ever greater zeal to the evangelisation of the young. The 2010 Strenna takes its cue from the year of St Paul just concluded and from the Synod on the Word, during which the Rector Major spoke about the passage from Luke about the disciples on the way to Emmaus, which, on account of the contents and the method, is seen as a model for the evangelisation of the young.



– **Re-thinking Youth Ministry**  
 – **The GC26.** During this session in various meetings the General Council examined the topic of “Youth Ministry: situation and revision of the current model”. It was a question not only of agreeing on the collaboration between the different Departments, especially those for the Salesian Mission – Youth Ministry, Social Communications and the Missions – but above all in seeking to design a vision which ensures the unity of the mission and is expressed in a pastoral model.

– **Project for Europe.** Following the presentation by the Coordinator of the “Commission of the 10”, Fr Francesco Cereda, the General Council examined the suggestions proposed by the Commission itself concerned with the identification of objectives, their definition in terms of “results which can be assessed”, and the monitoring of their implementation.

– **The Salesian House at Cremisan:** Centre for Ongoing Formation and Spirituality for the Salesian Family. Following the presentation by the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Adriano Bregolin, the General Council undertook a first examination of the possibility of changing our house in Cremisan

into a Centre for Ongoing Formation and Spirituality for the Salesian Family.

– **The Centenary Year of Don Rua.** There was a presentation of the letter of the Rector Major written to all Salesian Confreres of the Congregation entitled “**Remembering Don Rua**”, which announced the Centenary year of the death of Don Rua and invited them to live this year of 2010 as a spiritual and pastoral journey. It will begin on 31 January, the solemnity of Don Bosco, the day on which each year the death of our Holy Founder is commemorated: it was on that day 31 January in 1888, that Don Rua took on the responsibility for continuing along the same path followed by the Founder. The commemorative year will end on 31 January 2011.

The text of the Rector Major’s letter is found in **n. 5.2** of the present number of the AGC.

– **Meeting with Salesian Bishops.** During the session, the General Council examined the possibility of organising between 21 and 25 May 2010 in Turin a meeting of the Salesian Bishops with the following items on the agenda: Salesian spirituality from a Bishop’s point of view; the Salesian charism in the pastoral ani-

mation and government of a Diocese; areas of communication between the Congregation and Salesian Bishops.

– **Approval of the Consolidated Account for 2008.** In the course of the session, the General Council – following the presentation by the Economist General – examined and approved, in accordance with the General Regulations, the Consolidated Account of the Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, at 31 December 2008.

– **Distribution of the “Fund for the Missions”.** The General Council considered and approved the proposals presented by the Commission for the 144<sup>th</sup> (June 2009) distribution of assistance from the Mission Fund. These are funds coming from the Mission Offices for the benefit of the numerous projects and plans of the Congregation.

– **Reports of the activities of the Departments.** The General Councillors with responsibility for the Departments presented reports on the activities of their Departments in the period February-June 2009.

Among **significant events** in the course of the session in partic-

ular could be mentioned:

• **Meeting of the SDB and FMA General Councils.** «The evangelising urgency of the educative mission in the current socio-cultural situation characterised by a real educational emergency» was the topic examined by the General Councils of the Salesians and of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, as they met in the afternoon of 8 July at the “Santa Rosa” House in Castel Gandolfo.

• **Pilgrimage “in the steps of Saint Paul”.** At the conclusion of the «Pauline Year», at the suggestion of the Rector Major, a pilgrimage was made “in the steps of Saint Paul”. Between 27 June and 5 July the Rector Major and the Councillors – joined by the Procurator – travelled to the main places visited by Saint Paul on his journey meeting Christ and proclaiming his Gospel: from Tarsus, his birthplace, to Damascus, to Antioch, Ephesus and Athens. As it was intended, the pilgrimage was a real spiritual experience marked by the reading of the Word of God, by the “lectio divina”, led by Fr Juan José Bartolomé, and by the Rector Major’s own reflections on Paul the evangeliser, reflections which recalled the commitment to evangelisation proposed by the

GC26 which will also be the theme of the Strenna for 2010. The pilgrimage was also an opportunity to meet the Salesian communities working in those places: Damascus and Aleppo in Syria, Istanbul in

Turkey. For each of the communities, the visit of the Rector Major and the Council was an occasion of fraternity and celebration, also for the young people and the Salesian Family.

## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS ITEMS

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### 5.1 Don Bosco's holiness in commemorating 1 April 1934

*The following is the letter of the Rector Major, written on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canonisation of Don Bosco, which took place on 1 April 1934, Easter Sunday, by Pope Pius XI.*

*It is an invitation to contemplate the holiness of the Father, whose other special features which are handed down to his sons the Rector Major describes. «The year of grace which we are celebrating», the Rector Major writes, "once again presents us with the commitment to holiness as the main way "to make a fair copy of the Congregation"».*

My Dear Confreres,

We are in the Jubilee year of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our Salesian Society. There are many initiatives under way in various Provinces, and a lively historical interest in the beginnings of our charismatic family is spreading pretty well everywhere. All of this makes for a greater awareness in us of our Salesian consecrated vocation and fosters the maturing of our charism which can lead to a deep renewal in our life and in our mission. With a sense of humble gratitude we feel the need to give

praise to the Lord for the great gift we have received.

At the centre of all that we are celebrating in this "Holy Year" of the Congregation there is the fascination with the person of Don Bosco, who, still today, renews in us our enthusiasm, attracting our heart for an ever more complete gift of ourselves, re-enforces the passion for the mission to the young. In these days the memory of his canonisation which took place on Easter Sunday seventy five years ago by Pius XI, on 1 April 1934, helps us to understand that it is precisely his holiness that has conquered us. Our admiration for Don Bosco grows because of his holiness and it is this which invites us to invoke and to imitate our Founder.

1. In my first letter at the beginning of the last six-year period, with the same words that the Servant of God John Paul II used, I wrote to you "Dear Salesians, be saints!". In this way I invited you to make holiness our plan of spiritual life and of pastoral action. At the beginning of this new six-year period, the year of grace which we are celebrating once again presents us with the commitment to holiness as the main way "to make a fair copy of the Congregation", as

Don Bosco himself prophetically expressed it.

Holiness is *the beautiful thing* about our lives, our communities, our Congregation. Holiness which is expressed in the radical following of the Lord Jesus obedient, poor and chaste, is the fascinating thing about consecrated life. Holiness lived in the total giving of oneself to God for poor youth, is the power which emanates from a witness which is genuine, capable of raising up and attracting vocations. This then is why holiness together with its art and its liturgy, constitutes the beauty of the Church. Rightly then one can say: "Only beauty will save the world!"

2. Don Bosco's holiness is the guarantee that his life-project, his school of spirituality, his style of apostolic action constitute *an authentic path which leads to the fullness of love*. Following the path opened up by Don Bosco in the following of Christ, we have the certainty of living a life that is fully evangelical, completely given without conditions, without reserve, without holding back. At the school of Don Bosco we too learn to be saints.

3. The many forms and the great variety of holiness that have flow-

ered in the 150 years of the Congregation, among the young pupils, in the Salesian Family are a sign of the holiness of our Founder. "*The holiness of the sons proves the holiness of the father*", Blessed Michael Rua wrote to Salesian Rectors, in sending them the spiritual testament of Don Bosco, a few days after his death. The first Salesian generation had no doubts about the holiness of their "father and teacher", even though they could not proclaim it before the Church had solemnly recognised it.

In the meantime the holiness which at its beginnings the Congregation succeeded in living in its service of the young, applying the extraordinarily simple but equally effective method used by Don Bosco, would have been the most valid argument in favour of the holiness of the Founder. In this way with time the holiness of the sons and daughters has gone on increasing: following the father a good number of his disciples made their own that sympathetic form of holiness almost "homely" which is the "holiness of work and of the playground".

4. There are so many Salesian saints male and female who have drawn *their inspiration from Don Bosco*. The same path is being set before us: if we want to become

saints we have to look at him. We are the heirs of a saint. Holiness is the greatest legacy that he has left us. Don Bosco has handed on to us an original style of holiness, consisting in simplicity and attractiveness. A holiness that makes us friendly, good, simple, easy-going. This is the holiness to which we are called, capable of attracting the young. This has been Don Bosco's gift to the young and this is the best gift that we too can offer to the today's young people. Let us remember dear Confreres: poor young people have a right to our holiness!

Paraphrasing Don Bosco, we may say that it is a fascinating thing to be saints, because holiness is luminosity, spiritual energy, splendour, light, inner joy, equilibrium, serenity, love taken to the extreme. The Church too in Vatican Council II reminds us that "everyone is called to holiness" (*LG 39*). This is the priority of the new millennium: "it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity... The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living" (*NMI 31*).

Holiness should not intimidate us, as though it were asking us to

live an impossible heroism, reserved to the few privileged ones. Holiness is not our work, but the gratuitous participation in God's holiness, and therefore a grace. It is a gift, before being the fruit of our efforts. Our whole being is inserted in the mysterious sphere of the purity, the goodness, the gratuity, the mercy, the love of the Lord Jesus. It is the total handing over of ourselves in faith, in hope, in love to God; a handing over that is accomplished day by day with serenity, patience, gratuity, accepting daily trials and joys with the certainty that all makes sense in God's eyes.

Don Bosco's holiness shines out with the splendour with the hope and with the joy of Easter. The Jubilee of Easter Sunday 1 April 1934, experienced in St Peter's Square on the day of the canonisation, places Don Bosco's holiness in an Easter light. With the approach of Easter in this year of grace 2009 it is my prayer for all of us that with renewed joy and commitment we may live this journey of holiness as a new life.

Cordially in the Lord

  
Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
Rector Major

## 5.2 "Remembering Don Rua"

*The following is the letter of the Rector Major to Salesian Confreres, introducing a year of "special commemoration" of Blessed Michael Rua, for the centenary of his death, which occurred in 1910. The Rector Major explains the purpose of this year for remembering Don Rua and indicates to the Salesians some special "focal points", representing practical ways of pursuing the path of holiness following the example of Don Rua, Don Bosco's faithful disciple and the one who continued along the road he marked out.*

My dear Confreres,

We are celebrating this Jubilee Year of 2009 in which we are commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. We thank God for the gifts of grace which this year brings us and for the fruits which it is bringing to maturity in ourselves, in our communities, in the young, in lay people and in families. One of these gifts is certainly the journey which the casket containing Don Bosco's relic is making, having begun its pilgrimage in the Central Italy Province, and visited the UPS Vice Province and the Generalate of the FMA. In the next few days it will come to spend some time in our

Generalate and then it will leave for Chile and the other countries of Latin America.

The climax of this jubilee year will be 18 December. On that day in a solemn ceremony held especially at local level, we shall renew our religious profession, re-affirming the gift of ourselves to God for the young. We want this act to be an ecclesial and public moment. It is important therefore to involve the young, lay people and families, the Salesian Bishops, the various groups of the Salesian Family. I will be spending this moment with the General Council in Turin, in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, but I shall certainly feel myself close to each one of you, in profound communion of spirit and in the joy of belonging to the wonderful Family of Don Bosco.

The reason for this letter of mine is to make the official announcement to you that we shall be dedicating the year 2010 to a special commemoration of Blessed Michael Rua. It is in fact the centenary year of his death, which occurred on 6 April 1910. The year 2010, centred on the figure of the first Successor of Don Bosco, from some points of view will be a continuation of this present jubilee year; it will help us to bring to fuller maturity our con-

secrated Salesian vocation. It seems to me important that we are conscious of the historical situation, that from the death of Don Bosco until our own days, the Congregation has had a great and significant development, taking steps forward, having second thoughts, making fresh starts, reflecting deeply. The identity of the Congregation can be understood better, in fact, through its history, knowing the forms and expressions it has assumed at different times and in different places.

“Remembering Don Rua”, we shall spend this year 2010 on a *spiritual and pastoral journey*. It will begin on 31 January, the solemnity of Don Bosco, the day on which each year we recall the death of the Saint: it was on that 31 January in 1888 that Don Rua took the tiller, to continue the journey on which the Founder had embarked. The year of commemoration will conclude on 31 January 2011. At Congregational level, among other things, there will be two meetings for historical reflection: between 28 October and 1 November 2009, in Turin, the Vth International Congress on Salesian History with the theme “Don Rua, the first Successor of Don Bosco” will be taking place; and later, between 29 October and 1 November 2010 at the

“Salesianum” in Rome there will be an International Congress of the Salesian Congregation on the topic “Don Michael Rua in history”.

I mention now *some focal points*, to be borne in mind for your spiritual and pastoral planning for the coming year, at personal, community and Province level. They will be further and more amply developed in the circular letter in which I intend to illustrate at greater depth the figure of Blessed Michael Rua. It will be offered to all the confreres in the month of September 2009 and will be published in the next issue of the Acts of the General Council.

First of all, following the example of Don Rua, the faithful disciple of Jesus in the footsteps of Don Bosco, each confrere is being called to re-discover the ways in which to preserve **fidelity to the vocation of consecration**. Our vocation is a precious gift; however, it is “like a treasure in earthenware vessels”. The greatness of the gift received is often put at risk by the fragility of our response. I believe that placing ourselves in the presence of the life of this great witness to fidelity we need to ask ourselves: «Am I happy with God?»; and even more importantly: «Is God happy with me?». In fact, em-



bracing Salesian consecrated life we set ourselves to follow the Lord Jesus and we become genuine disciples of His and zealous apostles; all this demands from us a convinced fidelity to our vocation. Let us therefore draw deeply from the wells of the life of the disciple and of the apostle, from the fountains of fidelity to our vocation: Sacred Scripture, through "lectio divina" and the Eucharist.

We can also underline one particular feature of our Salesian consecrated life. It is present in its two forms: ministerial and lay; in this year of the priesthood we can re-discover in particular the gift of the priesthood in the community and in the educative pastoral community.

When Don Rua was sent to Mirabello to found a new house, he summed up the advice received from Don Bosco in a single phrase: "In Mirabello I shall try to be Don Bosco". How important it is that each one of us adopt the same attitude! In fact, this is also the project of life which we find expressed in our **Constitutions**: to be Don Bosco today, wherever we find ourselves living and working. Becoming Don Bosco, day after day, is precisely what the Constitutions set before us in practical terms. We know that after the approval of the Constitu-

tions on 3 April 1874, on account of his exemplary way of life, Don Rua was called "the living rule"; he used to say: "Nothing can be considered small once it is in the Rule".

Here then, dear Confreres, a second point to give attention to. Moved by the special witness given by the first successor of Don Bosco, I invite you, during this year, especially on the occasion of the Retreat, to re-discover the importance and the spirit of our Salesian Constitutions and to look again at your personal Plan of Life. Encouraged by the example of Don Rua and following the guidelines of the GC26, we want to commit ourselves to the study and the practice of our Constitutions, with particular reference to Chapter four: that which deals with our mission and is entitled "sent to the young".

In the third place, we recall how Don Rua, moved by the passion of the *Da mihi animas*, gave a great impetus to the Salesian mission. It was the vitality of the mission that led him to initiate new forms of the apostolate, to raise up and to cultivate vocations to Salesian consecrated life, to launch out into other parts of the world. The mission called him to respond to the needs of the young and to find pastoral ways suited to reaching them with

the proclamation of the gospel. Don Rua's apostolic zeal, therefore, demands that we too during this year express in practical terms the commitment to **evangelising the young**. The second key issue in the GC26 requires it from us; the 2010 Strenna sets is before us as it invites us to let ourselves be caught up in the commitment to evangelisation as the Salesian Family of which Don Rua was a convinced promoter. The GC26 invites us to bring the gospel to the young, to be engaged, as evangelised and evangelising communities, in giving the central place to presenting Jesus Christ, in developing in a effective manner the link between evangelisation and education, bearing in mind the different contexts, and involving the families. Let us be inspired by this theme of the Chapter to begin to rethink our pastoral work.

May the Spirit of Christ inspire us on our journey of pastoral renewal and may Mary Help of Christians sustain us in our apostolic commitment. May Don Bosco, as ever, be our model and our guide.

Cordially in the Lord

  
Fr Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
Rector Major

### 5.3 Plenary Indulgence during the pilgrimage of the Casket with the relic of Don Bosco

*Below is a translation of the Decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on 8 May 2009, in which is communicated the granting of a Plenary Indulgence by the Holy Father to those who devoutly spend some time in prayer – in a public celebration or also privately – before the Casket containing a relic of Saint John Bosco solemnly exposed, on the occasion of its pilgrimage to different places in the world where the Salesians are present.*

Prot. N. 344/09/I

MOST HOLY FATHER,

Francesco Maraccani, Procurator General of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, in the name of the Rector Major, Pascual Chávez Villanueva, who, with sentiments of filial veneration towards Your Holiness, which he expresses together with all the members of the Congregation and the other faithful entrusted to their work of charity, with reverence makes the following request.

From the present month of May until the anniversary of the bi-cen-

tenary of the birth on earth of Saint John Bosco, the Casket of the Holy Founder to the great spiritual joy of the Christians faithful, will be carried with great honour in pilgrimage in succession to all the Provinces of the Salesian Society spread throughout the world.

And so that the faithful who will see the relics of the Saint may be ever more inspired to strengthen the Faith within themselves and to profess it openly in public, to safeguard supernatural Hope and to make grow within their hearts Charity towards God and towards their neighbours bearing witness to it by their good works, in communion with the Catholic Church, in all the world united around Your Holiness, with confidence implore the gift of Sacred Indulgences.

Hence,

on 8 May 2009

the APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, on the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, willingly grants the *Plenary Indulgence*, which may be gained by the Christian faithful who, truly repentant, having fulfilled the usual conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff), in the course of the pilgrimage of the Casket of Saint John Bosco in

every part of the world, before the relic of the Saint solemnly exposed, devoutly take part in a sacred function celebrated in his honour or at least spend some time in pious reflection, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Saint John Bosco.

The decree will be valid for the whole period of the pilgrimage of the Casket of the Saint. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

S.R.E. Cardinal James Francis STAFFORD  
*Major Penitentiary*

Mons. Gianfranco GIROTTI, O.F.M. Conv.  
Titular Bishop of Meta, *Regent*

#### **5.4 Plenary Indulgence granted to the Salesians for the renewal of religious profession on 18 December 2009, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Salesian Society.**

*Below is a translation of the Decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on 22 June 2009, in which is communicated the granting of a Plenary Indulgence by the Holy Father to Salesian confreres on 18 December 2009, the day on which the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Salesian Society*

*occurs, when they renew their religious profession solemnly – or also privately if prevented from doing so solemnly – with the promise of faithfully living the commitments of their vocation.*

Prot. N. 131/09/I

MOST HOLY FATHER,

Pascual Chávez Villanueva, Rector Major of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, expressing to Your Holiness on his own behalf and on that of the whole Salesian Family, sentiments of devotion, with due reverence informs Your Holiness that on 18 December next, it will be one hundred and fifty years since Saint John Bosco founded the Pious Salesian Society for the education of youth in the Christian life and in arts and trades and which with the help of Divine Providence, has widely spread throughout the whole world and has always been well-deserving for its great pastoral and missionary activity.

To worthily commemorate this event, gratitude to Almighty God will be expressed through sacred functions, initiatives of piety and of Christian formation in the various houses and sacred places connected with the Institute which is

celebrating this Jubilee. And so that the confreres of the Salesian Society may be even more open to the Divine generosity and therefore draw more abundant spiritual fruits, the above mentioned Superior humbly requests Your Holiness for the gift of a Plenary Indulgence to be gained on the day of the anniversary.

Hence,

on 22 June 2009

the APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, on the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, willingly grants the *Plenary Indulgence*, which may be gained by the confreres of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales who, truly repentant, having fulfilled the usual conditions (sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff), on **18 December 2009** renew the promise to faithfully fulfil the commitments of their vocation, solemnly, or even privately for the members legitimately prevented.

The decree will be valid for this one occasion. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary

S.R.E. Cardinal James Francis STAFFORD  
*Major Penitentiary*

Mons. Gianfranco GIROTTI, O.F.M. Conv.  
Titular Bishop of Meta, *Regent*

### 5.5 Proper Liturgical Calendar approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship

*In number 392 of the Acts of the General Council the **Proper Liturgical Calendar**, approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 30 June 2005, for our Society of Saint Francis of Sales (Salesians of Don Bosco), as well as that for the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and of the Volunteers of Don Bosco was given.*

*In recent years a further Memorial (optional) has been inserted in the Calendar, that of Zephyrinus Namuncurá (26 August); the two Memorials have been divided of Blessed Joseph Kowalski, martyr (29 May) and the five young martyrs, Francis Kęsy and Companions (12 June), Memorial (optional). The Memorial (optional) of St. Luigi Orione has been trans-*

*ferred to 16 May (the day on which it is celebrated by the Orionini). Finally the Memorial of Blessed Artemides Zatti has been transferred to 13 November (which is the free day closest to the date of the first missionary expedition sent by Don Bosco to Latin America).*

*Therefore we now publish the **Proper Liturgical Calendar, following the latest additions or transfers of Memorials**. The Calendar can be considered approved by a Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 12 June 2009 (N. 260/08/L), with which were approved some liturgical texts (collects and the II readings for the Office of Readings) for the latest Blesseds.*

*Below therefore is the complete new Proper Liturgical Calendar (also with regard to the FMA and to the VDB, whose Calendars were approved at the same time as that of the SDB):*

## PROPER CALENDAR

### JANUARY

15 Blessed Luigi Variara, priest

*Memorial*  
[for FMA and VDB: *Optional memorial*]

- 22 Blessed Laura Vicuña, adolescent *Optional memorial*  
[for the FMA: *Memorial*]
- 24 Saint Francis of Sales, bishop and doctor of the Church  
Titular and Patron of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales *Feast*
- 30 Blessed Bronisław Markiewicz, priest *Optional memorial*  
(only for the S.D.B.)
- 31 Saint John Bosco, priest  
Founder of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales  
of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians  
and of the Salesian Cooperators *Solemnity*

## FEBRUARY

- 1 Commemoration of all deceased Confreres
- 7 Blessed Pius IX, Pope *Optional memorial*
- 9 Blessed Eusebia Palomino Yenes, virgin *Optional memorial*  
[for the FMA: *Memorial*]
- 25 Saints Luigi Versiglia, bishop, and Callisto Caravario, priest  
Salesian Protomartyrs *Feast*  
[for the FMA and VDB: *Memorial*]

## MAY

- 6 Saint Dominic Savio, adolescent *Feast*
- 13 Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello.  
Co-foundress of the Institute  
of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians *Feast*  
[for the FMA: *Solemnity*]
- [15] Our Lady of Fatima *Optional memorial*
- 16 Saint Luigi Orione, priest *Optional memorial*
- 18 Saint Leonard Murialdo, priest *Optional memorial*
- 24 Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians  
Principal Patron of the S.D.B., the F.M.A. and the V.D.B. *Solemnity*
- 29 Blessed Joseph Kowalski, priest martyr *Memorial*  
[for FMA and VDB: *Optional memorial*]

## JUNE

- 12 Blessed Francis Kęsy and companions, martyrs *Optional memorial*  
 23 Saint Joseph Cafasso, priest *Memorial*

## JULY

- 7 Blessed Maria Romero, virgin *Optional memorial*  
 [for the FMA: *Memorial*]

## AUGUST

- 2 Blessed August Czartoryski, priest *Optional memorial*  
 26 Blessed Zephyrinus Namuncurá *Optional memorial*

## SEPTEMBER

- 22 Blessed Joseph Calasanz and Henry Sáiz,  
 priests and companions, martyrs *Memorial*  
 [for the VDB: *Optional memorial*]

## OCTOBER

- 5 Blessed Albert Marvelli *Optional memorial*  
 (only for the S.D.B.)  
 13 Blessed Alexandrina da Costa, virgin *Optional memorial*  
 24 Blessed Luigi Guanella, priest *Optional memorial*  
 25 Anniversary of the dedication of one's own church  
 (when the date is not known) *Solemnity*  
 29 Blessed Michael Rua, priest *Memorial*

## NOVEMBER

- 13 Blessed Artemides Zatti *Memorial*  
 [for FMA and VDB: *Optional memorial*]  
 15 Blessed Maddalena Morano, virgin *Optional memorial*

## DECEMBER

- 5 Blessed Philip Rinaldi, priest *Memorial*  
 Founder of the Volunteers of Don Bosco  
 [for the VDB: *Feast*]

**Notes:**

1. In the celebrations for which there is nothing in parentheses, the rank indicated (*Solemnity, Feast, Memorial, Optional memorial*) applies to all three Institutes (SDB, FMA, VDB). In parentheses is what has special reference to the individual Institutes.
2. As a rule the Congregation for Divine Worship does not grant the rank of *Memorial (oblig.)* for the Blessed on whose days there are already Optional Memorials in the calendar of the Universal Church (cf. 2 August and 15 November). Nevertheless it is possible to celebrate the Blessed in the proper calendar as an *Optional memorial*.
3. Since in our proper calendar the celebration of Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello occurs on 13 May, the Congregation for Divine Worship has agreed that the Optional memorial of *Our Lady of Fatima* (which in the Universal calendar occurs on 13 May) may be celebrated on 15 May.

**5.6 Decree for the canonical erection of the “Blessed Artemides Zatti” Province of North Argentina**

Prot. n° 182/2009

**DECREE  
FOR THE CANONICAL ERECTION  
OF THE  
“BLESSED ARTEMIDES ZATTI”  
SALESIAN PROVINCE  
OF NORTH ARGENTINA**

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 North of Argentina, divided at present between the two Provinces “Saint Francis Solano “ with headquarters in Córdoba and “Our Lady of the Rosary” with headquarters in Funes;
- after having heard the opinion of the two Provincials and their respective Councils and taking into account the results of the consultation among the confreres of the two Provinces;
- with reference to article 156 of the Constitutions;



- having obtained the consent of the General Council in the meeting of **24 January 2008**, in accordance with articles 132 §1,1 and 156 of the Constitutions;

### CANONICALLY ERECTS

by this present Decree, the **SALESIAN PROVINCE of NORTH ARGENTINA, with the title "BLESSED ARTEMIDES ZATTI", with headquarters in CÓRDOBA, in the house of "Saint Francis of Sales", as a result of the unification of the two Provinces of Córdoba and Rosario**, including therefore all the Communities that at present form part of the aforementioned Provinces with the confreres assigned to them.

ALTA GRACIA, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - CONCEPCIÓN DEL URUGUAY, "Santa Teresa del Bambino Gesù" - CÓRDOBA Casa Inspectorial, "San Francesco di Sales" - CÓRDOBA Domingo Savio, "Ss. Angeli Custodi" - CÓRDOBA Miguel Rua, "Beato Michele Rua" - CÓRDOBA Pio X, "San Girolamo" - CÓRDOBA Residencia Universitaria, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - CÓRDOBA San Antonio, "Sant'Antonio" - CÓRDOBA Villada Técnico, "San Giuseppe" - CORRIENTES Maria Auxiliadora, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - CURUZÚ CUATÍA,

"San Giovanni Bosco" - EUGENIO BUSTOS, "San Giovanni Bosco" - FERRÉ, "SS. Trinità" - FONTANA, "Beata Vergine di Itatí" - FORMOSA, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - FUNES Aspirantato, "San Giovanni Bosco" - FUNES "Madonna del Rosario" - MENDOZA Colegio D. Bosco, "San Giacomo Maggiore" - MISIONES San José, "San Giovanni Bosco" - POSADAS, "Ss. L. Versiglia e C. Caravario" - RESISTENCIA, "San Giovanni Bosco" - RÍO TERCERO, "San Domenico Savio" - RODEO DEL MEDIO, "San Isidoro" - ROSARIO San Domenico Savio, "San Domenico Savio" - ROSARIO San José, "San Giuseppe" - SALTA Colegio Salesiano, "San Francesco Solano" - SAN AMBROSIO, "Sacro Cuore" - SAN JUAN, "San Giovanni Bosco" - SAN LUIS, "San Giovanni Bosco" - SAN NICOLÁS DE LOS ARROYOS, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - SAN RAFAEL, "San Domenico Savio" - SANTA FE, "San Giovanni Bosco" - SANTIAGO DEL ESTERO, "San Giovanni Bosco" - TUCUMÁN Belgrano, "San Luigi Gonzaga" - TUCUMÁN Massa, "San Lorenzo" - TUCUMÁN Tulio, "San Michele Arcangelo" - VENADO TUERTO, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - VIGNAUD, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù"

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

The following decisions have

been made:

1°Members of the Province are all those who at the date of the canonical erection are living and working in the Salesian houses listed above. Nevertheless such attachment is temporary for those who, by agreement between Provincials, are temporarily providing a service of collaboration in the houses of these two Provinces.

2°Also members of the Province are confreres in formation in the two former Provinces "Saint Francis Solano" of Córdoba and "Our Lady of the Rosary" of Rosario and other confreres incardinated in the same Provinces who at the time of the canonical erection are outside the Province for reasons of study or health or other just cause.

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

The present Decree will come into force on **31 January 2010**.

Rome, 9 July 2009.

Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

Fr. Marian STEMPEL  
*Secretary General*

## 5.7 Decree for the canonical erection of the "Blessed Zephyrinus Namuncurá" Province of Argentina South

Prot. n° 183/2009

### DECREE FOR THE CANONICAL ERECTION OF THE "BLESSED ZEPHYRINUS NAMUNCURÁ" SALESIAN PROVINCE OF ARGENTINA SOUTH

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 South of Argentina, divided at present between the three Provinces of "Saint Francis of Sales" with headquarters in Buenos Aires, "Saint Francis Xavier" with headquarters in Bahía Blanca and "Our Lady of Luján" with headquarters in La Plata;
- after having heard the opinion of the three Provincials and their respective Councils and taking into account the results of the consultation among the confreres of the two Provinces;

- with reference to article 156 of the Constitutions;
- having obtained the consent of the General Council in the meeting of **24 January 2008**, in accordance with articles 132 §1,1 and 156 of the Constitutions;

### **CANONICALLY ERECTS**

by this present Decree, the **SALESIAN PROVINCE of SOUTH ARGENTINA, with the title "BLESSED ZEPHYRINUS NAMUNCURÁ", with headquarters in BUENOS AIRES, in the house of "Saint Francis of Sales", as a result of the unification of the three Provinces of Buenos Aires, Bahía Blanca and La Plata**, including therefore all the Communities that at present form part of the aforementioned Provinces with the confreres assigned to them.

AVELLANEDA, "San Giovanni Bosco"  
 - BAHÍA BLANCA Don Bosco, "San Giovanni Bosco" - BAHÍA BLANCA Enfermería A. Zatti, "Beato Artemide Zatti" - BAHÍA BLANCA La Piedad, "Madonna della Pietà" - BARILOCHE Don Bosco, "San Giovanni Bosco" - BERNAL, "Madonna della Guardia" - BUENOS AIRES Boca - Colegio, "San Giovanni Evangelista" - BUENOS AIRES Boca - San Pe-

dro, "San Pietro Apostolo" - BUENOS AIRES Casa Ispettorale, "San Francesco di Sales" - BUENOS AIRES León XIII, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù" - BUENOS AIRES N.S. de los Remedios, "Nuestra Señora de los Remedios" - BUENOS AIRES Procura, "San Giovanni Bosco" - BUENOS AIRES San Carlos, "San Carlo Borromeo" - BUENOS AIRES Santa Caterina, "Santa Caterina V.M." - CALETA OLIVIA, "San Giovanni Bosco" - CHOS MALAL, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - CIPOLLETTI, "San Giuseppe" - COMODORO RIVADAVIA D. Savio, "San Domenico Savio" - DEL VALLE, "Maria SS. Immacolata" - DERQUI, "Nuestra Señora de Caacupé" - DON BOSCO, "San Giovanni Bosco" - ENSENADA, "Madonna della Mercede" - ESQUEL, "San Luigi Gonzaga" - FORTÍN MERCEDES, "San Pietro" - GENERAL ACHA, "Maria SS. Immacolata" - GENERAL PICO, "Madonna della Mercede" - ISIDRO CASANOVA, "San Giovanni Bosco" - JUNÍN DE LOS ANDES, "Madonna della Neve" - LA PLATA Sacro Cuore, "Sacro Cuore" - LA PLATA San Michele, "San Michele Arcangelo" - MAR DEL PLATA, "Maria Ausiliatrice" - NEUQUÉN Don Bosco, "San Giovanni Bosco" - PICO TRUNCADO, "Sacra Famiglia" - PUERTO DESEADO, "San Giuseppe" - RAMOS MEJÍA M. Auxiliadora, "Ss. Angeli Custodi" - RÍO GALLEGOS, "Madonna di Luján" -

RÍO GRANDE Parrocchia, "San Giovanni Bosco" - SAN ISIDRO Artemide Zatti, "Beato Filippo Rinaldi" - SAN ISIDRO J. Fernández, "Sacro Cuore" - SAN ISIDRO Santa Isabel, "Santa Elisabetta" - SAN JUSTO Teologato, "Madonna della Speranza" - SAN JUSTO, "Sacro Cuore" - SANTA ROSA, "Sacro Cuore" - TRELEW Colegio J. Muzio, "San Giovanni Battista" - TRELEW N.S. de la Paz, "San Domenico de Guzman" - URIBELARREA, "San Pasquale Baylon" - USHUALA, "Madonna della Mercede" - VICTORICA, "Madonna della Mercede" - VIEDMA, "Sacro Cuore" - VILLA REGINA, "Madonna del Rosario" - ZAPALA, "Sacro Cuore di Gesù" - ZÁRATE, "San Giuseppe Operaio"

and in addition the foundation (not canonically erected) at LA PLATA "Ceferino Namuncurá"

The following decisions have been made:

1°Members of the Province are all those who at the date of the canonical erection are living and working in the Salesian houses listed above. Nevertheless such attachment is temporary for those who, by agreement between Provincials, are temporarily providing a service of collaboration in the houses of these three Provinces.

2°Also members of the Province are confreres in formation in the three former Provinces of "Saint Francis of Sales" of Buenos Aires, "Saint Francis Xavier" of Bahía Blanca and "Our Lady of Luján" of La Plata and other confreres incardinated in the same Provinces who at the time of the canonical erection are outside the Province for reasons of study or health or other just cause.

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

The present Decree will come into force on **31 January 2010**.

Rome, 9 July 2009.

Fr. Pascual CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA  
*Rector Major*

Fr. Marian STEMPEL  
*Secretary General*

## 5.8 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 2009.*

1. *CAYO Manuel, Provincial of the NORTH ARGENTINA Province.*

To guide the "Blessed Artemides Zatti" Province of North Argentina, with headquarters in Córdoba (cf. n. 5.6 of this issue of the AGC) Fr *Manuel CAYO* has been appointed.

Born on 31 May 1966 at General Roca (Argentina), he became a Salesian on 31 January 1986, when he made his first profession at La Plata. Perpetually professed on 16 November 1991, he was ordained priest on 13 June 1995 at General Roca.

After ordination, between 1995 and 1999 he exercised his educative and pastoral ministry in the house of Bahía Blanca - Don Bosco. He was then in Rome (1999-2001) at the Salesian Pontifical University where he obtained a Licence in Spiritual Theology. Having returned to the Province in 2001, he was appointed to the Provincial Council while residing in Bahía Blanca La Piedad. In 2004 he moved to the Provincial house (Bahía Blanca - Don Bosco) and became Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry, education, evangelisation and catechesis. In 2005 he was appointed Vice Provincial a post he held until his present ap-

pointment as Provincial of the new Province of North Argentina.

2. *FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME Ángel, Provincial of the SOUTH ARGENTINA Province.*

To guide the "Blessed Zephyrinus Namuncurá" Province of South Argentina, with headquarters in Buenos Aires (cf. n. 5.7 of this issue of the AGC), Fr *Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME* has been appointed.

He was born at Gozón-Luanco (Oviedo), in Spain, on 21 August 1960 and became a Salesian in 1978 having made his first profession on 3 September 1978 at Mohernando, where he had made his Novitiate. He was ordained priest at León on 4 July 1987, at the conclusion of the various stages prescribed in the Salesian curriculum. He obtained a Licence in Philosophy and Pedagogy.

After ordination he began his educational and pastoral work in the house of Avilés (1987-1989). After two years he moved to Madrid, in 1991 he was appointed to the Provincial Council and made Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry, a post he held until 1998, when he was appointed Vice Provincial and Rector of the Provincial House.

In 2000 he was appointed Provincial of the León Province in Spain his original Province a post he held for six years. In 2007 he was a member of the Precapitular Commission for the GC26. Now the Rector Major and his Council have called him as Provincial to guide the new Province of South Argentina.

3. *MILITANTE George, Provincial of the SOUTH PHILIPPINES Province.*

Fr. *George MILITANTE* is the new Superior of the “Mary Help of Christians” Province of the Southern Philippines with headquarters in Cebu City. He succeeds Fr. Arthur Sanchez Jr. at the end of his term in office.

Born on 21 December 1952 at Calamba, Misamis Occidental (Philippines), he made his first Salesian religious profession on 1 May 1971 in the novitiate in Canlubang. Perpetually professed on 22 March 1978, he was ordained priest on 8 December 1978 at Parañaque, Manila.

After ordination he was assigned to the Postnovitiate in Canlubang, where he carried out his ministry for a number of years. In January 1988 he was appointed Rector of Talisay-Lawaan. After three years

he moved to the Provincial House where he became Provincial Economist (1992-2008) and also Provincial Secretary (1992-1997). In September 2008, after finishing as Provincial Economist he was transferred to the house of Dumangas - Iloilo. Here the news of his appointment as Provincial reached him.

4. *TRAN HOA HUNG Joseph, Provincial of the VIETNAM Province.*

Fr *Joseph TRAN HOA HUNG* succeeds Fr. John Baptist Nguyen Van Them in guiding the “Saint John Bosco” Province of Vietnam.

Joseph Tran Hoa Hung was born on 20 November 1958 and became a Salesian on 14 August 1977 when he made his first profession at Tam Hai (Ho Chi Minh). He was ordained priest on 20 December 1995 at Ho Chi Minh.

After ordination he exercised his ministry in the house of Ba Thon until September 2000, when he was transferred to the Formation Community in Xuan Hiep, where first he was Vice Rector and then Rector. In 2000 he was appointed to the Provincial Council and in September 2003 he was appointed Vice Provincial, Provincial a post he held until his present appointment as Provincial.

## 5.9 Our dead confreres (2<sup>nd</sup> list 2009)

"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 AGREITER Francisco	Campo Grande (Brasile)	03-05-2009	86	BCG
P AIRES Manuel	Évora (Portogallo)	03-04-2009	79	POR
P ALBERDI ALBERDI Ramón	Barcelona (Spagna)	29-05-2009	79	SBA
P ALESSI Luigi	Palermo (Italia)	12-07-2009	96	ISI
P AUCELLO Giacinto	Castellana Grotte (Italia)	06-06-2009	76	IME
P BARBISAN Giuseppe	Campo Grande (Brasile)	28-03-2009	81	BCG
P BARREÑA LUIS Silverio	Sevilla (Spagna)	30-03-2009	96	SSE
P BELLANDI Attilio	Manaus (Brasile)	12-07-2009	63	BMA
P BOTTER Giancarlo	Venezia-Mestre (Italia)	18-03-2009	78	INE
L CACIOLI Gino	Roma	21-06-2009	93	ICC
P COSTA Duarte	Belo Horizonte (Brasile)	23-06-2009	97	BBH
L CREGO DE ARRIBA Miguel	Ávila (Spagna)	06-06-2009	75	SMA
P DELACOLLETTE Georges	Bruxelles (Belgio)	18-03-2009	75	BES
P DEMAGISTRIS Erminio	Torino	09-04-2009	85	ICP
P DÍAZ BERRÍO Juan Andrés	Medellín (Colombia)	15-06-2009	78	COM
P D'MELLO Albano	Fatorda, Goa (India)	05-04-2009	77	ING
L Do NASCIMENTO Edson Gomes	Recife (Brasile)	23-04-2009	29	BRE
P Dos SANTOS Ferreira Alberto	São João del Rei (Brasile)	13-07-2009	76	BBH
P DUFFY Vincent	Wayne, NJ (USA)	21-03-2009	90	SUE
P FALK Oskar	München (Germania)	04-04-2009	82	GER
P FERASIN Egidio	Torino	13-05-2009	81	ICP
L FERNÁNDEZ ARROYO Teófilo	Logroño (Spagna)	20-06-2009	83	SBI
P FERRARI Giuseppe	Civitanova Marche (Italia)	14-05-2009	79	ICC
P FIGUEIREDO Maurice	Bambolim, Goa (India)	14-05-2009	55	INP
P FRANCESCHINI Renato	Arese (Italia)	18-04-2009	89	ILE
L GASPERI Hermann	Vöcklabruck (Austria)	29-03-2009	82	AUS
P GIANOLI Mario	Arese (Italia)	06-04-2009	89	ILE
P GLOWICKI Felix	Cebu City (Filippine)	11-05-2009	78	FIS
P GOZZO Mario	Zafferaba Etnea (Italia)	23-06-2009	86	ISI
P GRZYB Józef	Oświęcim (Polonia)	18-04-2009	79	PLS
P GUERRA Mario	Roma	21-05-2009	83	ICC
P HERIBAN Jozef	Roma	16-04-2009	83	UPS
L HURTADO GARCÍA Florentino	Sahuayo, Mich. (Messico)	18-04-2009	96	MEG
L INDA Javier	Barcelona (Spagna)	28-03-2009	75	SBA
P IRAOLA MUJICA Pedro A.	Asunción (Paraguay)	13-04-2009	82	PAR
P JACONO Antonino	Pedara (Italia)	28-05-2009	97	ISI
P KING Matthew	Taipei (Taiwan)	09-07-2009	76	CIN
P KORONKIEWICZ Stanisław	Olsztyn (Polonia)	02-06-2009	69	PLE

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P KŘÍŽEK Jan	Stará Boleslav (Rep. Ceca)	23-04-2009	86	CEP
P KUCHAR Franc	Golnik (Slovenia)	24-03-2009	90	SLO
P LOCATELLI Damiano	Carisolo (Italia)	20-06-2009	88	ILE
L MACHO MARTÍNEZ José	Arévalo (Spagna)	29-05-2009	75	SMA
L MARUME Nicolas	Congo (Rep. R.D.)	24-04-2009	46	AFC
P MATA BARREÑA Rafael	Sevilla (Spagna)	28-05-2009	78	SSE
P MAZZOLENI Luigi	Torino	12-06-2006	98	ICP
P MÉNDEZ NORMA Enrique A.	San Juan (Porto Rico)	18-04-2009	84	ANT
P MINCHILLO Guido	Torino	23-06-2009	81	ICP
L MINELLA Aquilino	Rio do Sul, SC (Brasile)	06-06-2009	86	BPA
P MOJA Giuseppe	Arese (Milano)	26-05-2009	93	INB
P MONTADE Georges	Toulon (Francia)	06-04-2009	83	FRA
P MUÑOZ ROSAS Alfonso	Coacalco (Messico)	02-04-2009	66	MEM
P MUSSO Augusto	Torino	31-05-2009	81	ICP
P NÚÑEZ SOLÉ Roberto	Roma	25-03-2009	84	SBI
P NYS Clement	Evere, Bruxelles (Belgio)	06-06-2009	93	BEN
P OBORA Władysław	Lins, SP (Brasile)	20-05-2009	94	BCG
P PALACIÁN CRESPO Juan Ramón	Alicante (Spagna)	23-04-2009	72	SVA
P PINHO Mauricio	Lisbona (Portogallo)	09-04-2009	74	POR
P PINTO Martiniano	Vitória (Brasile)	08-07-2009	85	BBH
P PIVARNIK Jan	Košice (Slovacchia)	03-06-2009	80	SLK
P POTES ROLDÁN Jaime	Medellín (Colombia)	21-06-2009	85	COM
P POTTIE Lucien	Kortrijk (Belgio)	06-04-2009	72	BEN
L RODRÍGUEZ MATILLA Francisco	Los Teques (Venezuela)	19-06-2009	75	VEN
P ROSTAGNO Carlo	Torino	03-05-2009	76	ICP
P ROZAS Luis Alberto	Rosario (Argentina)	19-06-2009	86	ARO
P RUIZ ORTEGA Federico	Neuquén (Argentina)	01-05-2009	68	ABB
P SÁNCHEZ ARANGO Leonel	Armenia (Colombia)	25-06-2009	66	COM
P SANTHANARAJ Edwin	Manikandam-Trichy (India)	22-05-2009	29	INT
P SARTORI Guerino	Manaus (Brasile)	12-05-2009	75	BMA
P SCILLIGO Pio	Roma	03-07-2009	81	UPS
P SEVERINO Domenico	San Salvador (El Salvador)	22-05-2009	87	CAM
P SHRIEVES Harold	Shillong (India)	16-04-2009	84	ING
P SIUBER Zbigniew	Kobyła (Polonia)	31-03-2009	59	PLS
P SOCHA František	Chrudim (Rep. Ceca)	18-03-2009	90	CEP
P SOLER COROMINAS Joaquín M.	San Francisco de Macoris (R.D.)	14-07-2009	78	ANT
P SOLIS DUARTE Pedro Sindulfo	Asunción (Paraguay)	10-04-2009	78	PAR
L TILTON Frank	Oakland, NJ (USA)	02-05-2009	82	SUE
P TOPNO John	Guwahati (India)	30-06-2009	92	ING
P UKLEJA Ryszard	Człuchów (Polonia)	07-05-2009	73	PLN
P VAZ Vincent	Mumbai (India)	19-04-2009	74	INB
P VENTURA CEDEÑO Jesús S.	Guadalajara (Messico)	19-04-2009	74	MEG
P VERGELS Willy	Huy (Belgio)	18-05-2009	80	FRB
P VERZOTTO Giuseppe	Kolkata (India)	06-05-2009	81	INC
P VILLAGRÁ CASADO Cándido	Logroño (Spagna)	17-05-2009	90	SBI
L ŻUKOWSKI Stanisław	Oświęcim (Polonia)	23-04-2009	96	PLS









