



acts

of the general council

year XCVIII

july-december 2017

N. 425

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and communication
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salesian congregation

Direzione Generale
Opere don Bosco
Roma

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of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco

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Tel. 06.78.27.819 - Fax 06.78.48.333 - E-mail: tipolito@pcn.net
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“100 YEARS FOR GOD AND FOR THE WORLD”

Letter of the Rector Major to the Volunteers of Don Bosco on the Centenary of the Foundation of the Institute

1. A LOOK AT THE ORIGINS. – 2. AROUSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NOVELTY OF CONSECRATED SECULAR LIFE. Some hints on how to live the VDB identity. – 3. AS MEMBERS OF A BEAUTIFUL CHARISMATIC FAMILY. *Your Salesian Spirituality*. - *Recognizing yourselves as living members of the Salesian Family*. - *Recognized in the Family*. Conclusion.

Rome, May 20th, 2017

Dear Confrères,

The publication of each number of the Acts of the General Council is for me a very good opportunity to meet each one of you.

On this occasion I wish to draw your attention on an important family event such as the celebration of the Centenary of the beginning of the Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco.

Last May 20th and 21st, in Valdocco, in the presence of many of you and of the representatives of the 31 groups of our Salesian Family, our sisters, and we with them, could celebrate their great centenary feast.

The location they chose was the best possible one: Valdocco, where the first sisters pronounced their vows in the presence of Msgr. Giovanni Cagliero.

As I stated at the beginning of the letter I wrote on this occurrence, also my predecessors, Fr Egidio Viganò, Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi and Fr Pascual Chávez, marked their spiritual presence on the 60th, 80th and 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. On the celebration of the centenary, I thought that the entire Salesian Family all over the world, and we Salesians as part of it, should do all we can to better know the Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco.

Reflecting on their interesting history, which is not exempt from difficulties, and on their identity, will help us to better understand the richness of their consecrated lay status with which they complete the vitality of the great tree of the Salesian Family as a charismatic family.

Dear Confrères, I offer you this letter, trusting in your attentive reading as well as in the expressions of affection for and closeness to our VDB sisters. The celebration of their Centenary greatly concerns our charism, our spirituality, our mission and our being Salesian Family in the Church and in the world.

* * *

My dear sisters in Don Bosco, dear sisters of the Secular Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco. I am happy and honoured to have the opportunity of writing this letter to you on the occasion of your jubilee year 2017, in which you celebrate the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute.

I have in my hands the letters addressed to you on the occasions of your significant anniversaries, by my three latest predecessors: Fr Egidio Vigano (September 1979) on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the first professions “of the Group of the first seven *Zelatrici* of the Society of St. Francis of Sales and of Mary Help of Christians¹; Fr Juan Edmundo Vecchi (1997) on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute, and Fr Pascual Chavez Villanueva (2007) for the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the foundation.

This year, 2017, as President General Olga Krizová writes, is a jubilee year in which “*on May 20th, all the regions and Groups dependent on the Centre will be united in thanking God for the gift of our Institute: it is He who aroused this vocation in the heart of the world; it is the Holy Spirit who guides history and who makes something extraordinary flourish even in simplicity and concealment*”².

¹ Quaderno Carpanera, QC, October 26, 1919.

² OLGA KRIZOVÁ. *Crescere*. No. 1 - 2017.

1. A LOOK AT THE ORIGINS

Although your beginnings are very well known to each one of you, my dear VDB sisters, yet we of the Salesian Family, who accompany you in this moment with true fraternity and affection, we feel the need of *knowing to Love*. And in this knowledge, we cannot ignore your origins or your history, with the motions of the Spirit, with the decisive role of some persons and with the difficulties and conquests experienced by the protagonists of the time.

It was, certainly, on that October 26th, 1919, in the chapel adjoining the rooms of Don Bosco, in the presence of Cardinal Cagliero, who presided over the celebration, of Fr Philip Rinaldi, who was then director of that group of *Zelatrici*, and of one FMA sister representing the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, that seven *Zelatrici* commenced a new experience of Salesian consecration, making their first profession of the evangelical counsels.

There is something in this event that to me is not only important, but also beautiful and moving. This group of the ‘*seven cheerfulnesses of the Madonna*’ pronounce their consecration for three years, before Cardinal Cagliero, who points out that “*today, you begin your new life of Zelatrici*”, and that the new Institution “*had the great fortune of being born in the place sacred to Venerable Don Bosco, where He himself had received the first vows and the first promises* (sixty years before, Cagliero himself was there), *of those who had given life and development to the great Salesian Work*”... And defining this happy coincidence as a “*sign of predestination*”, he added: “*The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians have their cradle in Mornese, where Sr. Maria Mazzarello lived and pronounced her vows. You must give importance to this sign of a most special predestination!*”³.

The history of those who will later be the first VDBs has its roots in the birth of the female Oratory No. 1 of Turin - Valdocco

³ Quaderno Carpanera, October 26, 1919.

in 1876. Precisely here, in the Oratory of the FMAs, the Pious Union of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians was born in 1895, on the feast of the Immaculate. There are several young people who in this Association of the Daughters of Mary have a certain gift of leadership.

In 1903 there is the first official meeting of the Daughters of Mary with Fr Philip Rinaldi who provisionally replaces Fr Francesia as Director of the Oratory; a figure of special significance is Mother Felicina Fauda, FMA.

One of the first interventions of Fr Rinaldi will consist in reconfirming in the directive council of the Association of the Daughters of Mary the seven oratorians who already composed it. Among these we find four of the first future *zelatrici*: Amalia Pios, Cristina Milone, Caterina Borgia and Celestina Dominici.

Fr Rinaldi will re-enter in a definitive way as Director of the Oratory of the FMAs in the year 1907. In 1910, two other young ladies will enter to be part of the directive council of the Daughters of Mary: Giovannina Peraldi and Luigina Carpanera. Their names, and especially the latter one, will tell us in future the importance these persons had.

Already in 1908, Fr Rinaldi shows a special leading role in constituting, among the Daughters of Mary, 'the *Zelatrici of the Oratory*', i.e. an association in the Association, with the aim "*of maintaining peace among the members of the oratory and leading back to the Oratory and to the sacraments those who were going astray... You do* – he used to tell them – *what nuns and priests cannot do*"⁴. In 1916, he informs Fr Albera, Rector Major, of the reality of some pious persons who follow a rule of seven points – which he brings to his knowledge – and which is a first draft of the Statute for the future *Zelatrici* of Mary Help of Christians.

In all these years, until 1922, when he was elected Rector Major, Fr Rinaldi lives the most fruitful period of his pastoral activity in favour of lay people, with a great sensitivity of responding to the urgency of the most needy. In this perspective,

⁴ E. CERIA, *Life of Servant of God, Fr Philip Rinaldi*, SEI, 1951, p. 196-197.

one can perfectly understand why in these moments he said to the Daughters of Mary “*that in our times, piety alone is no more enough: action is required*”⁵.

The great moment that will mark a before and an afterwards, will be that May 20th, 1917, when three of those Daughters of Mary and *Zelatrici* – Maria Verzotti, Francesca Riccardi and Luigina Carpanera – will commence what will be recognized, after many years, as Secular Institute. At that time, the *Provida Mater* of 1947 had not yet been promulgated and it was not known that this type of life could be the one of consecrated people in the world⁶. They started a Society of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the world. These three will be joined by two more ‘Oratorians’ in the month of June, for the feast of the Sacred Heart (Celestina Dominici and Giovannina Peraldo), and by another two on the first day of the novena of the Immaculate (Caterina Borgia and Teresa Salassa); and so, at the end of 1917, the *Zelatrici* of Mary Help of Christians are seven, thanks also to the commitment of Mother Felicina Fauda FMA who, transferred to Catania, can see before her departure the fulfilment of this dream of hers.

And in the journey of consolidation, on January 29th, 1921, the first local council was constituted and they themselves will ask the Mother General of the FMAs, Mother Caterina Daghero, to give them a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians as their assistant, as was Mother Felicina.

The *Zelatrici* of Mary Help of Christians advance with their associated life and work, and participate in an assiduous manner to the formative encounters with Fr Rinaldi and the sister-assistant of the moment. Fr Rinaldi will accompany them spiritually, even though in a limited way because of his duties as Rector Major, until the end of 1928. His death on December 5th, 1933, truly leaves them orphans. The good will of Fr Calogero Gusmano, SDB, to whom the Association is entrusted, cannot fill the

⁵ Cf. CASTANO L., *Blessed Philip Rinaldi, 1856-1931, living image of Don Bosco, his third successor*. Elledici, 1990, 106-107 and 148.

⁶ Quaderno Carpanera, May 20, 1917.

void that Fr Rinaldi has created. We can see in those years an attempt to “turn them into religious people”, an attempt outlined in a new rule, probably drafted by Fr Calogero and Sr. Clelia Genghini, but this was not shared by all the *Zelatrici*.

It is easy to imagine how in this situation, the future of the Association might seem seriously compromised. Worth mentioning is the commitment of Luigina Carpanera in continuing to maintain frequent contacts with the other *Zelatrici* and the great effort of being faithful to the initial dream.

After the death of Fr Rinaldi, for more than ten years, the *Zelatrici* live a great uncertainty regarding their future. They do not find sufficient support in the SDBs, or in the FMAs. With the unity Luigina Carpanera had created, in 1943, they turn again, as a group, to Salesian Fr Domenico Garneri, imploring him to show concern for the Association. And he, after having reflected and consulted with some of his superiors, accepts and becomes aware that, even in the context of the terrible Second World War, there is a group of women – sixty five *Zelatrici* according to the list of 1945, eleven of whom of the times of Fr Rinaldi – who in spite of difficulties and their feeling orphans, continue to live with great fidelity.

Fr Garneri points out to Fr Ricaldone that this work, attributed to Fr Rinaldi, with a history not lacking of difficulties, needs a definition regarding its future. Four months later, the response of Fr Ricaldone seems to suggest that, “*without taking any commitment, the embers must be kept lit, even if they are under the ashes*”⁷.

This part of the story is long and is not yet exempt from difficulties. The superiors did not give a definitive response. The context of the war was not at all favourable. Good Fr Garneri asks the help of an FMA assistant and it is in this period that, despite precariousness, with the pronouncement of vows for six months or one year, another Salesian, Fr Gerolamo Luzi, will show interest in the Association, founding two new groups, one in Bagnolo Piemonte and one in Milan, this latter in the Provincial House of

⁷ S. MAGGIO, *Fr Rinaldi Founder in half-light*, p. 241.

the FMAs. The presence of an FMA sister who had already been assistant of the *Zelatrici* with Fr Rinaldi, helps to better understand how these new groups could be formed with three *Zelatrici*.

In the height of the war, on October 29th, 1944, the *Zelatrici* celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first professions of the Association, which *date back to October 26th, 1919*. Those who could not participate in the celebration, either for family reasons or because of distance, were invited to renew their vows in private in the presence of a priest, or else to turn in another moment to Fr Garneri.

Difficulties would not be finished yet. Fr Garneri has a very poor health and in 1946 he was transferred to another house; the same thing happens to Fr Luzi who leaves Bagnolo and returns to Turin, where he unfortunately dies in December of that same year at only 42 years of age. In September of the same year, significant Luigina Carpanera also dies.

Fragile health does not allow Fr Garneri to closely accompany the *Zelatrici*. To this difficulty was also to be added the discontent of a great part of them, because of the lack of response from the Rector Major concerning their situation. The same *Zelatrici* insist with Fr Garneri, who already feels old and worn out, to write anew to the Rector Major. Fr Garneri does it on May 1st, 1948, asking clarification regarding the *Zelatrici* and suggesting to change the Assistant so as not to ruin the work of Fr Rinaldi. However, no response comes from the Rector Major. In the month of August 1949, one of the *Zelatrici*, presumably Maria Fassione, writes to the SDB superiors, asking them to give a juridical form to the work of Fr Rinaldi and to give them a greater spiritual preparation. Meanwhile, the *Zelatrici* know that in the Church some institutions with a secular trait are being born. In fact, Secular Institutes had been officially recognized in the Church in 1947 with *Provida Mater* that affirms, for the first time, the possibility of living a total consecration in a full secularity in the world, within the world. Luigina Carrpanera had died one year before the promulgation of *Provida Mater*.

It seems that in the Salesian environment, the change takes place with the publication of the biography of the Servant of God,

Fr Rinaldi, written by Fr Eugenio Ceria, SDB and the Salesians get to know the *Zelatrici*, admire their history and be interested in them. In 1950, there is the celebration of the priestly jubilee of Fr Garneri, which is attended by all the *Zelatrici*; the Eucharist is presided over by Fr Renato Ziggiotti, then Prefect of the Salesian Congregation. It might be said that with him appears, for the first time, the person who would have had a very important role in the transformation of the Association of the *Zelatrici* into the future Secular Institute. After the death of Fr Piero Ricaldone, Fr Renato Ziggiotti succeeds him in the summer of 1952. Immediately, Fr Garneri informs him of the journey done by the Association of the *Zelatrici* of Mary Help of Christians who in that moment are eighty-six, with ages ranging between 22 and 76 years. A definitive systematization of this work is being felt as necessary.

The life of the Association moves on, despite difficulties, between renewals of the vows and encounters held whenever possible. In this period, Fr Garneri leaves the Association in the hands of Mother Melchiorrina Biancardi, since he, because of his state of health, has to be transferred to Cumiana.

We are in 1953. The moment is not easy. Some *Zelatrici* are discouraged because of the general climate of uncertainty; some are afraid that the Association will not call at any harbour; some members abandon the association to join other associations of lay consecrated people, and some others profess as FMAs.

In this moment, another SDB will be very significant. It is Fr Stefano Maggio who, after listening many times to Teresa Frassati, speaks to the Rector Major Fr Ziggiotti of the Association of Fr Rinaldi. The Rector Major listens to him with great interest and a positive attitude, but being aware that in this moment the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians are involved with great responsibility, he adds that the problem will be dealt with if one day it will be submitted to him. A few days later, Fr Maggio has a meeting with Mother Linda Lucotti and presents to her the opportunity of re-launching the Association of the *Zelatrici*. According to the existing writings, the Mother shows not to be in favour, but she promises that she will speak with her Council and

will give him an official response. This response arrives on October 19th, and is not positive.

The journey of the story is still long. I invite you to read the historical description in the various existing publications. There certainly are dialogues, encounters and clashes, there are SDBs and FMAs who are motivated and enthusiastic in the accompaniment of the *Zelatrici* and others who do not see any future for them. A moment comes when the dialogue is held between the Rector Major Fr R. Ziggiotti and Mother General Linda Lucotti. They requested canonists to produce some studies. Other episodes follow, until on December 5th, 1955, on the 24th anniversary of the death of Fr Philip Rinaldi, the *Zelatrici* have the new Rule of Life approved by the Superior Council of the Salesians of Don Bosco and by the General Council of the FMAs⁸.

On January 6th, 1956, the Association of the *Zelatrici* assumes the new name of "Cooperators Oblates of St. John Bosco". In the course of the meeting of their central Council, on March 19th, 1959, the change of the name with the current one of "Volunteers of Don Bosco" is discussed and decided, and is later accepted by the Rector Major.

So far, this long pilgrimage that tells us, certainly, of a journey in which only what comes really from God can last in time to date, despite difficulties; and this because, as we well know, it is the Holy Spirit that inspires and guides. The same Constitutions of the VDBs attest this in the first article: "*The Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB) live in the Church the spiritual and apostolic heritage of St. John Bosco, transmitted to them by Fr Philip Rinaldi. Illumined by the Holy Spirit and led by the maternal presence of Mary, he set afoot an original evangelical experience with a group of young women to become in the world leaven of Christian life*".

The historical moment we are living on the occasion of this Centenary is an opportunity of thanking God in the first place

⁸ Central Library VDB, Cooperators Oblates of St. John Bosco, Rules, Scuola tipografica private, Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Turin, Cfr. Chronicle, Vol 1, pp. 24, 25, 26.

and the persons who have rendered possible, with great human efforts, this project that comes from Him. What words are more pertinent than those of the very President General who, knowing all this historical pilgrimage, feels that the Institute of the VDBs can say: *“Our thanks go then to those first three Sisters who had the courage of launching themselves in a then all new spiritual adventure, who generously responded to the call and with their living and effective fidelity, even in moments of great difficulty kept the lamp of their vocation alight. Our gratitude goes also to our founder **Fr Philip Rinaldi**, who let himself be guided by the Spirit, giving a start to a new journey in the Salesian Family, just as to all those **Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians** who in the course of our history helped us to grow and be aware of the gift that we had received from the Spirit.*

*In this regard, I would like to remember Fr Garneri who followed us from 1943 to 1955; Fr Ziggotti, Rector Major, who gave a start to the juridical recognition; Fr Stefano Maggio, who accompanied us until the approval as Secular Institute, dedicating all his life to make our vocation known also in far away countries; Fr Frontini who directed us in being aware of our secularity and to whom we are greatly indebted; the **many SDB Assistants** who were fathers and brothers to us and all the many FMA sisters who in the first times accompanied us as affectionate sisters”⁹.*

2. AROUSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NOVELTY OF CONSECRATED SECULARITY

You, sisters, are the first to have this firm conviction: consecrated secularity is not an invention of yours. It was the Holy Spirit who aroused it in an historical moment of the life of the Church. In a moment in which it was being discovered with more clarity that we are all People of God and that the call to holiness is not the privilege of someone in particular, but a proposal and a goal for all the disciples of Jesus.

⁹ OLGA KRIZOVÁ, *Crescere* No. 1 – 2017.

Thus we read in your Constitutions and in the Regulations, where it is affirmed how the Holy Spirit inspired Fr Rinaldi (cf. C 1), and through the action of the same Spirit, God consecrates you to himself in Christ (cf. C 3), and drives you, through a profound need of love, to offer your life totally to God and to the brethren (cf. C 8).

The consecration is not, in the first place, an action of the same consecrated person, but of God, of the Spirit of Christ who guides the Church, and the consecrated person responds, offers and gives their self. So, the VDBs live it according to the Constitutions: *"With a particular initiative of love, God calls the Volunteers and consecrates them to Himself in Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit in order to send them in the world to evangelize it according to the charism of Don Bosco"*¹⁰.

You live this consecration as lay people who are in the world by vocational choice, like leaven in the dough. Secularity is something specific of your consecrated vocation and, from it, you realize your mission, express fraternal communion and your being part of the Salesian Family¹¹.

History enlightens us on how the foundation of your Association, such as the one of other similar realities that were being born, does not coincide with the moment of the recognition of Secular Institutes in the Church (Pope Pius XII promulgates the Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* on February 2nd, 1947), but historically precedes it by several years even if with it is enriched, developed and consolidated. Celebrating the 60th anniversary of this apostolic Constitution, Pope Benedict XVI has underscored in a clear way how such promulgation was not a point of arrival, but of departure of a new journey, of a new form of consecration for lay people and priests called to live with evangelical radicality, totally immersed in secular reality¹².

¹⁰ SECULAR INSTITUTE VOLUNTEERS OF DON BOSCO, *Constitutions and Regulations*, art 3, Rome 2009.

¹¹ Cf. C. art. 4.

¹² Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Address on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of "Provida Mater Ecclesia"*, February 3, 2007.

What I find very beautiful in this long journey of yours, my dear VDB sisters, is that from the beginning there is something in the vision and the inspiration of Fr Rinaldi that *gives a proper imprint* to the consecration of the first sisters, different from the consecration of the religious men and women of the time. Fr Rinaldi, in his generous dedication to the formation of those young 'oratorians' chosen among many, thinking of their consecration in the world, proposed to *bring to completion the work Don Bosco had left unfinished*. Thus, he expresses himself on May 20th, 1917, when he says: "*For some time, the Most Reverend Superiors have been receiving various requests to institute a Society of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in the world... The Superiors always accepted favourably these aspirations, all the more because this was truly something existing in the mind and programme of venerable Don Bosco. In the report he wrote of his work, he spoke precisely of two distinct categories of people, observing the same rule, one of which might form Communities, and the other would live in the world, there to promote the spirit of the Congregation in the practical exercise of their activity*"¹³.

Ever since your beginning, dear sisters, beyond all the vicissitudes and situations, beyond the changes of names of the Association, always and in all the years gone by, the **defence** of this "proper way" of being visible signs of Christ and servants of the others, with a style that is very close to Salesian spirituality, has been a constant feature of yours. As Fr Egidio Viganò magnificently affirms in the letter he addressed to you at the time, "*this way of yours of being in the Salesian Family distinguishes you from the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians for the "secularity", and from the Salesian Cooperators for the "consecration"*"¹⁴.

¹³ Quaderno Carpenera - May 20, 1919.

¹⁴ E. VIGANÒ, *Letter of Fr Egidio Viganò, Rector Major of the Salesians, to the Volunteers of Don Bosco*, September 24, 1979.

Some Hints on How to Live the VDB Identity

Besides the explicit reference I will make to your *Salesian spirituality* and to your being part of the Salesian Family, let me offer you some hints that can illumine your concrete way of living the VDB identity in the context of the Church and of the world today. In harmony with the Church and the pastoral guidelines we receive in it, I propose:

- Continue to be, with your particular secular consecration, **true yeast** that leavens all the dough (cf. Mt 13:33). *"You are not called – Pope Benedict says in the above-mentioned anniversary of Provida Mater – to establish special forms of living, of apostolic commitment or social intervention, but rather, forms that can come into being through personal relations"*. For this, it is desirable that you may truly be this yeast, with your lifestyle, good, sometimes silent and hidden, but also with a positive and encouraging outreach capable of generating hope¹⁵. Your Constitutions explicitly affirm that you want to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world so as to participate in the evangelizing mission of the Church that sends you (cf. C 6).
- Sisters, **be close** to the life and story of joy and of sorrow of every person you encounter in your existence. With the Salesian spirituality that is proper of your charism, this sensitivity becomes educative and evangelizing passion, it becomes charity and fraternity when it comes to little boys and girls and to the youth. With great strength, Pope Benedict XVI asks this of all Secular Institutes, when he says: *"May you feel challenged by every suffering, every injustice and every search for truth, beauty and goodness. This is not because you can come up with the solution to all problems; rather, it is because every circumstance in which human beings live and die is an opportunity for you to witness to God's saving work. This is your mission"*¹⁶.

¹⁵ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, o.c.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

- Do not fall into the very frequent and very human **temptation of individualism**. Dear Sisters, no one is exempt *a priori* from the danger of this temptation. Your Salesian apostolic passion must lead you to be always apostles and missionaries among the people (cf. C 6), with an apostolate that is concretized in the availability to the brethren (cf. C 19), and where life itself is the mission in which your consecration is the most efficacious way of being salt, light and leaven in the world (cf. C 12). As Pope Francis says: *“The missionary passion, the joy of the encounter with Christ that urges you to share with others the beauty of faith, reduces the risk of becoming stuck in individualism”*¹⁷.
- **Live a beautiful experience of fraternity** as an experience of constant communion and unity in the Spirit. Continue to be very sensitive “as Salesians” – this most beautiful expression you use in your Constitutions – to remain united in Christ (cf. C 38), in communion of life, with a strong sense of belonging to the Institute and with strong fraternal relations in the group to which you belong (cf. C 40).
- **Do not remain indifferent** in front of the life of every man and woman whom you encounter. It is not I who say it. It is the Pope who asks you in a very beautiful way. Your vocation of consecrated people in the world demands of you to stay in the heart of human vicissitudes. In such a complex world like the present one, the circumstances of human life, the stories of efforts, of struggle, of sorrow, of overcoming, and also the stories of fraternity and love of the men and women, the boys and girls and of the youth whom you encounter in your life, in your environment, *are today the field of your mission and of your prophecy*. Because of this, the Pope tells you: *“If this does not happen, if you are distracted, or worse still, if you do not know today’s world but you know and experience only the world which suits you best or that you feel more drawn to, then*

¹⁷ POPE FRANCIS, *Address to the General Assembly of the Italian Conference of Secular Institutes*, May 10, 2014.

conversion is urgently needed! Yours is an outward-reaching vocation by nature, not only because it brings you into contact with others, but also and especially (because) it demands that you live where every human being lives"¹⁸.

- **Live your vocation with radicality**, with the courage of knowing and feeling that faith gives form, content, strength and light to your whole existence. In your consecrated secularity you have found, as the Gospel says, the precious pearl, the hidden treasure that frees you from the idolatries of power, of possessing and accumulating superficially, it frees you also from the search for prestige and vain recognition. But Jesus makes you discover, as he does with all of us, that the true richness is not to be found in possessing, but in donating and in donating oneself; it makes you discover that the true richness implies stripping oneself of power and even more of a power that aspires to have and to possess. It is, ultimately, proposing this wisdom that derives from Love, this Truth that makes us really free, that is the creator of an authentic life that it keeps and fills.
- Be also, dear sisters, as Pope Francis recently requested all Secular Institutes, ***the advanced wing of the Church in the New Evangelization***. According to his words, this mission demands of you that you learn to interpret the signs of the times and that you move with liberty of spirit, living a spirituality capable of harmonizing the criteria that come from "above", i.e. from the grace of God, with those that come from "below", from history, the Pope says. This being *the advanced wing of the Church in the New Evangelization* will only be possible if you are women of prayer, of intimate friendship with Jesus, if you take care at the same time of family life, of brothers and sisters, up to being, with your way of living, as Secular Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco, a ***true school of holiness***¹⁹.

¹⁸ POPE FRANCIS, o.c.

¹⁹ Cf. POPE FRANCIS, *The Secular Institutes, advance wing of the Church in the New Evangelization*, World Conference of the Secular Institutes (CMIS), Rome, August 21-25, 2016.

3. AS MEMBERS OF A BEAUTIFUL CHARISMATIC FAMILY

A beautiful gift with which the Holy Spirit blessed your Institute, dear sisters, is precisely the one of your spirituality and of your belonging to a great religious family that shares, in the whole, the charism of Don Bosco. To this I want to refer briefly in this last part of the letter.

Your Salesian Spirituality

Fr Viganò, Fr Vecchi and Fr Chavez spoke of this in their letters. This means that this is not a circumstantial or casual element, but an essential one. Since this point was dealt with in the preceding anniversaries, I will not linger excessively on it, but I will just highlight some points.

This very important element is very well expressed in many passages of your Constitutions, in particular when you indicate that you live your vocation making your own the Salesian charism that characterizes you in the Church and in the world (cf. C 5). The Salesian spirituality is for you something essential that gives an identity of its own to your consecration. Your consecrated secularity is by no means limited by your Salesian spirituality, but rather, in the diversity and abundance of the Secular Institutes the Spirit has produced, and in which all participate in consecrated secularity, Salesian spirituality is your specific character against any type of genericism. Your Institute is distinguished from all the others precisely because of its *Salesian spirituality*: your very name tells it. You are characterized by living in the Church the spiritual and apostolic legacy of Don Bosco transmitted by Fr Philip Rinaldi, illumined by the Spirit (cf. C 1). Hence emerges the clear consciousness of being raised in the spiritual Family of Don Bosco and of having, as something essentially constitutive of the Institute, the will to live in profound harmony with the consecration, secularity and Salesian spirituality (cf. C 2). You feel sent to the world to evangelize it, according to the

charism of Don Bosco (cf. C 3), making your own the Salesian charism that characterizes you (cf. C 5), and addressing your apostolic action, above all, to those who were the main objective of Don Bosco's mission (cf. C 6). You recognize yourselves as living members of the Salesian Family (cf. C 5 and 7), and like Don Bosco, you totally trust in Mary because VDBs know that She continues to be always Mother and Helper (cf. C 5).

Recognizing Yourself as Living Members of the Salesian Family

Naturally, the Institute of the Volunteers of Don Bosco is recognized as a living part of the Salesian Family and the rest of the Salesian Family is aware of this. This, however, is not sufficient, and here we reach a point where my message is not only for you, dear sisters, but for all the other groups and branches of the big tree of the Salesian Family.

The Charter of the Salesian Family, in article 38, requests the knowledge of the specific identity of the different Groups; we are not Family by simply sharing a common charism and the same mission. The knowledge and appreciation of all the other Groups is also required.

This knowledge passes, in our case, through an ever greater awareness of the contribution implied, for our whole Family, by the wonderful originality of the Secular Institute of the VDBs. Its originality is very significant as far as harmony between the choice for evangelization and insertion in the various human contexts are concerned²⁰. However, the contribution of the Institute is, first of all, special in what refers to your being, even more than to the mission. Your life, your witness, undoubtedly indicate the presence of God in the world, *remaining in the heart of the world with the heart of God*. Your authentic witness as consecrated women who live the lay status of the world undeniably arouses

²⁰ Cf. JUAN E. VECCHI, *A novelty of the Holy Spirit, The Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB)*. Letter of the Rector Major of the Salesians on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. CCS, Madrid, 1997.

questions; at times it provokes curiosity and the desire of discovering what profound motivations are nurtured in your hearts. Questions like the reason of your way of acting, of being for the others and in the midst of the others. Your family, the families and the labour world, starting from yours, will always be the vital space in which to illumine in a simple way, with the light of being each one of you *entirely of God so as to donate yourself entirely to the brothers and sisters*.

Recognized in the Family

I have no doubt of the affection with which the rest of our Salesian Family in the world welcome and recognize the Institute of the VDBs. Nevertheless, the celebration of the Centenary of the foundation is a golden opportunity for *all to grow as Salesian Family*, helping one another to have a greater **knowledge** of the Institute, as I have tried to do here for our VDB sisters and for our entire Family. This knowledge must open us up to **joy, affection and esteem** for this beautiful work of the Spirit, so as to finally come together to **support** the Institute in all that is possible.

A support that is offered with the prayer and help of all the other members of our Family, which can be concretized also in presenting this specific vocation to the youth who may feel called to live this secular consecration in the most diverse contexts of the world; and for us, SDBs, also in guaranteeing the assistance we must provide. We should also succeed in turning into reality what is stated in the Charter of the Salesian Family regarding shared formation and methodology of collaboration among all of us (Art. 39 and 41).

Conclusion

I wish to address these last words in a very direct way to you, my dear VDB sisters. Before recommending you to our Mother Help of Christians, let me invite you to be what Pope Paul VI

requested at the time from Secular Institutes: Be true "*mountaineers of the spirit*". And this, sisters, because "*the Church also needs you to give completeness to her mission. Be seeds of holiness scattered by the handful in the furrows of history. Rooted in the freely given and effective action with which the Lord's Spirit guides human events, may you bear fruits of genuine faith, writing with your life and your witness trajectories of hope*"²¹.

I entrust you to Mary Help of Christians, our Mother. Let us put in front of her the past, the present and the future of the Secular Institute of the VDBs. She will always be the model of a woman completely consecrated to God with her unconditional YES that she has lived as spouse and mother in the world of her time, always attentive to the voice of God and docile to His Spirit.

May She accompany with the maternal Love that characterizes her, the Institute and each one of you, her daughters, together with the look of predilection that Blessed Philip Rinaldi has for you.

With true affection in the Lord and in Don Bosco



Fr Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, sdb
Rector Major

²¹ POPE PAUL VI, *Address to the participants in the 1st International Congress of the Secular Institutes*, September 26, 1970.

²² BENEDICT XVI, o.c.

2. GUIDELINES AND DIRECTIVES

2.1 PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION: PROCEDURAL NOTES

Fr Francesco CEREDA
Vicar of the Rector Major

The Vicar of the Rector Major or the Legal Office frequently receive from the Provincials or Provincial Vicars requests on how to proceed when they receive a notification of a confrere's conduct attributable to a canonical crime (*crimen*).¹

This is a good sign; in fact, it can be seen how a practice and a canonically correct procedure is being consolidated in the face of an accusation of a confrere. This aspect is also part of the culture of legality and sense of justice which, as Salesians, we are always called to promote. This process is called preliminary investigation; it aims at making clarity and truth in the face of an accusation.

The preliminary investigation envisaged in these cases is governed by cann. 1717-1719 of the Code of Canon Law. It constitutes the procedure to be used also in the preparatory phase required by can. 695 concerning mandatory dismissal of a religious and can. 696 concerning the dismissal of a religious in the judgement of the Superior. It gives legal certainty to the decisions of the Superior himself.

To this end, a *Vademecum* containing the canonical regulations and the instructions for the procedure to be followed, has been prepared for any report of an external violation of a canon

¹ According to can. 1321 §1 CIC, the term "crime" refers to the external violation of a canon law or a precept for which a punishment is foreseen, gravely imputable by reason of malice or negligence. The Code of Canon Law, in the second part of Book VI, identifies penalties for individual delicts as established in cann. 1364-1398. It should also be noted that the general norm of can. 1399, establishes that the external violation of a divine law or canonical law can be punished by a just penalty but "only when the special gravity of the violation requires punishment and urges the need to prevent or repair scandals".

law or of a precept which calls for a penalty. The instructions contained in the *Vademecum* are general in nature; they should be integrated with the most detailed prescriptions, possibly issued by the individual Bishops' Conferences and in full respect of the civil laws of each country.

This *Vademecum* will be sent soon to the Provincials. What follows below is the scheme of the document, so that every confrere may be aware of the procedure.

1. First phase: *notitia criminis* and initiation of proceedings

The procedure is initiated following the emergence of a *notitia criminis* regarding a confrere. The first phase is articulated in various moments and consequent acts.

- 1.1. The *criminis* notification: Mode of emergence
- 1.2. First assessment of the authenticity of the notification and the obligation to initiate the investigation
- 1.3. Preparatory Acts of the Investigation: Appointment of the Instructor and the Notary
- 1.4. Eventual precautionary measures

2. Second phase. *The investigation*

In this second phase, the Instructor assisted by the Notary, collects the information needed to determine whether the *notitia criminis* has a reasonable foundation. In particular, he will have to ascertain the facts, the circumstances, the imputability of the confrere. Several actions are foreseen:

- 2.1. Convocation and interrogation of the complainant
- 2.2. Convocation and interrogation of witnesses
- 2.3. Collection and verification of other evidence
- 2.4. Convocation and interrogation of the confrere investigated
- 2.5. Instructor's Report
- 2.6. Time-frame of investigation

3. Third phase. *Evaluation of the outcome of the investigation*

Upon delivery of the investigative records and report, the Instructor terminates his job, subject to the subsequent request for a supplementary inquiry. The Provincial, who is always responsible for the proceedings initiated, has a central role in this third phase, for the acts he makes and the decisions he takes.

- 3.1. Study and evaluation of acts
- 3.2. Decree closing the inquiry or requesting a supplement
- 3.3. Examination of the conclusions of the inquiry by the Provincial Council
- 3.4. Opinion of the Provincial Council
- 3.5. Decision of the Provincial by decree
- 3.6. Eventual submission of the Acts to the Rector Major

The *Vademecum* then has a section devoted to the *delicta graviora*,² and the specific attentions to have in mind at each stage; in particular, the Vicar of the Rector Major must be notified immediately. The judgment on such *delicta* is reserved for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In fact, if after the investigation the allegations are credible, the case must be forwarded to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith through the Rector Major.

² *Delicta graviora* are the most serious crimes committed against morals. They are included among the reserved delicts referred to in Articles 1-6 of the *Normae de delictis Congregationis pro Doctrina Fidei reservatis* issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on May 21, 2010.

2.2 FORMATION IS LIFELONG

Fr Ivo COELHO

General Councillor for Formation

*He shall drink from the stream by the wayside
and therefore he shall lift up his head. (Ps 110,7)*

A Salesian once gave a stirring conference about the importance of spiritual accompaniment. After his talk he overheard one confrere saying to another: “Thank God I am now a priest. I don’t have to go to spiritual direction anymore”.

Is formation something that “gets over” with perpetual profession or with priestly ordination, or is it something quite different, something that is lifelong? Taking inspiration and encouragement from the recent document of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Per vino nuovo otri nuovi*,¹ the present letter will go back to our Constitutions and to that wonderful commentary on the Constitutions that is *The Project of Life*, to remind us of the “adventure in the Spirit”² that is formation, and to offer a few practical suggestions.

The expression “ongoing formation” or “lifelong formation” has become familiar in the last few decades, especially in the context of the priesthood and religious life.³ The reality to which it refers, however, is something as old as humanity itself, even if only recently it has become a focus of reflection.

¹ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Per vino nuovo otri nuovi: Dal concilio Vaticano II la vita consacrata e le sfide ancora aperte: Orientamenti* (6 January 2017), see esp. Nos. 16 and 35.

² See Ángel Fernández Artime, *Strenna* 2016: “With Jesus, let us journey together in the adventure of the Spirit!”

³ Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church* (2015) uses the expression “lifelong formation” at No. 35 of the English version.

It was the merit of existentialism to have emphasized the historicity of the human being as the space of his realization, in contrast to an essentialism that tended to consider the human being as somehow “already constituted”. No doubt there were exaggerations, like the famous phrase of Jean-Paul Sartre, “existence precedes essence”; but in its very exaggeration this was a salutary correction to a static way of conceiving human life. A more balanced way of speaking would be to consider the identity of the human being as constituted in a major way by his concrete life experiences, by his projects and choices.

In this context, the concept of experience is fundamental, with all its etymological connotations, especially those of risk and danger: *ex-perior*, *ex-perto*, *periculum*, etc. Without entering into the complexity of this concept and what it indicates, I would like to note two elements that it would be convenient to distinguish: the *happening as such* (*evento*, *acontecimiento*, *événement*), and its *impact* on the person – what one learns from it. Here the German language makes possible a useful distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, between “experiences” on the one hand, and “experience” in the sense of what one learns from the many “experiences”. It is quite possible, in fact, to have plenty of experiences without learning anything. As one Salesian said of another who was boasting of his 25 years of experience: “He has really had only one year of experience repeated 25 times”. Turning life into a *formative space* does not consist in going through (“experiencing”) many things, but rather in *learning from what one has gone through* (“becoming experienced”). This will be important when we look at what our Constitutions have to say.

1. “Lifelong formation”: the expression

In the light of the above we could ask: what does the term “lifelong formation” mean? Clearly, it does not refer to the *set of activities* organized by an institution (whether religious or professional or whatever) for the updating, qualification or *aggior-*

namento of its members, many of which take place outside the context of ordinary life and work. Much less does it refer to a *phase* that begins after the so-called “initial formation”. In fact, General Chapter 22 examined several other expressions in an effort to avoid ambiguity – continuous formation, post-initial formation, etc. –, none of which was considered adequate.

To get to the heart of these expressions, we could ask ourselves: are we using the term “lifelong” or “permanent” as an *adjective* or as a *predicate*? More simply, we could ask which of these two expressions would be more correct for our purposes:

Lifelong formation is... (adjective)

Formation is *lifelong* (predicate)

Obviously it is the second expression that we want. It is within formation understood as lifelong that the so-called “initial formation” takes its place. In this regard, the remarks of the *Ratio* on “formation at the service of Salesian identity” are remarkably lucid: evidently, formation here does not refer only to the initial phases.⁴ Permanent or ongoing formation, in other words, is not a natural continuation of initial formation. It is the *habitual form of living out our vocation*. It is a new way of understanding consecrated life, as participation in the action of the Father who, through the Spirit, forms and shapes in the heart the inner attitudes of the Son.⁵ Formation, in other words, is lifelong – until the hour comes when our consecrated life is brought “to its highest fulfilment”.⁶

2. Lifelong formation in the Salesian Constitutions: analysis

As we have said already, the concept of “lifelong formation” is relatively new. In our Congregation it was first considered ex-

⁴ *Formation of Salesians of Don Bosco: Principles and Norms: Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum* (FSDB), 4th ed. (online, 2016) chapter, section 2: Formation at the service of Salesian identity. See <http://www.sdb.org/en/formation.html> (28.01.2017).

⁵ *Vita Consecrata* 66.

⁶ C 54.

plicitly during GC22 (1984), in the context of the elaboration of the definitive text of the Constitutions. The commission drafting the articles concerning formation was the only one that did not begin from the earlier text (the *ad experimentum* one of 1971-72), precisely because this way of understanding formation was so new. We must not be misled by the presence of two articles in chapter 9 dedicated exclusively to lifelong formation (C 118 and 119). As *The Project of Life of the Salesians of Don Bosco* (1986) notes, the whole of Part III of the new text has been organized with lifelong formation in mind.⁷ *Lifelong formation, in other words, is the mother-idea and the organizing principle of all that our Constitutions have to say on formation.*

- a) Formation is, first of all, a response to a **call**: “Jesus called his Apostles to be with him” (C 96). It is very important to distinguish *call* from *choice*. In our age, *choice* has become one of our most important ways of framing reality, including the religious dimension of our existence. Positively, this word encourages personal responsibility and intentionality, moving people beyond blind acceptance and passive membership. Its principal weakness as a framework for the spiritual life, however, is the way it puts the individual at the centre. *Call*, instead, presupposes that we stand before Someone who Calls. To speak of call is to acknowledge a Caller, to see that God’s gracious initiative precedes all our projects and plans. Clearly, consecrated life is not a choice that we make. It is a response to a call.
- b) Formation is our **response** to the call of God. Art. 96 says: “We respond to this call by committing ourselves to an adequate ongoing **formation**, for which the Lord daily gives us his grace”.⁸ From this statement we can draw two points:

⁷ *The Project of Life of the Salesians of Don Bosco: A Guide to the Salesian Constitutions* (Rome, 1986) 731-733. We will not hold ourselves bound to repeat here all that these key texts have to say on the topic of formation understood as lifelong.

⁸ “To respond to God’s call means to live in an attitude of ‘formation’”. *The Project of Life* 743. “Formation is the joyful acceptance of the gift of one’s vocation and its actualization at every moment of one’s life and in every situation”. (FSDB 1)

- We can understand formation as lifelong only if we understand vocation also in the same way, as ongoing, which is to say: the Lord continues to call me day after day: “Every morning, the Lord wakens my ear” (Is 50,4). The Protestant martyr D. Bonhoeffer notes beautifully that the first and last words of Jesus to Peter are the same: “Follow me!” (cf Jn 21,22).⁹
 - Life is not *formative* if it is not seen from the point of view of vocational growth. Blessed J.H. Newman used to say: “Don’t be afraid that your life will end. Be afraid that it has never begun”. When it comes to formation, the real risk is that for some of us formation has never really begun.¹⁰ It is possible that much of our discernment is inadequate and even wrong because it does not take as its point of reference growth in vocation, understood as a *response to the Lord who calls*. And, on the contrary, many negative experiences and crises can be paradoxically formative, if only the person knows how to confront them from the point of view of growth in vocation.
- c) Our call is **to follow Jesus** in a particular way – **as consecrated persons in the spirit of Don Bosco**. To follow Jesus is to become like him, sons in the Son, allowing the Father to form in us his heart and his mind, so that we experience and feel, think and understand, evaluate and judge, decide, love and act like him, so that we can say with St Paul: “I live, no not I, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2,20). To follow Jesus as consecrated persons is to be living memorials of him, following him even in his concrete choices of celibacy, poverty and obedi-

⁹ But the apostle to whom these words are addressed is far from being “the same”: in the second case he is less cocksure, but far more centred, because his centre is now Christ and his merciful love. Peter’s ongoing transformation up to the point of martyrdom provides theology with a starting point for a reflection on grace and freedom that begins in Augustine and that comes down through Aquinas to our own times, a reflection that has everything to do with formation as lifelong.

¹⁰ See A. Cencini, *Formazione permanente: Ci crediamo davvero?* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2011) 131.

ence for the sake of the kingdom, anticipating already now what we all one day hope to be.

- d) The call is never “for oneself”: the Lord **calls in order to send**. So the mission is the way of living the election. The formation of the Salesian is oriented and motivated by mission (C 97).¹¹ “Immersed in the world and in the cares of pastoral life, the Salesian learns to meet God through those to whom he is sent”. (C 95) The *goal* is to meet God in the midst of our life and work; the *journey* is the formation process. So we do not have to jump out of life in order to be formed; the point is to get into it properly. The point is to be able to make the shift from *simply living our lives* to *learning from experience* in the way indicated in our Constitutions. In this way we will live in a “permanent state of mission” that is also a *permanent state of formation*.¹²
- e) Formation is not a phase or a part of Salesian life, but rather **a dimension that embraces the whole of life**, in such a way that prayer, fraternal life, apostolic commitment and the living out of the evangelical counsels all become *formative*, which is to say: *response* to the Lord who calls us (at every moment, the *whole of our life*).¹³
- f) Article 119 indicates to us the nature of our life understood as formation: “Living in the midst of the young and in constant contact with working-class surroundings, the Salesian *tries to discern the voice of the Spirit in the events of each day, and so acquires the ability to learn from life’s experiences*”.¹⁴

¹¹ “Ongoing formation must take its direction from the ecclesial identity of consecrated life. It is not a question merely of updating oneself about the new theologies, ecclesial norms or studies about the history and charism of the Institute. The task is to consolidate, or often even to rediscover, one’s place within the Church at the service of humanity”. (*Per vino nuovo* 35)

¹² See EG 25 echoed in GC27 74.1.

¹³ See VC 65, and Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Starting Afresh From Christ: A Renewed Commitment to Consecrated Life in the Third Millennium. Instruction*, Rome, 19 May 2002, 15.

¹⁴ The Italian original speaks simply of “la capacità di imparare dalla vita”.

Towards the end, the article states: “[The Salesian] feels it his task to make the best formative use of any situation, and to see it as a favourable opportunity for growing in his vocation”. No experience is irrelevant or useless if we are able to learn from it. Obviously, it is not merely a question of human effort, intelligence or shrewdness, but of faith: “[he] tries to discern **the voice of the Spirit** in the events of each day”.

- g) This brings us to an important question: what is **the role of initial formation**? The first thing to be said is that initial formation is not the *princeps analogatum* of formation (as we tend to think even now). It gets its identity from what “comes after” (otherwise it would not be initial). It is part of “formation as lifelong”, but it has its own peculiar characteristics. It is like what university study is for a professional: not an end in itself, but a time for picking up the indispensable tools and instruments for what comes after. Thus, for example, “spiritual direction,” far from being reserved to initial formation, is something that lays the foundations for a *spiritual accompaniment* that ought to last all through life. With the text of article 119 in mind, we could say, simply, that the aim of the initial part of life understood as formation is **learning how to learn**.¹⁵ And when in the “rest of life” the learning continues, life becomes formation, an ongoing response to the love of the Lord who, *miserando atque eligendo*,¹⁶ never ceases to call and never ceases to love.

¹⁵ Initial formation “cannot be satisfied with formation to docility and to the sane customs and traditions of a group, but must make the young consecrated person truly *docibilis*. This means forming a heart that is free to learn from the events of every day for all one’s life in the footsteps of Christ in order to put oneself at the service of all”. (*Per vino nuovo* 35)

¹⁶ Coat of Arms of Pope Francis, taken from the homilies of Bede the Venerable on the call of Matthew (CCL 122, 149-151).

3. Lifelong formation in the Salesian Constitutions: synthesis

Having tried to list some features of lifelong formation as it appears in our Constitutions, I think we could conclude with an extraordinary synthesis, which we find in article 98: **the formation experience**.

Enlightened by the person of Christ and by his Gospel, lived according to Don Bosco's spirit, the Salesian commits himself to a formation process which will last all his life and will keep pace with his maturing in other ways. He learns by experience the meaning of the Salesian vocation at the various moments of his life and accepts the ascetical demands it makes on him.

With the help of Mary, his Mother and Teacher, he gradually becomes a pastor and educator of the young in the lay or priestly state which he has embraced.

We find here, first of all, formation understood as a *process*: "the experience of the meaning and values of vocation". During the initial phases of formation we come to know these fundamental values, but "knowing" is not the same thing as "learning from experience". To make the perpetual profession it is not enough to merely know the Constitutions by heart; one needs an experience of Salesian life, one needs to have learnt from life.

Further, the article highlights the *lifelong character* of formation: "a process which will last all his life". When formation is understood as response, and when mission is understood as revelation, the excitement never ends, for even in old age the dialogue of love between God and us continues, and the Salesian becomes, more clearly than ever, sign and bearer of his love, *vultus misericordiae*.

Moreover, one cannot ignore the *ascesis* involved in our life understood as formation. The roses of Salesian values also have thorns, as Don Bosco tried to teach us in his dream of the Pergola of roses.

And then, it bears insisting that formation takes place essentially in a context of faith, lived within the Salesian charism: “*Enlightened by the person of Christ and by his Gospel – lived according to Don Bosco’s spirit*”. To be like Don Bosco is to be always with Jesus, in an adventure of the Spirit – and to be a consecrated son of Don Bosco is unthinkable without a personal, passionate, splendid relationship with Christ.

Finally, we must take into account the concluding words: the Salesian, every Salesian, is essentially an **educator-pastor**. He is educator-pastor before being brother, deacon or priest. A Salesian brother who is not a *pastor* is not a Salesian; a Salesian priest or deacon who is not an *educator* is not a Salesian. And our effectiveness stems, in the final analysis, from our relationship with the Lord, from our being con-formed to the heart of Christ. For we educate by what we are, by what we love. Out of the fullness of our heart we speak, and act, and are. *Cor ad cor loquitor*, as Francis de Sales used to say.

And all this, “*with the help of Mary, his Mother and Teacher*” who leads us to the fullness of our offering to the Lord”. (C 92) We are invited to be sons in the Son, allowing Mary to give each of us a body and heart like that of Christ, allowing her to teach us to love as she taught Don Bosco (C 84), or better still, as she taught Jesus himself.

4. How to be in formation all our life

So far we have been talking mainly about the “what”. But it is necessary to indicate also the “how,” based on the Constitutions themselves and the *Ratio* – while also recalling that a good “what” is already a “how”.¹⁷

¹⁷ *Per vino nuovo* 35 reminds us that we do not yet have a culture of ongoing formation, and that at the pedagogical level we have not yet been able to create concrete processes, whether individual or communitarian, that would make ongoing formation effective. The document also calls for a reflection on the structural-institutional dimension

Article 119, cited above, contains some words that we deliberately ignored: “the Salesian **tries** to discern... and so acquires the ability to **learn** from life”. This learning and effort takes place all through life, even though it has a special place in “initial formation”.

Articles 118 and 119 both indicate areas to be developed if our Salesian life is truly to become a *formative space*: “We try to grow in our human qualities, to conform ourselves more closely to Christ, and to renew our fidelity to Don Bosco, so that we can respond to the ever new demands arising from the situation of the young and the poor” (C 118). “Even when he is fully occupied he finds opportunities for renewing the religious and pastoral meaning of his life, and of learning to carry out his work with greater competence” (C 119). Two aspects typical of formation show up here very clearly: process and personal responsibility. In line with this, I list some methodological points that refer especially to the phase of initial formation.

- a) The **qualitative** dimension must prevail over the *quantitative*: the point is to learn from experience rather than to merely have many experiences.
- b) We need to develop the ability to **learn from our experiences**, even those that could be considered “negative”.
- c) Even before insisting on learning from our experiences, with Pope Francis we could learn to **dwell** before the mystery of life, the beauty of nature, the mystery of the other, whether it is a young person or our confrere or one who shares with us the mission. We take to heart the pope’s repeated insistence on the “pastoral look” and “serene attentiveness”.¹⁸ So let us not neglect our *lived experience*, if we would truly “learn

of ongoing formation: “Just as, after the Council of Trent, seminaries and novitiates were created to take care of initial formation, so now we are called to give rise to forms and structures that can sustain the journey of each consecrated person towards ever greater conformity to the sentiments of the Son (cf. Phil 2,5). This would be an extremely eloquent institutional signal”. (ibid.)

¹⁸ Cf. EG 51, and also 125, 141, 169; and LS 225-226.

from,” we need to first learn to dwell, remain, stay before the mystery. Dwelling there we know we are on holy ground and before the burning bush.

- d) In our learning and discernment, the **Word of God** is the hermeneutical criterion. The Word gives light and strength, and is our nourishment for the way (C 87). Salesian life makes place for prolonged exposure to the Word of God¹⁹ through personal reading as well as *lectio divina* in community.
- e) Formation also includes constant access to the **Constitutions** that are for us the concretization of the Word of God, and to the Salesian Sources that encapsulate the adventure of the Spirit lived by Don Bosco and so many Salesians after him. We can and must think of initial formation also as an *initiation to the sources*: learning to go regularly to our sources, so as to dwell in them and draw life from them.
- f) Such learning calls for **accompaniment**. There is no learning without a master, without, indeed, an **expert** (we might recall that this word comes from *ex-perior*, which is the root also of *experience*). We might insist here again that, like vocation and formation, personal spiritual accompaniment is also ongoing and lifelong.²⁰

¹⁹ Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, “The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life” (March 1980) 20: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsrlife/documents/rc_con_ccsrlife_doc_12081980_the-contemplative-dimension-of-religious-life_en.html (28.01.2017).

²⁰ While our Constitutions speak of entrusting oneself with simplicity to a spiritual director as one of the attitudes and means for growing in chastity (C 84), and the Regulations encourage each confrere to “maintain his openness to... personal and community spiritual direction” (R 99), the FSDB notes that “the methodical direction proper to the first period of formation is ordinarily not necessary in the adult age” (n. 267). *Vita Consecrata* (1996) had restricted itself to saying that “Confident and humble recourse to spiritual direction is of great help on the path of fidelity to the Gospel, especially in the period of formation and at certain other times in life” (VC 95). Our recent General Chapters, however, call for a modification in the direction of ongoing accompaniment, given that the goal of formation is conformity to Christ (see GC26 62 and GC27 67.2). *The Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests* (new edition, 2013, No. 73) speaks of spiritual direction as a necessity for priests: “In order to contribute to the improvement of their spirituality it is necessary for priests to practice spiritual direction with respect to themselves”. The new Ratio of the Church (2016) presents personal accompaniment

- g) This learning is far from being unidirectional, and always takes place in the network of relationships that is the **community** – the Salesian community (C 99) as well as the larger educative-pastoral community.²¹ “It takes a village to raise a child,” goes an African proverb cited by Pope Francis²² Art. 101 of the Constitutions reminds us that it is the provincial community that welcomes and accompanies the vocation of each confrere, and that, in turn, each confrere, “through prayer and personal witness, contributes to the sustaining and renewal of the vocation of his brothers”.
- h) We acquire the ability to give *formative quality to **ordinary life*** – and the creative formator will make use of all the means at his disposal to encourage learning from experience, prayerful reflection, and spiritual discernment as a form of life. Here I would like to insist also on the importance of reading.²³ Let us not underestimate the power of good reading to change us, in the first place the reading of the Word of God and of the Constitutions, as we have said already.²⁴
- i) We make place for the **ascesis** implied by our life and mission, not merely by accepting it but by learning from it. Once again, here, the place of our daily meditation, our moments of personal prayer, personal spiritual accompaniment, and even the faith sharing to which our recent General Chapters invite us.²⁵

as one of the most important dynamics of ongoing formation: “The priest must not isolate himself: he will need support and accompaniment in the spiritual and/or psychological areas. In any case, it will be useful to intensify the relationship with the spiritual Director so as to draw positive fruit from the difficulties, learning to accept the truth about one’s life and understanding it better in the light of the Gospel”. (Congregation for the Clergy, *Il dono della vocazione presbiterale: Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, No. 84)

²¹ FSDB 560.

²² Address of Pope Francis to Students and Teachers from Schools across Italy, Rome, 10 May 2014.

²³ See R 99: “Each one should cultivate the habit of reading...”.

²⁴ On the Word of God and the Constitutions as the two poles of our formative reading, see *The Project of Life* 759.

²⁵ GC27 67.4.

In our Constitutions and Regulations we find, in addition, a whole series of **instruments and means relevant to formation**. We remind ourselves that every personal plan of life (R 99) needs to be placed firmly within the optic of formation as response to a call, and in view of the needs of the province (R 100). The same holds for the ordinary and extraordinary initiatives promoted by the province or groups of provinces, the church or society (R 101), and obviously for periods of personal renewal (R 102).

This note on lifelong formation cannot end without a word on *devotion* – which, for Francis de Sales, is the ability to find God in everything, and to live life with freshness and joy, “running and leaping in the way of God’s commands”.²⁶

We pray that the Lord assist us everyday to be faithful – to “drink from the stream by the wayside” (Ps 110,7) so that our hearts be constantly lifted up to him who is the fount of living water, and that fountains of living water might burst forth in us (Jn 7,88) to give life to many.

²⁶ “Even as a man just recovering from illness, walks only so far as he is obliged to go, with a slow and weary step, so the converted sinner journeys along as far as God commands him but slowly and wearily, until he attains a true spirit of devotion, and then, like a sound man, he not only gets along, but he runs and leaps in the way of God’s Commands, and hastens gladly along the paths of heavenly counsels and inspirations”. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 1, chapter 1.

2.3 SALESIAN MISSIONARY ANIMATION. PROVINCIAL DELEGATE'S MANUAL

Fr Guillermo BASAÑES

Councillor General for the Missions

The guidelines will soon be published for the “*Salesian Missionary Animation. Provincial Delegate’s Manual*”, which I now present with joy and gratitude. The Manual is the fruit and the synthesis of a very long journey of patient research and sharing, with the aim of fostering the missionary spirit and commitment throughout the Society of Saint Francis of Sales (cf. Salesian Constitutions, 138).

These guidelines are in perfect continuity with the first precious text published under the guidance of Fr Luciano Odorico in 1997: “*Manual of the Provincial Delegate for Missionary Animation*”. This Manual will continue to be studied and kept in mind. It was also the result of serious and generous commitment to collaboration.

The work of drawing up the current text, which I now present, was influenced particularly by two World Consultations of the Missions Sector during the six-year period 2008-2014. After collecting all the material, which was abundant, we succeeded in summarizing and reorganizing it. At the same time, we put the material in the hands of the Provincial Delegates for Missionary Animation (PDMA) of each of the seven Salesian Regions in the world. We discussed it and shared with them during their regional meetings in 2015 and 2016. Finally, the Rector Major with his council also made it the object of study and discussion, and it was approved during our Plenary Session on 26 January 2017, the memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus.

These guidelines are first of all an appeal to the awareness and missionary responsibility of each Provincial and his Council.

We are called to be apostolic and fruitful among the marginalized young people of our world, but we must avoid the risk that missionary animation itself remain “marginal” among the concerns and interests of the Province, or that it become a set of disconnected activities entrusted to a confrere who may be more or less creative or original. We are comforted and encouraged by the fact that on all continents, Salesian Missionary Animation – in harmony and collaboration with Formation, Youth Ministry, Social Communication and Economy – is once more taking shape with greater consistency and dynamism.

Secondly, these guidelines are given into the hands of each PDMA as a “lamp for my steps”. From them he will have to find the sure references that will nourish his personal convictions regarding this delicate and strategic ministry, and also find a very concrete and well-articulated map for the various steps of his activity.

- The first part (from No. 1 to No. 5) develops especially the principles of missionary activity and animation. The second part (from No. 6 to No. 10) develops the different ways and structures of this animation.
- The text, in its essence, initially presents “*the mission in today’s world*” (No. 1) and places the Holy Trinity as its source (No. 2).
- Immediately afterwards it tries to answer questions about the ecclesiological (3) and charismatic (4) foundations of missionary activity, saying clearly that it is not merely a theoretically perfect presentation, but that its priority objective is to form the mentality and the lived experience of Salesians: “*This ecclesiological understanding requires, first of all, a conversion of the mind and heart of all Salesians to bring about an awareness of this epochal change by which the whole Church is missionary*” (No. 3).

This first part concludes (No. 5) by providing the necessary clarifications to understand what missionary animation is in gen-

eral, and Salesian missionary animation in particular, specifying its two primary goals: first, to “keep missionary ardour alive in every Salesian and in every member of the educational-pastoral community, and to foster a missionary culture” and secondly, “to discern in every Salesian the Lord’s call to be missionary”.

These first five points highlight the urgent need for initial and ongoing missionary formation at all levels. The contents, attitudes and experiences of this formation were developed in the guidelines given in “*Missionary Formation of Salesians of Don Bosco*” (Rome 2014), drawn up jointly by the Formation and Missions Sectors during the last six-year period. The fifty-eight footnotes of this small Manual which we are presenting, also indicate a wealth of Church and Congregation references that show clearly that missionary formation, and first of all that of the PDMA, requires careful study and thorough research.

The points that follow speak about the PDMA (No. 6), his identity and his tasks. Without excluding the possibility that the Delegate may be a layperson who shares the spirit and mission of Don Bosco, it is clearly stated that “since this is an important charismatic service, the Provincial appoints as PDMA *preferably a capable and suitable confrere*”. This detailed presentation is complemented by a reference to the Provincial Commission which must accompany the PDMA in carrying out his ministry (No. 7).

The clear emphasis on collaboration in the current section should be emphasized: “*The PDMA works in collaboration with the Delegates for Formation, Youth Ministry, Social Communication and the vocations animator and with all the other animation bodies of the Province, in order to ensure that the missionary spirit becomes the animating dynamism that crosses all its initiatives*” (No. 6).

Particularly significant in this regard are the quotations in the present Manual from the new “*Framework of Reference for Youth Ministry*” as, for example, when it says that “*the PDMA collaborates with the Delegate for Youth Ministry in fostering the*

missionary implementation of the Framework of Reference for Youth Ministry so that every educational and pastoral initiative, in any environment, always includes as an essential element the proclamation of Christ and solicitude for the salvation of young people”.

Towards the end, the Manual describes the role and the need for a Regional Coordinator for Missionary Animation and his Commission (Nos 8 and 9). These two roles are still being implemented only slowly and there are obvious differences between one region and another.

The last point in the Manual (No. 10) gives the basic lines of a simple, but vital world-wide structure that is the Consultation Body of the Missions Sector (No. 10).

I believe that this Manual, and above all its faithful and creative implementation, is already a responsible answer and a charismatic commitment appropriate in these exceptionally missionary times that the Church is experiencing, stimulated by the pontificate of Pope Francis.

May Mary, the ever-new Star of Evangelization, continue to guide our missionary steps!

2.4 THE EVANGELICAL WITNESS OF POVERTY. CRITERIA FOR THE FORMULATION OF THE *SCRUTINIUM PAUPERTATIS* AT PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY LEVEL

Bro. Jean Paul MULLER
Economer General

The economy sector focused on three themes for the six-year period 2014-2020: the evangelical witness of poverty, the solidarity use of resources and the responsible and transparent management of money.

As regards the first point, we can put in place two clear and specific actions:

- Promoting the draft of the *scrutinium paupertatis* (at provincial, community and personal level), thus guaranteeing clear guidelines and its implementation in a spirit of service;
- Verifying the use and administration of economic resources, with reference to the confrères and the community.

Concerning the above-mentioned themes, we must keep in mind some references elaborated in GC26: “*The practice of poverty demands a management of the resources entrusted to us which is consistent with the purpose of the mission, responsible, transparent and carried out in a spirit of solidarity*” (GC26, pag. 61); hence it emerges that “*a clear and complete accountability, a rational and optimal use of our property, initiative in finding the necessary resources to guarantee the sustainability of our works*” (GC26, pag. 61), are strongly desirable (if not a duty).

It is worth noting how these requests, formulated in GC26 and successively developed in GC27, move in the context of a Church that is ever more transparent and attentive in combating corruption and inefficiency wherever hidden. A clear example of this is the drafting and publication of the book “The Management

of the Ecclesiastical Goods of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life”, together with the ever-stronger sensitivity of Pope Francis for such themes. In this scenario, particular value assumes for us Salesians the tool of the *scrutinium paupertatis*. Fr Vecchi “*encourage[s] every single confrere, as well as communities and those who exercise the service of authority to live the “scrutinium” not so much as an examination of conscience, (but rather) as an experience of the Spirit, as an entrustment to his purifying fire and power of regeneration*” (AGC 367, pag. 31).

In this perspective, the *scrutinium* is not lived as an act of control or of lack of trust, but it must be seen as a service to communion and transparency in personal life, because only in purity it is possible to look for Christ and follow his teachings.

Evangelical Testimony of Poverty

The aspiration of some confrères to attain personal benefits at the expense of improving their community, together with the piling up some superfluous material goods, often leads us not to “*witness to the primacy of God through the practice of the vows, our modest lifestyle, commitment to work, dedication to the mission, personal and community prayer faithfully practised*” (GC27, Witnesses to the Radical Approach of the Gospel, pag. 32). This is a focal point highlighted in GC27, the return to the origins, i.e. rediscovering the true Salesian being which over time has been “watered down”. The *scrutinium* acts like an informatics “antivirus” – if I may use this metaphor – that, scanning our lifestyle, highlights what we do well and what we are doing wrong. However, the care for our not so clear behaviour can come only from ourselves. There must be an awareness of willingness to change, of willing to return on the path that leads to God.

1. *Personal Responsibility on Poverty*

Each one of us is called to witness to poverty autonomously and individually, in their lifestyle and in their daily attitude. Poverty is the first aspect highlighted in the Gospel; this is a clear path for those who want to live according to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Poverty is not a possibility, it is a conscious and clear choice for us, consecrated people; our existence and our work must be at the service of the most needy and destitute youth.

Whoever does not have a true, practical and real love for poverty, will not achieve much in their spiritual life, because besides lacking the impetus, even without their realising it, they will end up by caressing the senses, introducing in their souls the seeds of temptation. In fact, *"each one of us bears primary responsibility for his own poverty, daily living out by the frugality of his life the detachment he has promised"* (Const. 75). We must toil to become ever more witnesses to evangelical radicality.

2. *Poverty, a Path to Bliss*

Our lifestyle must be shaped as if it were a soil, we must ask ourselves if the footsteps Jesus leaves in our lives are impressed in our humid soil, or whether we are "clayey" and arid, and hence they do not take root, because we have a heart closed to God's messages. Fr Ricceri used to say that *"we must be poor Salesians, destined to poor youth; our works must be the image of our poverty"*.

Material goods are necessary as long as they are used as tools to implement our mission, they must not enter into our heart to guide our life. When we begin to seek pleasure or to pile up money, we are no longer servants of God, but become "spiritual bankers". We cannot make any progress without the conversion of the heart, first of all to poverty, which implies the demand and the concession of living one's entire life in symbiosis with one's neighbour. Each one of us is called to serve their brethren, we must return to the origins, to the humility of serving rather than

being served. “*He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all”* (Mk 9:35); then he took a little child and said: “*Become like this child*”. Christ, the Pope explains, “overturns everything. The glory and the cross, greatness and the little child...”¹. May the Lord help us to be always simple and pure like little children.

Each one of us, in their subconsciousness, must ask this question:

- Which difficulties do I encounter in abandoning material goods?
- Are my lifestyle and behaviour respectful of the Constitutions and Regulations?
- Can I call myself a faithful servant of Jesus Christ?
- Do I consider poverty as a virtue necessary to my interior life, so as to offer the world the testimony of an open Church, close to the sufferings of the poor?
- Which are the obscure zones of my existence that are still entrapped in worldliness?
- Am I responsible with my life of a counter-testimony?

Although spirituality is an inborn quality, yet it must be cultivated and developed; I would even say protected. Let’s think of the flame of a candle, a breath of wind can blow it out, and nowadays the world offers lots of drafts of wind. Let us not be conditioned in our apostolate by external factors; what matters is repeating “yes” to the call of Jesus that continues to guide us in each moment of our life.

3. *Poverty as Communion of Goods*

Another flower in the tree of poverty is the one of sharing with the community. Nothing must be kept for oneself, but “*we share together our material goods, the fruits of our work, the gifts we receive and whatever comes to us from pensions, subsidies and insur-*

¹ Pope Francis, Morning Meditation in the Chapel of Domus Sancta Martha, Tempted by Worldliness, Tuesday, 21 February 2017.

ance policies [...]” (Const. 76). The good shared with others can be a spark that brings help to several people at the same time, because “in the community the good of each individual becomes the good of all” (Const. 76). The discernment on community life, which began in GC25 and is still ongoing after GC27, is undoubtedly very important. This acquires relevance in the present context, where many novices come from very diverse cultures and families; in fact “many who knock on our doors to enter the Congregation do not come from our works, and that means that they may not have a suitable Salesian and family background. For many confrères the charism has not been assimilated almost by osmosis since their pre-teen years, as used to happen among us in the past”².

We necessarily refer to the “concreteness of poverty”, in fact we are called to proclaim with our life and with our culture of origin, even prior to our words, the will of God in our daily lifestyle.

- Poverty inspires the solidarity of little with the many; thus the community becomes the home of fraternity and union in Christ;
- Evangelical poverty inspires us to be among those most in need, especially the poorest youth; let us reach out to them in the most peripheral places of the world and let us sustain them so that they may improve their material and spiritual situation;
- Let us share with an open heart and with the wisdom of a good family man;
- Let our communities be hospitable and involving in the Salesian family spirit.

4. *Poverty: intertwining with mission and work*

The intertwining of poverty, work and mission is highlighted above all in the daily relationship with the youth present in the

² Address of the Rector Major emeritus, Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva, at the opening of GC27, at the opening of GC27, in *Witnesses to the Radical Approach to the Gospel*

oratories, schools etc. The working commitment of the individual leads him to fulfil himself in symbiosis with the Salesian community and mission; in fact we are all so many pieces of one mosaic where each one is called to play their role. "*Work and temperance will make the Congregation flourish; whereas the seeking of an easy and comfortable life will instead bring about its death*" (Const. 18).

Service to the young fits in the scheme outlined on poverty, each step is directed to the good of the young. Without the need of keeping and saving material goods, it is possible to devote one's strengths to noble objectives, without obtaining anything in return but merits in heaven. Before being taught, poverty must be lived, must be transmitted with the witness of life, because it identifies our full trust in Providence that will sustain us when we strongly commit ourselves to the care of the most needy. Many Salesian projects in the world are being carried out all the same, despite their facing problems and halts due to scarcity of financial resources. This is not a reason to stop having faith and working to change things. By saying this I mean that we must not sink into idleness, but we must always be proactive and resourceful in finding the means to work.

Work and faith are fundamental instruments we must use to transform negative aspects and injustices into positive aspects of solidarity. Faith must express itself in *work and temperance* (GC27). When we deal with the youth, often our sole objective is their social welfare, and we neglect to accompany them towards a more fruitful and fecund spiritual life. Let us remember "*we believe that God is awaiting us in the young to offer us the grace of meeting with him and to dispose us to serve him in them, recognizing their dignity and educating them to the fullness of life*" (GC23, p. 95).

We must recognize and englobe in our *modus operandi* the concept of "working in joint responsibility" (GC 27, p. 28). Often-times co-responsibility is not found in our works, both among the confrères and lay collaborators. In the first case, there is a ten-

dency to refer all the management and decisions to the superiors, without ever participating in the proposals and the implementation of the activities; in the second case there is the tendency to delegate all the works of the house to salaried employees, thus weakening co-responsibility. The idleness and lack of joint responsibility of the confrères with regard to the management and economic situation of a house leads the same not to be aware of the daily difficulties and problems, and therefore the *scrutinium paupertatis* does not always manage to change some wrong habits. Don Bosco said: *"Whoever wants to join the Congregation must love work... Let nothing essential be lacking, but one has to work... Let no one enter the Congregation with the hope of keeping their arms akimbo"* (MB XIII, 424).

Work in our Salesian spirituality is understood as the fulfilment of our vocation, as a testimony of life and an educative message. Community work characterizes our apostolic action with the young. We are a family and not a group of individuals. In our reality: *"work is the visibility of Salesian mysticism and is an expression of the passion for souls, while temperance is the visibility of Salesian asceticism and is an expression of the cetera tolle"* (AGC 413, p. 45).

5. Poverty as transparency in the use of money and good administration

Poverty is expressed first of all in the individual behaviour of each confrère; then the witness of temperance in lifestyle must show at community level and be the symbol of an austere and vice-free life. In a world that is ever more in economic difficulty, faced by manifold social crises, it is imperative that our lifestyle be modest and respectful of the social and economic context where the community is inserted.

The law, and above all the complexity of the market and of international relations, request sectorial competences, linked more than ever to key figures inside post-modern society. By this, I re-

fer to professionals who are in charge of budget checking, transparency and bi-directional communication between us and society; these can no longer be improvised, because it must be clear that every human resource has a competence and a task that must be carried out in the best possible way in order to achieve the planned targets. Let's keep in mind that today every single activity of ours must be assessed. It does not suffice to do good, we must also know how to do it! Improving the competences and the formation of those responsible of the Salesian works is more than ever fundamental to realize the *best practice* in administration and to increase the *capacity building*, so as to realize more and more the longed-for self-sustainability of the works. Having a proactive and adaptable approach is a method to follow in all fields of life, especially in religious and social works.

The wise management of the resources of the Congregation, vigilance on the budgets and expenses are to be included in the context outlined by Pope Francis in 2014 with regard to a humble and poor Church. "*Supervision and controls are not intended as a limitation of the autonomy of the entities or a sign of lack of trust, but as an expression of a service to communion and transparency, also to the protection of those who carry out delicate tasks of administration*"³. But we must not refer only to this, we must also consider Canon Law, in particular canon 1284, which calls "*diligentia boni patrisfamilias* (the diligence of a good householder) the care with which every administrator must fulfil his task. From this jurisdictional definition of the figure of the good administrator, some key indications of economic and administrative management derive. Let us see them in detail:

- **Care:** that is, attention to the work. This must present an economic balance (both in revenue and outflow) and, moreover, it must be restructured when the building presents problems, so that community places are healthy and liveable. Let's

³ Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Guidelines for the Management of Goods in the Institutes of Consecrated life and the Societies of Apostolic Life, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014.

adopt the concept of the Roman *res publica*. By this, I mean that community goods must be safeguarded as much as personal ones, so they must not be damaged or left in ruins without anyone taking care of them. We may also recover a true community spirit from these things.

- **Caution:** This refers in particular to the bonds or bank loans we enter into. Careful discernment and accurate assessment of the scope of the bank loan, both in relation to the economic situation of the Work (current and future) and the return plan for the loan, must be made. *"It will never be sufficiently recommended that these operations should not be faced with carelessness, with vague and uncertain perspectives, with the illusory forecast of random incomes (collections, subsidies, offerings). There is the risk to put into serious difficulty a House, a Province, and to create a hard life for those who will come"*⁴. In this case, when drawing up the loan repayment plan to be submitted to the General Council, it is strongly advisable to request the assistance of professional advisors and technicians. In the plan, the timing, the guaranteeing assets, the interests to be paid and the amortizations must not be omitted. Always in relation to caution, it should be noted that *"if any member, no matter what office he holds, should contract debts or any obligation without authorization from a competent superior, he alone remains responsible. Neither the Society nor the Province nor the house to which he belongs accepts any responsibility in the matter"* (Reg. 191). So let those who have delicate roles and are managing money be aware that their actions or subtraction of economic funds, to facilitate any person or to pay bribes, makes them directly responsible both before the law and in front of the institutions.
- **Expertise:** Making use of external consultants and technical experts is no longer a choice, but a duty in this contemporary

⁴ Juridical elements and administrative praxis in the governance of the Province, Chapter 11, , pp. 145-146. Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 2004.

society that is becoming increasingly complex from a legal and economic point of view. Expertise is realized with the involvement and participation of employees in our structures. Our collaborators must be constantly formed and qualified anew according to needs, they must be integrated and socialized with the typical *vision* of the Congregation; in fact, the humanization of the place of work necessarily leads to the involvement of the staff in achieving the goals and increasing their productivity. We recall the words of Pope Benedict XVI on employees: “*They should not be regarded as “collaborators” of the clergy, but, rather, as people who are really “co-responsible” for the Church’s being and acting*”⁵. Feeling part of something important drives individuals to feel responsible for the good performance of the structure and work, in other words “taking to heart” a mission, necessarily leads to “taking care”. I would like to emphasize, however, that consultants are a valuable aid to us, but they cannot replace us in the fundamental decisions for our works. I therefore hope for courses of upgrading and ongoing formation for economists so as to guide and channel events, instead of finding ourselves in situations of financial emergencies.

- **Legality and vigilance:** Legality must be understood in two ways: on the one hand, we refer to respect for civil laws, while on the other we renew our commitment to respect for our constitutions and regulations. As far as the law is concerned, GC26 had already emphasized the importance of the conditions of the social environment and of the nation in which we operate, together with the respect of lawfulness in the stipulation of employment contracts, so as not to incur sanctions. Let us remember that respect for labour laws is not an optional but an obligation, no type of contract that does not respect the human rights and the psychophysical integrity of the worker is acceptable. It goes without saying that contracts

⁵ Message of Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of the VI Ordinary Assembly of the International Forum of Azione Cattolica, August 10th, 2012.

that do not conform to legal norms cause an image damage to the Congregation, which is hardly repairable within the social context in which many of us work and are in mission.

Again with regard to legality we clarify two more particularly interesting points:

1. **Concentration of responsibilities.** I am referring to the danger, sometimes underestimated, to represent in a single person several institutional offices, even delicate ones, that inevitably invalidate the transparency-related process of control. We know that in some local communities the rector's (the superior's) figure coincides with the one of the economer, who deals with management and accounting. As was often underscored by the Rector Major, this is really dangerous, because the supervision of management and administration ends up to be lacking at a superior level, i.e. the certification of the correctness of what is being administered (will be lacking). In fact, *"all temporal goods are administered respectively by the economer general and by provincial and local economers, under the direction and control of the appropriate superiors and councils, in conformity with canonical dispositions, in accordance with the Constitutions and General Regulations, and in compliance with the laws of each country"* (Const. 190). The Salesian Constitutions clearly show us the importance of the evaluation, the supervision of higher hierarchical levels on the work of the economer; precisely this clear division of roles ensures transparency. However, considering the current situation with regard to the decline in vocations, Canon Law states: *"In each institute and likewise in each province which is governed by a major superior, there is to be a Finance officer, distinct from the major superior and constituted according to the norm of proper law, who is to manage the administration of goods under the direction of the respective superior. Insofar as possible, a Finance officer distinct from the local superior is to be designated even in local communities"* (Can.636). The phrase "insofar as possible" cannot be interpreted as an open-

ing towards the double charge (economer/director), only in exceptional cases and with the consent of the superiors it will be possible to have a double assignment, assuming that the ultimate responsible of the supervision will be in charge of the provincial economer and the provincial in such a way as to maintain transparency in the administration.

2. **Corruption:** this is another vital point to deal with. As Pope Francis says, *"corruption is a sin easier for all of us who have some power, either ecclesiastical, religious, economic and political"*. We do not have to be "whitewashed sepulchres", beautiful outside but full of rotten bones in the inside. Corruption is sneaky and attracts us and for some time makes us live over our possibilities but with time it will lead us to destruction. Corruption is manifested through multiple aspects: misappropriation of money or exaction, etc. Improper misappropriation consists in the private use of funds for projects or the theft of these funds to transfer them to one's own bank account. Also the exchange of resources in local currency on the black market, obtaining higher exchange rates, must be condemned. If we discover some suspicious behaviour, it is our right and duty, both as men of God and as men of justice, to intervene so that these "abnormal" situations may come to an end, so that the "corrupt" person be brought to the path of redemption. Let none of us ever get soiled with conspiratorial behaviours.

The most important tool to prevent corruption is surely transparency and a periodic, not just annual, control of the budgets. In this regard, it is particularly important to draw up budgets that respect international transparency and reporting schemes in the administration of the funding and charity of believers; in addition, an audit should be carried out to certify the correctness and goodness of the same according to internationally recognized criteria. The aim is to create a continuous improvement of our works not only through transparency but also through the *benchmarking* method between

the various Provinces so that all of them are aligned on high standards. On the road of commitment to reporting and transparency, tools such as monitoring and evaluation should not be ignored. Monitoring must start with the commencement of the implementation phase of the work and must end with the same, it must provide us with data on previously identified indicators in order to check the activity progress and allow for a specific correction. The evaluation can be summarized with two concepts: formulation of useful recommendations for project planning and verification during the work of the initial forecasts.

Ultimately it is required to have a clear picture of how all the works in each Province are handled. In the Provinces, budgets and investment plans must always be approved annually, so as to quantify the resources needed. Accounting records describing in detail the various operations that have been carried out should be kept in the archive. Last but not least, let the resources available be oriented to the mission and to youth activities. Seek, wherever possible, to show solidarity in the broad sense of the word, even between the same Provinces and the Congregation as a whole, because we are a great world family as expressed in art. 76 of the Constitutions.

Lastly, I would like to point out that poverty is intimately intertwined with the common good, in particular with the environment and the safeguarding of the Common House. Therefore, the *scrutinium paupertatis* also serves to make our administrative and managerial choices oriented to an “economic ecology”⁶ of our works, which means that our actions aim in long-term at environmental sustainability.

6. Poverty as obedience

Obedience is one of the pillars of Salesian tradition. It is often forgotten that “*the service of authority and the willingness to obey*

⁶ Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato si*, 141.

are the principles of cohesion in the Congregation and guarantee its permanence" (Const. 65). Many of us seek positions of command and prestige, surrendering to the sin of pride and worldliness. In some cases real centres of power are established, independent from the superior, a kind of community in the community. Poverty demands to be divested of all sorts of willingness of power and to return to being servants of the Congregation and of God.

Today, a genuine examination of conscience is fundamental, starting from the reflection on the Gospel of Mark, in which it is said that the disciples James and John before Jesus claimed "*places of honour according to their hierarchical vision of the kingdom of God*". The answer of Christ is "*an invitation to follow him on the path of love and service, rejecting the worldly temptation of wanting to rule and command over others*"; changing one's mentality from the craving of power to the joy of disappearing and serving becomes ever more urgent.

Following the clear and precise indications of the superior must be obvious, and not a possibility among the many. Today more than ever a single mistake in management can cost a high price to the single work and/or to the Province. Let us always keep an open dialogue with the superior and his council, let us always be co-responsible in decisions and in participation of the same; in fact, as Don Bosco said, "*alone we can do very little, but united we are much stronger*".

Conclusion

I have tried to define poverty by following some clear lines of transparency and sound administration, providing in some passages questions to better direct the confrères and Provincials. The implementation and formulation of the *scrutinium pauper-tatis* should follow a few points:

1. Debate and suggestions that a team of Salesian Officers receive;
2. A draft of the official instrument, corrected in the light of the new historical period in which we live;

3. Instructions of methodology and implementation in the compilation.

The future is rich in complex challenges, so let us walk this way together, as Jesus did with the apostles, to rediscover the richness of a communion of intent and to carry out activities in favour of youth. The final invitation is that the hearts of each one of us be guided by the true evangelical inspiration in achieving the supreme good.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

Below are some of the main activities of the Rector Major from January to June 2017.

– **January 2017**

The Rector Major begins the New Year at his family's home in Luanco, Spain. When he returns to Rome, he does several office works and chairs the meetings of the General Council's winter session. On the Feast of Epiphany he presides over the Holy Mass at the General House of the FMAs and on the following day he visits the confreres of the 'Artemide Zatti' care home in Rome. Each day he has several meetings with his Councilors and other confreres from the General House and with various people who request hearing. He also meets some of the newly appointed Provincials.

On January 11th, he visits in succession the novitiates of Genzano (SDB) and Castelgandolfo (FMA). On the 12th-14th, at various moments he attends the meeting of the major Procures, which is being held at Pisana; on the 16th, together with his Vicar, he attends a meeting with officials of the Vati-

can Secretariat of State and on the 17th, he hosts for lunch at the General House the Ambassadors to the Holy See of Panama, Angola, Chile, China-Taiwan, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela, sharing a moment of fraternity and friendship.

On January 19th-22nd, the Rector Major presides over the *Days of Spirituality of the Salesian Family* held at the 'Salesianum' in Rome.

In the last week of January, before leaving for the American continent, on the 23rd he visits the Zefirino Namuncurá (Gerini) community; on the 24th he meets the community at the Vatican for the festive dinner in honour of our patron St. Francis of Sales, meeting several Salesian bishops members of the Vatican Curia. On the 25th, together with other members of the General Council, he visits the 'Giuseppe Cafasso' (Testaccio) community for dinner, and on the 26th he travels to Barcelona, Spain, to celebrate the anniversary of EDEBÉ Publication. On the following day he returns to Rome. Finally, on the 30th he leaves to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, where, accompanied by his person-

al secretary and by the Provincial, he will begin his *visit to the Province of the Antilles* (ANT).

On the 31st, Saint John Bosco's solemnity, he meets the ANT Provincial Council, the youth of SYM/MGS of the Dominican Republic, and presides over the solemn Eucharist in honour of Don Bosco with the whole Salesian Family in the Salesian Parish of Santo Domingo.

– **February 2017**

On February 1st, the Rector Major visits the works of La Vega (IATESA), Moca and Jarabacoa, in the Dominican Republic; on the 2nd and the 3rd he visits Cantera and Cataño in Puerto Rico; and on the 4th and the 5th in Cuba he visits La Habana, Peñalver and La Habana Vieja. In the various countries he meets the Salesians, the Salesian Family and the young. It is worth underscoring the encounter with the Salesian Family and the young people in Peñalver, Cuba, especially because of the beautiful, creative and courageous artistic-cultural moment prepared by the young people of the SYM/MGS, with a reading of their history as a country and society. On the 5th of February in the evening, the Rector Major and his secretary leave Havana to return to Rome.

On February 7th, the Rector Major receives the President of the 'Mediterraneo Foundation', Mr Michele Capasso, to define the details of his visit to the Museum of Peace on the following days.

Between February 9th and 16th, the Rector Major stays in Malta for an intensive week of English, and on the 17th, together with his secretary, he meets with the Ambassadors of Panama and of Guatemala to the Holy See, who wanted to accompany the inauguration of the space dedicated to Don Bosco and the young in the Peace Museum MAMT, promoted by the 'Mediterraneo Foundation'.

From the 19th to the 26th of January, the Rector Major, accompanied by his secretary and the Regional Councillor of East Asia and Oceania, visits the Province of Vietnam (VIE). Then, on the 27th, he goes to Chennai, India, to participate in the *Team Visit of the Asia Region*, the first of the series.

During his stay in Vietnam, he visits the Salesian Presences in Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) on 20th-23rd; Dalat and High Land area, on 23rd-24th, and Thái Bình, in the North on the 25th and 26th. During the various stages of the visit, he meets with the Salesians, the numerous members of the Salesian Family and the young. Worth mentioning

is the liveliness of the Salesian charism in this country, which, apart from more than 300 SDBs in the country, has offered over 100 missionaries. At Thái Bình, the Rector Major and his companions were hosted by the Salesian Bishop Pierre Nguyen Van De in his home, which is also a minor seminary and a meeting house, a home open to all. In this house, the Rector Major met 5000 young people of the Diocese, among whom there were also 800 coming from the Salesian works of the North: meeting, cultural moment, Eucharist. A real juvenile feast!

– **March 2017**

During the month of March 2017, the Rector Major participates in and presides over *four Team Visits*: *South Asia* (February 28th – March 4th, Chennai, India); *East Asia and Oceania* (March 7th-10th, in Hua Hin, Thailand); *America South Cone* (March 21st-24th, Ypacaraí, Paraguay), and *Interamerica* (March 28th - April 1st, Cochabamba, Bolivia). In all these meetings, besides the programs set for each meeting, the Rector Major had several talks with Provincials and other participants, he met some provincial councils, gave interviews, etc.

After the Team Visits in Asia he returned to Rome for a couple of

days and on March 14th he left for Buenos Aires, together with his secretary, to make a private visit to the Salesian Agricultural School in Del Valle on the 15th, and on the following day, to the Salesian Central Archive of Buenos Aires (linked to the one Bahía Blanca) which is in the process of being refurbished and technologically updated. This Archive, with two locations, is considered by the Rector Major of great importance because it keeps part of the history of the missionary origins of our Congregation. After this visit, the Rector Major had lunch with the confrères of the Care Home, and then departed for Santiago de Chile to visit the south of Chilean Patagonia.

On March 17th-19th, he visited the Salesian presence in Punta Arenas, on the southern end of the American continent, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of Bishop Giuseppe Fagnano. In Punta Arenas he also met some youth, confrères and members of the Salesian Family of the Presences of Puerto Natales, Porvenir, Punta Arenas and of the nearby Argentine presences of Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire): Ushuaia and Rio Grande. The Rector Major also inaugurated the large mural of the outer corner of San José High School with a beautiful image of

Bishop Fagnano. On these days he also had the opportunity to visit Dawson Island, formerly headquarters of a mission of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and the Salesian Museum 'Mag-giorino Borgatello'.

– April 2017

On his return to Rome after the American "Team Visits", the Rector Major presided over the "Intermediate" session of the General Council (from April 3rd to 12th), combining the Council meetings with various office jobs and diverse hearings.

Worth noting is the meeting of April 4th with the Archbishop of the City of Panama, Msgr. José Domingo Ulloa, accompanied by Cardinal José Luis Lacunza, Bishop of David, Panama; worth mentioning are also the meetings with Msgr. Rafael Valdivieso, Bishop of Chitré, Vice-President of the Bishops' Conference; Fr Ramón Aguilar, in charge of the Youth Ministry of the Bishops' Conference; Mr. Victor Chang, Executive Secretary of World Youth Day 2019; and also the Ambassador of the Republic of Panama to the Holy See, H.E. Miroslava Rosas, and the attaché at the Embassy, Ms. Carmen Inchausti. The main theme of the meeting was the collaboration of

the Salesian Congregation in the preparation and conduct of WYD 2019, which will have Don Bosco as one of the patron saints of the Days.

In the following days, the Rector Major received the FMA Sisters of the "Mornese Project" and presided over the Mass with the IUS team, which had its meeting at Pisana on April 7th. During this period, he met several confreres, including some recently appointed Provincials, and the team that is in charge of Salesian sites (on the 11th).

On April 13th-16th, the Rector Major celebrated the Easter Triduum in his country, together with his family.

On the 17th, he departed from Madrid to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, along with his secretary, to begin his *visit to the AFE Province* (between April 18th and 27th). He visited the Presences of Dar Es Salaam, Iringa, Mafinga, Didia and Moshi, Tanzania, and Nairobi and Kakuma in Kenya. In the two countries he met the SDB confrères, novices, the youth and members of the Salesian Family. He had special meetings with the confrères in the initial stages of formation: the post-novices at Moshi, and theology students at Utume. Particularly important moments were: the Eucharist of thanksgiving for the 25

years of presence in Moshi; the solemn Eucharist in Nairobi Upper Hill (Sunday 23rd) attended by more than 3,000 people, and during which 12 confreres did their perpetual profession, and a visit to the refugee camp at Kakuma. This camp depends on the United Nations; this is the only religious parish and community located inside a refugee camp in the world. This is a very significant and prophetic Salesian presence.

On the 29th, the Rector Major returned to the General House.

– May 2017

During the first week of May, the Rector Major devoted all the time to office work. Among the hearings, worth mentioning are those of some UPS members at different times of the week. On the 8th, together with his secretary, he left for Mexico City to begin the *Visit to the Province of South Mexico (MEM)* from May 9th to 12th.

As in all his visits to the Provinces, the Rector Major met the Provincial Council, the confrères, the members of the Salesian Family and the young. And as on many occasions he also met the Salesian and lay personnel who work in the provincial headquarters. He also had dinner together with the Council of the Daughters of Mary

Help of Christians and visited their community of the provincial house. In the MEM, besides the provincial house, he also visited several Salesian Presences: the Don Bosco Institute of Mexico City, the Sanctuary of Maria Auxiliadora, the Colegio Santa Julia, the Novitiate and the Youth Centre in Coacalco.

During the meeting with the SDB confrères at the Don Bosco Institute, on May 10th, he participated in a beautiful concert of the IDB Youth Orchestra in his honour. Particularly important was the meeting with the Salesian Family: the Rector Major participated in a 4 km pilgrimage to the “Glorieta del Peralvillo” to arrive at the Illustrious and National Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe (INBG) and preside over a solemn Eucharist together with 10,000 participants of the Salesian Family of MEM, the Provincial and some delegates from MEG sister-Province, and many students and teachers of the MEM schools. On the next day, a very significant moment was the meeting with the young of SYM/MGS in Coacalco.

A very special moment was when returning to the Basilica of Guadalupe on the evening of the 10th, the Rector Major and his secretary, the Regional Councillor Fr Timothy Ploch, the Provincials and a

small group of confrères (13 counting the RM) were received by the Rector of INBG, Mgr. Enrique Glennie Graue, the Vice Rector, Canon Pedro Tapia Rosete, and Canon Rómulo Eduardo Chávez Sánchez, theologian and director of the Higher Institute of Guadalupan Studies, and postulator of the cause of St. Juan Diego. After an interesting and profound explanation, they were allowed to see closely and also to touch the Holy Image of Our Lady in a special room, ordinarily not open to public access. This moment of great religious intensity in the room of the patron saint of the American continent, where also Pope Francis had been a year ago, strongly marked this visit in Mexico.

On his return to Rome on May 14th, the Rector Major devoted an entire week to the *Team Visit of Centre and North Europe Region* (Atlantic-German Conference) at the 'Salesianum' (from the 16th to the 20th). As in other such events, he met the various Provincials and other confrères.

On the 19th, at noon, the Rector Major was received in a private audience by the Holy Father Pope Francis.

On the 20th in the afternoon he left for Turin, accompanied by two Salesian Brothers of the General

House, Bro. Renato Celato and Bro. Cesare Borlengo, and by his secretary. In Valdocco he participated in the encounter on the occasion of the Centenary of the Volunteers of Don Bosco (May 21st); he presided over the *Consultation team* of the Salesian Family (22nd-23rd), coordinated by his delegate Fr Eusebio Muñoz; he presided over the solemn Mass of SYM/MGS on the occasion of the feast of Mary Help of Christians and joined the Evening Procession, that was presided over by Msgr. Cesare Nosiglia, Archbishop of Turin. On the 23rd in the afternoon, he also went to Colle Don Bosco for an inspection of the entire building, together with the rector, the economist and other confrères of the Colle community, in view of the important investments to be made to make it more suitable for the project of the Salesian sites.

On his return to Rome together with those accompanying him, on the 25th, he dedicated the following days to office work and several meetings. Among these, worth mentioning is the meeting with Card. Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development of the Holy See. He also met a group of Salesian Ladies coming from the

American continent, and the confrères convened by the Dicastery for Formation to collaborate in the study of a new manual for Rectors.

– June 2017

The Rector Major started the month of June with a visit to the Lombardo-Emiliana Province (ILE) (on 1st to 4th). He visited the works of Bologna (Bologna-Blessed Virgin of St. Luke and Castel de' Britti, on the 1st and the 2nd), and Milan (St. Ambrose and Provincial House, on the 3rd and 4th). He then met with the confrères, members of the Salesian Family and young people of the SYM/MGS of the Emilia Romagna and San Marino areas in the early days, and of Lombardy and Canton Ticino in the following days. In Bologna there was a meeting with the Provincial Council and in Milan a meeting with representatives of the students of the Schools and Vocational Training Centres.

On the 5th of June, he began the meetings of the General Council's summer plenary session and from the 12th to the 24th he accompanied, together with his Vicar and other Councillors, the formation course of the new Provincials.

On June 9th to 11th, he and his secretary and the Regional Councillor for Central and North Eu-

rope went to Poznan, Poland (PLO) for the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the death of 5 young oratory martyrs. In Poznan Wroniecka he met family members of these 5 youth, he presided over the main Eucharist (Winogrady), met the Salesian Family and visited Fortress VII, one of the prisons where the young martyrs were kept, and who were beheaded a few months later in Dresden.

During the second and third week of the Council, the Rector Major received every day one of the provincials attending the formation course.

On May 16th-17th, the Rector Major went to Turin to meet some professors of the Crocetta Theological Institute. On Sunday 18th, he went to Chiari (Brescia) to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the death of Fr Silvio Galli, who was renowned and loved in the area for his testimony of Salesian life and above all for his service to the poorest. Upon invitation by the members of the "Don Silvio Galli Auxilium Association" and the Salesian community, he presided over the Mass and met the members of the Association and the confrères.

4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

The Vicar of the Rector Major

The Vicar of the Rector Major on *January 28th-31st, 2017*, replacing the Rector Major, presided over the celebrations for Don Bosco's feast in Chieri, Colle Don Bosco and Valdocco; he presented the Strenna 2017 to the Salesian Family; he met with the ICP Provincial and the Councils of the Salesian communities of the Salesian sites to deepen the further steps that can be taken to accomplish their pastoral project and the search for the staff to be assigned there.

He participated in various *Team Visits*: from February 28th to March 4th in Chennai, India for the *South Asia Region*; on March 6th to 11th, in Hua Hin in Thailand for the *East Asia and Oceania Region*; on March 21st to 25th, in Ypacaraí in Paraguay for the *America South Cone Region*; on March 28th to April 1st in Cochabamba, Bolivia, for the *Interamerica Region*; on May 16th to 20th at the "Salesianum" of Rome for the *German Atlantic Zone of Centre and North Europe Region*.

From April 26th to May 4th he visited the Chilean Province to do consultations in view of the appointment of the new Provincial; for this purpose he held discernment meetings with community groups in seven different places: Santiago Macul "Sagrada Familia", Santiago Macul "Care Home", Punta Arenas, Antofagasta, Serena, Linares, Santiago La Cisterna. From May 24th to 27th he participated in the Assembly of the Union of Superiors General on the theme "Vocational discernment in an intercultural world"; in particular during the Assembly, he guided the group works and prepared the synthesis for the contribution of the same Union to the Preparatory Document of the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment".

He attended the monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of the "Gerini Foundation"; he chaired the meeting of UPS Group for assessment and staff research; he was in contact with the Vatican authorities, participated in the feast of UPS Vice-Province and met and greeted the various groups of confrères and of the Salesian families who visited the General House.

The Councillor for Formation

After the end of the General Council's winter session, the Councillor for Formation, Fr Ivo Coelho, celebrated Don Bosco's solemnity at Don Bosco Cinecittà (January 29th) and UPS (January 31st). On February 9th he visited the international community of Testaccio.

From February 13th to 18th, the World Consultation for Formation was held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. In addition to the members of the Dicastery, the Regional Coordinators for Formation also participated.

On February 21st-25th, the Councillor was in Jerusalem to preside over the 'Curatorium'.

On February 26th, he travelled to Chennai, India, to attend, together with the Rector Major and other Councillors, the *Team Visit of South Asia Region* (February 28th-March 4th), and then to Hua Hin, Thailand, for the *Team Visit of East Asia - Oceania Region* (March 7th-10th). In Thailand, he also visited the formation house of Sampran (novitiate and postnovitiate). From February 11th to 14th, the Councillor visited the formation house (Chofu) and the aspirantate (Yokkaichi) in the Province of Japan.

On March 21st-24th, he took part in the *Team Visit of America South Cone Region* in Ypacaraí, Paraguay. From March 25th to 27th, he visited the formation house (prenovitiate and postnovitiate) of the Bolivian Province (Cochabamba), where he later participated in the *Team Visit of Interamerica Region* (March 28th - April 1st).

After the Intermediate Session of the General Council (April 3rd-12th), the Councillor attended the last two days (April 22nd-23rd) of the First Congress of the Salesian Brothers of the Africa and Madagascar Region in Nairobi, which ended with the presence of the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández. Then, together with Fr Silvio Roggia, the Councillor visited the theologate of Utume, Nairobi (April 24th-25th). From Nairobi, he went with Fr Roggia to Kigali, Rwanda, from where he went to Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to visit the (second) prenovitiate of AFC Province in that location (Goma - Boscolac). Returning to Rwanda, he visited the formation houses of AGL Province: novitiate (Butare), postnovitiate (Kabgayi), and prenovitiate (Gatenga - Kigali). He then met with the Provincial Fr Kamiel Swertvagher and his council and with the Commission for formation. From Rwanda, Fr Coelho

and Fr Roggia went to Yaounde, Cameroon, where they visited the Centre for specific formation of Francophone Brothers (Yaounde, provincial community), the prenovitiate at Ebolowa and the theologate (mainly for ATE and AFO) in Yaoundé. They also made short visits to the study centres (ITPR for Salesian Brothers, and the École Théologique Saint Cyprien - Ngoya for aspirants to the priesthood). After that, Fr Coelho and Fr Roggia returned to DBYES in Nairobi to participate in the seminar for those in charge of the pre-novices of African-Madagascar Region. The Councillor for Formation then returned to Rome on May 9th, while Fr Roggia remained to run the seminar.

From May 16th to 20th, the Councillor participated in the *Team Visit of Centre and North Europe Region* (Atlantic-German zone).

From May 22nd to 24th, Fr Coelho went with Fr Cleofas Murguia to Bogotá, Colombia, at the request of the Rector Major, to accompany the implementation of the recommendations of the Extraordinary Visitation 2016 done by Fr Filiberto González Plascencia. They visited the theologate in Bogotá as well as the prenovitiate of Mosquera, before meeting the Provincial Fr Jaime Morales and some members

of his Council.

From May 29th to 31st, the Dicastery organized the second meeting of the team for the revision of the Manual of the Salesian Rector, held at the General House in Rome. On June 3rd, the Councillor, together with Fr Cleofas Murguia, attended the 28th 'Curatorium' of the International Theologate of Gerini - Rome.

Worth noting is also the process on Salesian personal accompaniment, organized by the Dicastery, which in these months continues as planned. Of the 7500 questionnaires that were sent, over 3000 have already been completed. Tabulation is being done by confrères who volunteer to do this service.

The Councillor for Youth Ministry

At the end of the General Council's winter session, the Councillor Fr Fabio Attard, together with some members of the Dicastery for Youth Ministry, animated the regional meeting of provincial delegates of youth ministry of the two regions of Europe: the Mediterranean Europe Region and the Centre and North Europe Region. The meeting took place in Munich from February 7th to 10th, 2017.

On February 16th, the Councillor participated in the CEP Conference organized by the CISI.

From February 19th to February 26th, 2017, Fr Fabio Attard animated some workshops on the *Frame of Reference* in the INP (India - Panjim) and INB (India - Mumbai) Provinces. During these animation meetings, there was the opportunity to offer formation and reflection times to young people in formation phases, as well as to the local pastoral coordinators of the two Provinces.

From February 28th to April 1st, 2017, the Councillor attended the following four *Team Visits*: *South Asia Region*, Chennai (India), from February 28th to March 4th; *East Asia and Oceania Region*, Hua Hin (Thailand), from March 7th to 11th, 2017; *America South Cone Region*, Ypacaraí (Paraguay), from March 21st to 24th, 2017; *Interamerica Region*, Cochabamba (Bolivia), from March 28th to April 1st, 2017.

Along with the Team Visits, in Rome, on March 14th and 15th, 2017, there also was the annual meeting of the *Don Bosco Network*, in which the Councillor participated together with some members of the Dicastery.

After the Easter break, there was the Annual Encounter of the Dicastery with the *Centro Na-*

cional Salesiano de Pastoral Juvenil, held in Madrid on April 20th, 2017. On April 23rd the Councillor attended the meeting of the families in Syracuse, Sicily.

Fr Fabio Attard participated in the *Escuela Salesiana America IV* meeting, which was held in Medellín, Colombia, from May 9th to 13th, 2017, with the presence of about 400 participants, both consecrated and lay people.

From May 16th to 20th, 2017, at the General House in Rome, the Councillor participated in the 5th *Team Visit* of this six-year period: to the *Atlantic-German Zone of the Centre and North Europe Region*.

On May 22nd, 2017, in Valdocco, Turin, Fr Fabio Attard, together with Sr. Maria Teresa Spiga FMA, was invited by the Secretariat for the Salesian Family to offer a reading of the *Preparatory Document* of the Synod of Youth: *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*.

During the last weekend of May 2017, Fr Fabio Attard was invited by a group of lay people close to *Canção Nova* to animate two days of spiritual exercises in Dublin.

The last two meetings of special importance, organized at the General House and animated by the Councillor for Youth Ministry, were: the first, on Saturday, June 3rd, 2017, the meeting with the Mis-

sionary Procure of New Rochelle, together with some General Councillors, to study and plan the future of the Salesian representation at the UN; the second, on June 7th, 2017, the meeting between *Don Bosco Mondo*, *VIS* and *DBTech Africa*, together with other General Councillors, to study the strategies and offer lines of action on some projects in the field of vocational training for Africa and Madagascar Region.

The Councillor for Social Communication

The Councillor for Social Communication, Fr Filiberto González Plasencia, after the meetings of the General Council's plenary winter session, on January 26th, 2017, attended the EDEBE International Children's and Young Adults' Literature Prizes, together with the Rector Major and the Councillor for the Mediterranean Region in Barcelona.

February 2017: From the 3rd to the 5th Fr Filiberto participates in Bolton (GBR) in the Youth Ministry and Communication meeting, called "The Digital Courts".

From the 16th to the 19th he chairs the restricted group of the

World Consultation for Social Communication (SC), who are in charge of making a first draft for updating the SSCS.

On February 25th, he travels to Chennai, India, to participate in the *Team Visit of South Asia Region*.

March 2017: On March 5th, he goes from Chennai to Bangkok, Thailand. In Hua Hin (THA), he participates in the *Team Visit of East Asia and Oceania Region* till March 12th. He seizes the opportunity to visit, together with the Councillor for Formation, the prenovitiate and postnovitiate. On the 17th he leaves to São Paulo, Brazil, remaining in the provincial house until the 19th, when he leaves for Paraguay and participates in the *Team Visit of America South Cone Region* in Ypacaraí until the 25th. Immediately afterwards, he goes to Bolivia to participate in the *Team Visit of Inter-america Region* in Cochabamba until May 1st.

April 2017: On April 2nd he returns to Rome. From the 3rd to the 12th he participates in the meetings of the General Council's intermediate session. From the 19th to the 23rd he chairs the meeting of European Publishers in Prague (CEP); he is accompanied by Fr Juan

Pablo Abreu, Secretary of the Dicastery for SC. On the 29th and the 30th, in FSC – UPS, together with the General Councillor for Social Communication of the FMAs, he chairs the days of Formation to Social Communication for young people in formation, as well as SDB and FMA formators and members of ‘Canção Nova’.

May 2017: From May 1st to 7th, on behalf of the Rector Major, he does a visit of accompaniment and verification of the guidelines left by the Rector Major and the Visitor after the Extraordinary Visitation to the Province of Colombia-Bogotá (COB). In the course of several full days, he first of all meets with the Provincial and his Council, then with the Delegates of sectors and provincial services, both SDBs and lay people, and finally with all the Salesian Rectors of the communities and works. On other days he also visits the community of the Theologate as well as the elderly and sick of the “Niño Jesús” community. On the last day he meets with the Provincial and his Vicar.

From May 10th to 15th, accompanied by Fr Juan Pablo Abreu, he chairs the meeting of the Delegates for Social Communication of the Mediterranean Region in “El Cam-

pello” (SMX); during the meeting, there is a sharing of the SC animation processes of each Province, the good practices in the field of formation to SC, the Document on the Salesians and the CISI network, and there also follows a discussion on the topic of opinion-making.

From May 16th to 20th, he participates in the *Team Visit of Centre and North Europe Region*, Atlantic - German Zone, at the ‘Salesianum’ in Rome.

From the 24th to the 29th, accompanied by Fr Juan Pablo Abreu, he chairs the meeting of the Delegates for Social Communication of Centre and North Europe Region in the Provincial House in Bratislava (SLK), with a sharing of the SC animation processes of each Province and the good practices in formation to SC. The theme on “Social Networks and Pastoral Opportunities” is also dealt with.

The Councillor for the Missions

At the end of the General Council’s winter session, the Councilor for the Missions, Fr Guillermo Basaños, left to Hong Kong, where taking advantage of the Chinese New Year Holidays, from January 30th to February 3rd, he participated

in several meetings of confrères of the CIN Province.

Remaining in Asia, he visited for the first time nearly all the Salesian presences in East Timor (ITM Province), arriving in Dili on February 5th and departing on the 11th, after having celebrated on that day, with the postnovitiate community, the monthly missionary memory.

Later on, Fr Guillermo left for the new Vice-Province of Papua New Guinea - Solomon Islands, arriving first in Honiara, staying there until the night of February 12th, meeting on this occasion the SDBs, FMAs, and also the Archbishop and the Apostolic Nuncio. In the following days, until February 19th, he visited the missionary presences of Papua, meeting in Arai-miri the newly elected Bishop SDB and former first Superior of the Vice-Province, Fr Peter Baquero.

Returning to Europe, he attended the last day of the encounter of missionaries of "Project Europe" in Budapest, on February 21st and 22nd, continuing with the World Consultation of the Missions Sector, over which he himself presided, together with all the Members of the Sector, at the headquarters of the *Missionswissenschaftliches Institut* and the *Anthropos Institute* of the Society of the Divine Word

(SVD) in Sankt Augustin, near Bonn, Germany. This Consultation dealt with the topic of missionary study and missionary preparation in the Congregation.

Successively, the Councillor for the Missions was directly involved in the five *Team Visits* of this four-month period: *South Asia* (Chennai, February 28th - March 4th), *East Asia and Oceania* (Hua Hin, March 7th-10th), *America South Cone* (Ypacaraí, March 21st-24th), *Inter-america* (Cochabamba, March 28th - April 1st) and finally, *Centre and North Europe - Atlantic-German Zone* (Salesianum, Rome, May 16th-20th). In all these visits, the Councillor for the Missions had the opportunity to refer to the dispatch and reception of missionaries in the different regions and provinces, as well as to the renewed Manual for Missionary Animation.

From April 13th to 15th, Fr Guillermo Basaños was involved in a series of meetings organized by the 'Don Bosco Network' (DBN) at the General House, and then leaving immediately afterwards to Buenos Aires for a weekend with his parents.

After the usual Intermediate Session of the General Council in early April, the Councillor could celebrate the entire Easter Triduum with the confrères in Bulgaria,

the missionary frontier of “Project Europe”.

From April 19th to 22nd, Fr Guillermo travelled to Lomé (Togo), where, in addition to several missionary animation visits to the AFO Province, he attended a joint meeting of the AFO and AFW Provincial Councils to study the possibility of a Salesian presence in the Gambia. The Vicar General of the Diocese of this Western-African nation, on behalf of the Bishop, actively participated in this meeting.

After the short African stay, the Councillor left for South America again, to Belo Horizonte, Brazil, where he participated in the “Retiro das Rosas” of the FMAs, in the Seminar of Missionary Formation and Missionary Seminar for all America, jointly organized by the FMA and SDB Sectors for the missions.

After a day of missionary animation in the BBH Province – on May 1st – Fr Basaños returned to the General House to get the entry visa to Eritrea and there to make the Canonical Visitation to the communities of that nation. Unfortunately, he did not manage to get the visa and remained in Rome doing several works.

On the day of the solemnity of Mary Help of Christians, the Councillor for the Missions celebrated

the Eucharist in the infirmary community of Venice-Mestre (INE), departing shortly afterwards to Turin, arriving on time in the evening for the procession of May 24th. On the following day he attended the Council of the Missions Procure of Turin.

In the weekend of May 27th and 28th, Fr Guillermo met in Maynooth with the missionaries *ad gentes* of the Irish Province; he also participated in the diaconal ordination of two of them. Subsequently, in Brussels, he attended the Annual Meeting of the Don Bosco Network - DBN (May 30th and 31st), which was followed by the meeting of the Rectors of the Major Missions Procures in Rome, in the General House (June 1st and 2nd) and by the gathering for the coordination of the Salesian presence in the United Nations, New York, on Saturday, June 3, always at the General House.

The original aspect of this intense four-month period of the Councillor for the Missions is the fact that he was present in all five continents!

The Economist General

In **January** 2017, on the 3rd and 4th, the Economist General, Jean

Paul Muller, was involved in the meetings held at the Procure in Valdocco with the rector and the procurator. From the 11th to the 15th he attended the Procures' Symposium, delivering two speeches: the first focused on "*Procure-PDO-NGO: identity as a characterizing element*", while the latter was entitled "*Procures: Cooperators of God's Mercy*". On the 25th of January, the Eonomer took part in the Board of Directors of the "Gerini Foundation".

The month of **February** begins with the Eonomer General who meets the current Salesian Representative at the United Nations in order to identify a *job description* for the future choice of this figure. From the 4th to the 10th of the same month he travels to Namibia to participate in a conference on sustainable economy in Church works and to meet diocesan and Salesian eonomers. During this time spent in Africa, the Eonomer has various meetings with those in charge of the communities in order to clarify some management and administrative points. After this African parenthesis, the Eonomer General is involved in various court hearings, first in the penal court in Rome and then in the court in Luxembourg. On the 17th of this month in Rome he presides

over the Economic Commission that, along with the lawyers, follows and develops reflections on the Gerini cause, to which the fate of the General House is closely linked. Then, on February 22nd, there is the Board of Directors of the "Gerini Foundation". From February 24th to 28th, the Eonomer General begins a series of trips, with the aim of meeting the various Provincials and Provincial Eonomers in Europe; in particular he goes to Lisbon, Madrid, Paris and Brussels.

The month of **March** starts with the Eonomer General's trip to Munich, where he meets the Provincial of Germany (GER) and the eonomers of the various communities. Successively, he goes to Seville where he discusses some administrative situations with the Provincial of the Salesian work of the place. From February 7th to 11th, he continues his consultation trip to Europe, meeting the persons in charge of the Lombardo-Emiliana Province (ILE) to discuss some administrative issues and then goes to Krakow, where he meets the four Provincials of Poland. The last Provincial Consultation takes place on March 19th in the Province of Austria (AUS), where the Eonomer General meets the confrères in charge.

The month of April sees Mr. Jean Paul Muller engaged in the Board of Directors of the "Gerini Foundation" to discuss the real estate aspects of the same Foundation. On the 19th and the 20th, the Economist visits Jerusalem to meet with officials of the Patriarchate and discuss legal issues with the lawyers.

On the 28th of the same month he goes to Turin to take part in the SEI Assembly and decide on the future strategies of Salesian publishing.

In **May**, the Economist, together with the treasurer and the secretary, holds a week of lessons on management, reporting and financial transparency to the new provincial economists; in particular: on budgets, on the figure of the provincial economist, on the management of the works and their organization, on canon law, on the new ESC reporting software and on anti-corruption activities in the field of economy and management of Salesian works.

On May 11th, the Economist General attends the hearing at the Rome Penal Court. In the same month he participates in the *Team Visits of Centre and North Europe Region*, making a report on the theme of common good, administrative transparency in budgets and on solidarity.

At the end of the month, the Economist participates in the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Procure of Madrid and in the Conference of the G5 Procures on Distribution No. 160 of the funds of the Rector Major.

The Councillor for the Africa and Madagascar Region

At the conclusion of the winter plenary session of the General Council, the Councillor for Africa and Madagascar Region, Fr Américo Chaquisse, left Rome on *January 27th* for the Province of East Africa (AFE) to attend the celebrations of the reception and placement of the Relics of Don Bosco in the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians in Upper Hill, Nairobi, on *January 29th*. Subsequently, he reached Lusaka to participate in the installation of the Superior of ZMB Vice-Province on *January 31st*, solemnity of St. John Bosco; on the following day he met with the Council of the Vice-Province.

He then moved to Mozambique for a short animation visit, *from February 2nd to 8th*. There he also had a half-day-long meeting with the Council of the Vice-Province. Successively, he was in the Province of Central Africa (AFC),

where he participated in the 'Curatorium' of the AFC Theologate in Lubumbashi. *From February 13th to March 30th*, he did the *Extraordinary Visitation in the Vice-Province of Angola (ANG)*. At the opening of the Visitation, he gathered the Council of the Vice-Province: also for the conclusion of the Visitation, the Regional Councillor had a meeting with the Council, which was followed by a meeting with all the Rectors of the Communities. During the Visitation, on the 27th he presided over the Eucharist for the opening of the academic year in the postnovitiate.

After the visit in Angola, from March 31st to April 8th, he returned to Rome to attend the intermediate session of the General Council, and to present and start the study of Africa and Madagascar Region. Subsequently, from April 9th to May 26th, he did the *Extraordinary Visitation in the Vice-Province of Africa Meridionale (AFM)*, during which there was also the consultation for the appointment of the new Superior of the Vice-Province. For the opening of the Visitation, the Regional Councillor gathered the Council of the Vice-Province; likewise for the conclusion there was again a meeting with the Council, followed by the encounter with all the Rectors of the commu-

nities. During the Visitation to AFM, the Regional Councillor, on May 13th, took part in the meeting of the Salesian Family of the Vice-Province in Booyens - Johannesburg, with the presence of SF members of all three countries: South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. From April 17th to 27th, he interrupted the Extraordinary Visitation to AFM to participate in Nairobi in the first *Congress of Salesian Brothers of the Region* and to accompany the Rector Major in the Animation Visit to the Province of East Africa (AFE).

Finally, from May 30th to June 1st, he was in the ATE Vice-Province for the Curatorium of the Theologate and the consultation for the New Superior, since the previous Superior had been appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Ebibeyin in Equatorial Guinea. At the same time, on May 31st, he had the opportunity to preside over the Eucharist when a group of Theology students received the Ministry of Lectors and Acolytes.

The Councillor for the Latin America - South Cone Region

After the conclusion of the General Council's winter session, the

Councillor for Latin America South Cone Region, Fr Natale Vitali, on January 28th, left for Brazil to participate in the first professions in the Novitiate of Curitiba (BPA), where he received the profession of 9 novices.

On **February** 9th he held a meeting with the six Provincials of Brazil, on the reshaping of the Provinces of Brazil, to be presented at the *Team Visit* of the Region.

On February 10th, in Lapa (BSP) he participated in the diaconal ordination of 11 new deacons of Brazil.

On February 11th, he arrived in Paraguay to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation* to this Province, a Visit that ended on May 24th. The "Maria Assunta" Province of Paraguay has, at this time, 11 Salesian communities, 79 Salesians with an average age of 50.54 years, of whom 43 are under 50. They run 15 colleges, 8 parishes, 3 public churches, 2 missionary works, 7 social works, 14 festive oratories, 3 social communication works and 3 formation houses.

During the Visitation he met twice with the Provincial Council; a third meeting was held at the end of the Visit.

From March 20th to 24th, in Ypacaraí, Paraguay, there was the *Team Visit of South Cone Region*

with the participation of the Rector Major, his Vicar, four other Councillors and the two Regional Councillors of America, with the Provincials and the respective Councils of the 11 Provinces of the Region.

Subsequently, from March 27th to March 31st, the Regional Councillor of South Cone Region participated also in the *Team Visit of Interamerica Region* in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

From April 19th to 20th, Fr Natale Vitali took part in Brasilia in the encounter of the Provincials of Brazil and from the 21st to the 22nd in the meeting of the School Network of Brazil.

From April 24th to 29th, he attended the "First Announcement" Seminar organized by the Councillor for the Missions at Cachoeira do Campo (BBH) with the presence of those in charge of Missionary Animation of SDBs and FMAs American Provinces.

On May 1st, Fr Natale Vitali participated in the meeting of SDBs' and FMAs' Provincials in Córdoba.

On May 3rd, he participated in the Curatorium of the Novitiate of CISUR, in Alta Gracia (ARN), and on the following day in the Curatorium of CISUR postnovitiate, in Córdoba (ARN).

From May 9th to 12th, the Regional Councillor of South Cone Region

took part in the “Salesian School America IV” in the city of Medellín with representatives of schools of all America.

From May 25th to 26th, he conducted the consultation for the new Provincial of Uruguay and from the 29th to the 30th the consultation for the new Provincial of the Province of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Finally, on June 2nd, he returned to Rome to attend the plenary session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Interamerica Region

After the General Council’s winter session, on the following day, the Regional Councillor for Interamerica Region, Fr Timothy Ploch, left Rome and went to Guadalajara, Mexico, to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation in the MEG Province*, starting on January 29th, 2017. After meeting the Provincial Council and having participated in a spiritual retreat for the Provincials, their councils and all the rectors and delegates of the two Mexican Provinces, and after visiting only five of the twenty-three MEG communities, on March 9th the Visitor had a fall, in which he dislocated his arm from his shoulder, causing a nerve bruise and a ten-

don rupture. Since the time needed to recover from the resulting surgical operation would have required at least one month of instability and then four months of daily physical therapy, the Rector Major took the decision to suspend the Extraordinary Visitation in the MEG Department. The Regional Councillor remained then in Provincial House of Guadalajara until early June, participating in the regular life of the same provincial community. He was thus able to attend twice the monthly meeting of the Provincial Council.

Prior to the incident, he had gone to the United States to attend the “Curatorium” of the post-novitiate of the SUE and SUO in Orange, New Jersey. In February he also travelled to Quito, Ecuador, for the installation of Fr Francisco Sánchez as the new Provincial of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province (ECU) and later to Lima, Peru, for the installation of P. Manolo Cayo as the new Provincial of the Province of Santa Rosa in Lima (PER). In addition, he could also participate in the two *Team Visits in the American Continent*, the one of *America South Cone* in Ypacaraí, Paraguay, and the one of *Interamerica* in Bolivia, both at the end of March. He also attended a week of Spiritual Exercises with a group

of MEG confrères in Amatitán. The Regional Councillor was also able to accompany the Rector Major for two days on his visit to the Province of South Mexico (MEM), which also included a Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe for the Salesian Family of MEM, with the special privilege of Enter the “camerín” behind the real image of Our Lady miraculously described on the “tilma” of St. Juan Diego, the same “camerín” where Pope Francis spent almost thirty minutes in private prayer.

Without any physical visit to the US for this purpose, the Regional Councillor also conducted the consultation for the new Provincial of the Province of St. Philip, the Apostle, based in New Rochelle, New York (SUE). Everything was done digitally from Guadalajara.

Finally, on June 2nd, Fr Timothy Ploch returned to Rome for the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the East Asia and Oceania Region

At the end of the General Council's Winter Session, Fr Václav Klement did for three months the *Extraordinary Visitation in VIE Province* (Vietnam - Mongolia)

from February 2nd to May 7th. The Visit took place following the style of discernment of GC27 (listening - interpretation - way forward). During the visitation to the 22 local communities, the Visitor shared the Biblical icon of GC27 “Jesus the Vine and the Branches” as a visible sign of conversion to belong ever more to God, to the brethren and to the young. Thanks to the help of the interpreter Fr Giovanni Battista Thinh (SUO), he could have all the 358 colloquia in an atmosphere of profound personal dialogue.

Prior to his arrival in Vietnam, the Regional Councillor stayed for three days in Hong Kong for a brief animation visit (on the occasion of the Chinese New Year); then on February 2nd in Bangkok he presided over the installation ceremony of the new Provincial of THA (Thailand - Laos - Cambodia), Fr John Bosco Theparat Pitisan. The other installation that took place was Fr Alfred Maravilla's, the new Superior of the PGS Vice-Province, which Don Klement chaired in Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea) on March 19th.

The Extraordinary Visitation of VIE was interrupted two more times when the Regional Councillor accompanied the Rector Major during his visit to Vietnam (Febru-

ary 20-27) from the South to the North of the country, and during the *Team Visit of East Asia and Oceania Region* (March 7th-10th, Hua Hin - THA), together with the Vicar of the Rector Major and 5 other General Councillors in charge of the various Sectors. After the departure of the Rector Major, Fr Klement presided over the annual meeting of the 11 Provincials and 6 Superiors of the Vice-Provinces (Hua Hin, March 11th).

After the Extraordinary Visitation, the Regional Councillor participated in the 9th Regional Congress of Salesian Cooperators (Tokyo, Japan May 7th-10th), together with World Coordinator Noemi Bertola, the World Delegate Fr Giuseppe Casti and 5 Provincials of the Region (FIN, FIS, GIA, MYM and VIE). More than 250 Salesian Cooperators and 70 young adults from 14 countries participated in the Congress.

In May, two short animation visits took place: to the Vice-Province of Myanmar, MYM (May 12th-16th, Anisakan), and to the Vice-Province of Indonesia - East Timor, ITM (May 16th-22nd, Jakarta, Dili, Fatumaca). The last official act of the semester was the consultation for the new Provincial of the Australian-Pacific Province (AUL, May 22nd - June 4th). The consultation

took place in 7 locations: Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney (Australia), Suva (Fiji Islands), Auckland (New Zealand) and Alafua (Samoa).

Fr Klement returned on June 4th for the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the South Asia Region

Arriving in Chennai on January 31st, 2017, after the conclusion of the General Council's winter session, the Regional Councillor Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga held preparatory meetings for the forthcoming *Team Visit* in Chennai and installed the new Provincials of INM-Chennai (February 2nd) and INT-Tiruchy (February 4th).

Passing by New Delhi, he chaired meetings with the various organs of the SPCSA (South Asia Provincial Conference), before reaching Agartala on February 14th, to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation to the Province of Shillong (INS)*. From February 15th to 25th, he visited the Salesian communities of the state of Tripura, before returning to Chennai on the 26th to meet all the provincial ecomomers of the Region. The *Team Visit of South Asia Region* was held from February 28th to

March 4th at the Provincial House in Chennai in the presence of the Rector Major and some members of the General Council. After spending the days from March 6th to 12th for medical treatment in Kerala, Fr Maria Arokiam reached Shillong on March 15th, to continue the Extraordinary Visitation to the communities in the state of Meghalaya, in North East India. From May 7th to May 16th, he visited all the communities in the state of Mizoram. He held the final sessions of the Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Shillong from May 18th to 23rd, meeting with various groups of the Salesian Family and confrères in the city. On May 24th, the Regional Councillor received both the first profession of the novices and the perpetual profession of various confrères. Proceeding to New Delhi on May 25th, to install the new rector of the regional headquarter - the SPCSA house - Fr Arokiam also met the members of the regional animation team.

On May 27th, the Regional Councillor reached Chennai and spoke to the groups of various sectors of the INM Province who had organized their annual meetings at provincial level. In addition, he also chaired the meeting of SPCSA permanent committee before returning to Rome on June 3rd for the

summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Central and North Europe Region

After the General Council's winter session, the Councillor for Centre and North Europe Region, Fr Tadeusz Rozmus, goes to Brussels on January 29th to participate in the FRB Province on the solemnity of the patron saint Don Bosco and to meet the Rectors at one of the moments of the path established after the 2016 Extraordinary Visitation.

Immediately afterwards he leaves to Munich to start the *Extraordinary Visitation in the Province of Germany (GER)*, which will end on May 6th. During this period, Fr Tadeusz Rozmus visits all the Salesian communities, the majority of Salesian works, mostly run by lay people, and meets with some church and government authorities. The Province also extends to communities in other countries, which are also visited during the Extraordinary Visitation: from March 29th to 31st he visits the confrères in Sweden, from April 8th to 10th those in Switzerland and from April 19th to 22nd the community of the

confrères present in Istanbul, Turkey. At the end of the Extraordinary Visitation, on May 3rd, in Wuerzburg he meets the Provincial Council and on the next day he chairs the final conference of the visit.

During the presence in the GER Province, the Regional Councillor also accompanies the other meetings or events that are important for the development of the Region. So from April 24th to 26th, he attends the meeting of the Provincials of the KSIP Conference (Polish Provinces and Belarusian Vice-Province) in Krakow. Being in Poland, he also pays a short visit to his mom.

On May 6th he celebrates his 60th birthday in the sanctuary of Szczyrk (PLS) with some confrères and friends and then from May 8th to 13th he visits some of the Provinces of the Region, holding meetings with the Provincial Councils. Thus he meets the Councils of Slovakia SLK, Hungary UNG, Croatia CRO, Slovenia SLO and Czech Republic CEP, and from May 15th he is also present at the *Team Visit of the Atlantic - German Zone of the Region* (AUS, BEN, FRB, GBR, GER, IRL Provinces and the Vice-Province of Malta). This Visit takes place at the General House in Rome.

On May 22nd and 23rd the Regional Councillor participates in Prague (CEP Province) in the Province feast, after which he visits some formation houses: the novitiate in Kopiec, the postnovitiate in Łąd and the theologate in Krakow. In Krakow he also participates in the priestly ordination of some young confrères. From here, he goes to Paris to meet the FRB Provincial Council and conclude the annual journey after the Extraordinary Visitation. From France, he returns to Poland to meet again the Provincials in the context of the KSIP Conference (4 Provinces of Poland and the Vice-Province of Belarus); he meets some confrères of Warsaw, attends and chairs the encounter of the Past Pupils of the Salesian School of Oświęcim. On June 4th he returns to Rome to participate in the summer session of the General Council.

The Councillor for the Mediterranean Region

The Councilor for the Mediterranean Region, Fr Stefano Martoglio, after the works of the General Council's winter session, on January 27th, 2017, went to the novitiate of Genzano for a day of

meeting and fraternity with the novices and formators.

On January 28th, he left for the Lombardo-Emiliana Province (ILE), where he spent some days of animation of the same Province. He celebrated the feast of Don Bosco with the youth in some houses of the Province, had several meetings with the confrères, and in the early days of February he began the consultations for the appointment of the new Provincial with two provincial assemblies, one in Bologna and one in Milan.

On February 6th, 2017, he began the *Extraordinary Visitation, on behalf of the Rector Major, in the North-East Province (INE)*. The visit began with a full day of work with the provincial council and then continued with the visits to the houses of the Province; the Extraordinary Visitation, with the interruption of the General Council's summer period, will continue till the end of September 2017.

On February 22nd, 2017, the Councillor of the Mediterranean Region went to Portugal to preach a round of spiritual exercises to the confrères of the POR Province and to begin the consultation for the new Provincial during a very attended assembly meeting.

On March 3rd, the Regional Councillor of the Mediterranean

Region returned to Italy and continued the visitation in the INE Province. During the days of visit to the houses of the Province, he participated on April 10th, 2017, in a one-day meeting of the intermediate session of the General Council to present and share the program of the Team Visit of the Mediterranean Region to be held in Rome-Pisana from July 31st to August 3rd, 2017.

As the visits to the houses of INE continued, from April 26th to 30th, five days of conference of the Provincials of the Mediterranean Region were held at the provincial headquarters in Mestre. This was a fruitful and very rich appointment where all Provincials were warmly welcomed by the INE Province.

On May 30th, 2017, the Regional Councillor completed the first part of his visits to the houses, which will continue at the end of August, to go to Catania to conclude the Extraordinary Visitation to the Province of Sicily (ISI).

On June 2nd, 2017, various meetings were held in Catania, with all the confrères, the Rectors and the Provincial Council, for the conclusion of the Extraordinary Visitation to the ISI Province that had started, on behalf of the Rector Major, on June 20th, 2016. It was a rich and fraternal moment of

encounter and reflection on the Province, with the participation of many confrères.

On June 3rd, the Regional Councillor participated in the Curatori-

um of the "San Tommaso" theologate in Messina and then returned to Rome-Pisana to begin the summer plenary session of the General Council.

5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS

5.1 Letter of the Rector Major to the Salesians of Don Bosco.

The Preparatory Document of the Synod of Bishops 2018

on

“YOUNG PEOPLE,

THE FAITH AND

VOCATIONAL

DISCERNMENT”,

the compass for our journey.

Rome, 24 July 2014

Dear Confreres,

I am writing this Letter to you with the desire to exhort you to be aware that we are living at this time a *kairós*, a propitious time for our service and our communion with the Church.

In fact on 16 October 2016, Pope Francis announced that in October 2018 the **XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the subject: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”** will be held. It is the first time in the history of the Church that such an important and representative Assembly is dedicated in a direct and explicit way to the study of this subject. The Synod on New Evangelization (2012) and the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (2013) have

dealt with the issue of how to carry out the mission of proclaiming the joy of the Gospel in the world of today. To the accompaniment of families in their encounter with this joy, on the other hand, were dedicated the two Synods (2014, 2015) and the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* (2016). Continuing along the same path, the Holy Father has decided that the Church should examine herself on how to accompany young people in recognizing and welcoming the call to love and to love to the full. He has also asked young people themselves to help the Church to identify the most effective ways to proclaim the Good News nowadays. On 13 January 2017, therefore, the Secretariate of the Synod of Bishops offered for the attention of the whole Church a *Preparatory Document* (PD), to launch “the phase of the consultation of all the People of God”.

As Salesians of Don Bosco we are called to offer to the Church the gift of our charism, together with our reflections and pastoral experiences with and for the young. For this reason, today I am asking you to join in the efforts of the whole Church in the study of this Document and in responding to the attached *Questionnaire*, allowing

yourselves first of all to be challenged by this question: following the convocation of this Synod and the publication of this *Preparatory Document*, how do we feel challenged in our charismatic experience? I ask you also to share your reflections with the local Church in the knowledge that they are given not only to the young people and the educators in our Salesians centres, but above all shared and discussed with them and with many other young people and educators engaged in the youth ministry of local Churches.

With a view to our being involved in this we have asked all the Provinces to reply to the Questionnaire and to send their replies to the Youth Ministry Department.

1. The first essential step to take must be that of reading the *story of the young people* who have been entrusted to us. This step implies being familiar with the challenges and the opportunities of the area in which we are called to bear witness to the love of God for the young, especially the poorest ones. The whole of the first part of the *Preparatory Document*, in fact, is based on the importance of a reading of the contemporary situation of the young. In the spirit of *Evan-*

gelii Gaudium we are called to “go out” and to “listen”, so that we may then share the Good News. Knowing the real situation of the young people we meet is not a luxury we may allow ourselves but an obligation we cannot neglect. Not to do so would be a betrayal, turning our back on the cry of the young - often hidden but profound. The temptation of “we have always done it this way” together with the attitude “we already know the answer,” even if the question has changed, are the very real dangers that we have to recognize and overcome.

2. The second part of the *Preparatory Document* concentrates on the concepts of ***faith, discernment and vocation***. These are closely linked: faith is the source of vocational discernment, “It makes us aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love. It assures us that this love is trustworthy and worth embracing, for it is based on God’s faithfulness which is stronger than our every weakness” (LF, 53). As Salesians we are called to recognise in this field some challenges and to confirm certain choices: our educative and pastoral proposal ought to offer to young people programmes that will bring them to live an integral human experience. This proposal therefore ought to

help the young people to live life as a gift to be welcomed and shared, and for which to be grateful. Finally, as educators and pastors, we are called to accompany the young in discerning their own vocation, and therefore in the construction of their own plan of life, in the knowledge that "every vocation is directed towards a mission" (PD II, 3).

The topics of discernment and of accompaniment require a serious and well-organized human, spiritual, and charismatic preparation for all those, consecrated and lay, involved in the Educative - Pastoral Community. I invite you to reject two pastoral temptations.

The *first temptation* that we encounter here is that of stopping and realizing the shortage of time and of the necessary resources for a strong commitment to the accompaniment of the young. To this temptation we respond by offering ourselves in the first place to become true and authentic witnesses in allowing ourselves to be accompanied: "guided guides", who themselves have personal experience of spiritual accompaniment and only then are in a position to offer it to others, setting in motion suitable procedures of training in accompaniment for the lay people co-responsible in the Salesian mission.

The *second temptation* is that of being satisfied with a reductionist view of accompaniment, which seems to emphasise the individual role of the one who accompanies in this process. To this other temptation we respond offering to those young people in places where we find ourselves a progressive accompaniment on several levels: an accompaniment by the Salesian centre which welcomes the young and hands on to them a "family spirit"; an accompaniment by the educative-pastoral community which in its turn needs to be guided in co-responsibility in the Salesian mission and in the community discernment that precedes educative and pastoral planning; and a group accompaniment of the group to which the young person belongs, in a gradual process of learning and apostolate; finally, the personal accompaniment of the young person which is decisive for their vocational discernment.

The *Preparatory Document* tells us that the last kind of discernment is not a one-off but rather a "process by which a person makes fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord, and listening to the voice of the Spirit, starting with the choice of one's state of life" (PD II, 2). In every young person educated

in the faith the question arises: "How does a person live the Good News of the Gospel and respond to the call which the Lord addresses to all those he encounters, whether through marriage, the ordained ministry, or the consecrated life?" (PD II, 2). Mindful of the universal call to holiness (LG 40), we are called to accompany each young person, none excluded, in responding to this fundamental question, that is to say to the threshold of adult life, gradually but fearlessly proposing, as Don Bosco did, the goal of a high level of human and Christian life.

3. The third part of the *Preparatory Document* brings together some suggestions regarding **pastoral action**, identifying those involved, the places and the resources. We are invited to "accompany the young", with the three attitudes/ of "going out", "seeing" and "calling", which describe the way Jesus encountered the people of his time. This sounds familiar to us sons of Don Bosco, and represents a further appeal to listen to the young and to be totally available to them in their needs, aware that the relationship of spiritual paternity is an extension of educational paternity. From the encounter with the young, well repre-

sented by the practice of assistance, there can develop accompaniment in area of vocational discernment and the subsequent construction of the young person's plan of life.

When the *Preparatory Document* invites us to consider as those to whom youth ministry is addressed "all young people, none excluded", there echoes in us a conviction that we have, as did Don Bosco, for whom "*In every boy even the most wretched there is soft spot*". In view of the high-quality pastoral service offered to young people with different needs therefore, there ought to be promoted a clear and participative experience of all the subjects of the community that educates and evangelizes: the Educative - Pastoral Community. On the part of the local Salesian Community and of the Salesian Province leadership this requires a commitment, that is ever more serious, professional and well-planned, to the formation of the lay co-workers, also as regards the accompaniment of the young.

The co-responsible co-involvement of the various subjects of pastoral action needs to be accompanied by their understanding of pastoral work as not being limited to a generic pastoral proposal, but as including procedures of community discernment based on a shared un-

derstanding of a Educative-Pastoral Plan. Then in the course of pastoral planning it is appropriate that the processes followed aim as far as possible at seeing the young people as capable of developing a sense of personal responsibility in the course of their human growth and development in the faith, in which the idea of a progressive journey finds its place. In addition, I urge you to make an effort to provide lessons and experiences of prayer within the educative and evangelizing process, where the young people can have a taste of the value of silence and contemplation: "no discernment is possible without cultivating a familiarity with the Lord and a dialogue with his Word" (PD III, 4).

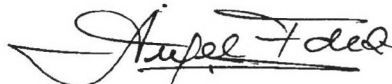
In the context of this letter, finally, I offer you **three questions**, that may guide your reflections on the challenges and the opportunities regarding the faith and the vocational discernment of the young nowadays. I am offering these three questions as material for reflection at the various Provincial Councils, at Rectors' meetings, at meetings of Salesians in the quinquennium, and of those in practical training. I also ask you to consider the possibility of sharing these three questions with the different groups of the

Salesian Family:

1. What are the proposals that at the level of the local Church we are making so that *Evangelii Gaudium* remains the compass for our pastoral journey?
2. What are the pastoral choices that we have in mind and/or could be proposing so that everyone - young and adults, parents and teachers, catechists and leaders, can feel part of a community that is educating to the faith, a community that is evangelizing?
3. What are the difficulties that can weaken the continuity and the consistency of the pastoral processes? What are the proposals to strengthen the continuity and consistency of the pastoral processes?

Following the invitation of the Holy Father (PD III, V), we entrust to Mary this process in which, together with the whole Church, we examine ourselves on how to accompany young people to accept the call to the joy of love and the fullness of life.

In Christ,



Fr Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, sdb
Xth Successor of Don Bosco

5.2 Institute of Salesian History, Perspectives and Programmes 2015-2021.

During its 35 years of existence, the Institute of Salesian History (ISS), in keeping with its scope of *making available scientifically valid documents connected to the rich spiritual heritage left by Don Bosco and developed by his continuators ... and of promoting their study, illustration and dissemination* (Statute, ISS, art. 1), has published more than 60,000 pages of Salesian history.

During the past two years, in line with its above-indicated goal, the Institute has updated its Statutes and its website; organized conferences, study days and the presentation of its publications. These were done even outside the immediate Salesian circles and that with the collaboration also of professors from secular universities. In the various meetings of both the Management Board and of the Assembly of ISS, several projects have been programmed and the challenges faced by ISS, which need to be addressed after due consultation with the Rector Major and his Council and in collaboration with the confreres at the various levels (region, province, houses) have been identified.

1. Projects

1.1 *Salesian Sources - II: Don Rua (1888-1910)*

The planned volume will have three parts: History, Pedagogy and Spirituality. The publication is scheduled for CG 28 (2020).

1.2 *History of the Salesian Congregation up to the death of don Albera (1921)*

The importance of this work both for the Salesian institutions as also for the world of culture – ecclesiastical and secular – has often been emphasized. ISS is in the process of finalizing the plans for its realization.

1.3 *The History of the Salesian Congregation in Different Regions/Countries*

Plans are afoot to initiate the writing of the history of the Salesian Congregation in those countries where it has been present for at least 75 years. This will go hand in hand with efforts to up-date up to the Special General Chapter (1971-72) already existing scientifically written histories. Obviously, they will have to go beyond being a mere “in-house” history drawing only from sources within the Con-

gregation, but will have to take into account the general socio-political, cultural and religious factors which have impacted on the Congregation. Some regions/countries have already set themselves to realize this work and ISS will accompany them.

1.4 Scientific monographs on individual Rectors Major

The next one planned for publication is that on don Paolo Albera and is scheduled for release in 2021, the centenary of his death.

1.5 Various Publications

ISS has published the following works during the academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017:

1) MOTTO Francesco (a cura di), *BOSCO Giovanni, Epistolario*. Introduzione, testi critici e note, *Volume settimo-1880-1881* (= ISS, Fonti - 14, 2016, 557 p.); 2) POZZO Vittorio, *I salesiani di Don Bosco nel paese dei cedri. I primi venticinque anni di presenza salesiana in Libano 1952-1977*, (= ISS - Studi, 28, 2016, 302 p.); 3) WIELGOSS Johannes, *Das Haus der Salesianer Don Boscos in Essen-Borbeck von der Gründung bis zum II. Vatikanischen Konzil* (= Piccola Biblioteca dell'ISS, 26, 2015, 130 p.); 4) LOPARCO Grazia e ZIMNIAK Stanisław (a cura di), *Investire nel futuro tutelando la memoria.*

Venti anni dell'Associazione Cultori di Storia Salesiana (1995-2015) (= ACSSA, volume unico edizione extra commerciale, 2015, 156 p.); 5) KOLAR Bogdan, *Don Bosco e le opere salesiane tra gli Sloveni* (= ACSSA - Varia, 9, 2015, 392 p.); 6) GIRAUDO Aldo - LOPARCO Grazia - PRELLEZO José Manuel - ROSSI Giorgio (a cura di), *Sviluppo del carisma di Don Bosco fino alla metà del secolo XX - Relazioni*. Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Storia Salesiana (Nel Bicentenario della nascita di Don Bosco. Roma, 19-23 novembre 2014) (= Istituto Storico Salesiano-Centro Studi Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice, Fuori Collana, 2016, Vol. I, 412 p. & Vol. II, 638 p.); 7) LOPARCO Grazia e ZIMNIAK Stanisław (a cura di), *Percezione della figura di don Bosco all'esterno dell'Opera Salesiana dal 1879 al 1965*. Atti del 6° Seminario Internazionale di Storia dell'Opera Salesiana. Torino, 28 ottobre - 1° novembre 2015 (= ACSSA - Studi, 8, 2016, 877 p.); 8) CIAMMARUCCONI Clemente, *Un clero per la "Città Nuova", I Salesiani da Littoria a Latina*, Vol. II, 1942-1953 (= ISS - Studi, 29, 2016, 300p.).

Publications planned for the coming years: 1) MOTTO Francesco (a cura di), *Epistolario di Don Bosco, vol. VIII* (= ISS; 2017); 2) PRELLEZO José Manuel, *Appunti di*

pedagogia sacra esposti agli ascritti della Pia Società di Francesco di Sales, di G. Barberis (= ISS, 2017); 3) GIRAUDO Aldo *Epistolario di don Michele Unia (1849-1895)*, (= ISS, 2020); 4) S. ZIMNIAK & J. WĄSOVICZ, *Lettere dei polacchi a don Bosco* (2017); 5) PROVOOST Wim, *Corrispondenza belga con don Bosco* (= ISS (francese), 2017); 6) S. Zimniak, *Don Augusto Hlond: Il primo Ispettore tedesco-ungarico (1919-1922)* (= ISS, 2018); 7) BOENZI Joseph, *Monografia sulla spiritualità e l'opera di don Paolo Albera* (= ISS, 2020); 8) ROSSI Giorgio, *I Salesiani in Roma capitale (1880-1930)* (= ISS, 2018); 9) PRELLEZO, José Manuel, *Scritti dei primi sdb collaboratori di don Bosco sull'educazione e la scuola* (= ISS, 2017); 10) ROSSI Giorgio, *Tomasetti Francesco, Ordinamento scolastico e professionale. Programmi didattici. Programmi professionali degli alunni artigiani dell'Ospizio del S. Cuore di Gesù in Roma, Scuola Tipografica Salesiana 1910* (= ISS, 2017); 11) BRAIDO Pietro, *L'Oratorio Salesiano in Italia* (= *Una compilazione di alcuni suoi articoli già pubblicati*, ISS, 2017); 12) VENTURA Concetta Maria, *Voci e commenti su don Bosco. Il volto del Santo sulla stampa non salesiana in occasione della morte e della beatificazione e canonizzazione* (= ACSSA, 2017).

1.6 Congresses - Seminars - Presentation of Books

During the years 2015-2017, ISS has organized or participated in the following congresses, seminars and presentation of books: 1) 6th International Seminar of History of the Salesian work on the Perception of the Figure of Don Bosco outside the Salesian Work from 1879 to 1965 (= ACSSA, Torino, 28th Oct. – 1st Nov. 2015); 2) Pozzo Vittorio, *I salesiani di Don Bosco nel paese dei cedri. I primi venticinque anni di presenza salesiana in Libano 1952-1977.* (= ISS – Studi, 28, presentation, Rome, 11 May 2016); 3) Clemente CIAMMARUCCONI, *Un clero per la "Città Nuova", I Salesiani da Littoria a Latina, Vol. II, 1942-1953* (Latina, 27 April 2016); 4) MOTTO Francesco, *Epistolario*, voll. 1-7, Salerno 22 May 2017; 5) The stable members of ISS participated in the Congress for the inauguration of the European Academy of Religion (EAR) at the University of Bologna (05 Dec. 2016) and presented a paper on *Surviving and Growing "in Difficult Times"*, the Salesian Educative Mission in Europe in the First Half of the 20th Century at the European Congress organized by EAR at the University of (18-22 June 2017); 6) International Conference on Don Albera e le isti-

tuzioni salesiane al suo tempo (Nov. 2020); 7) Figure Salesiane incisive ed innovative nel secolo XX (= AC-SSA, Nov. 2021) that will be preceded by 5 Continental Congresses; 8) A day of study on Msgr. Giuseppe Fagnano in collaboration with the Faculty of Theology of the Salesian University (Nov. 2017).

1.7 The Journal: *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* (RSS)

No. 12 of the Statutes of the ISS defines the journal, *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* (RSS) as "the scientific and operational expression of ISS". The Institute publishes two numbers of RSS each year.

2. Challenges

ISS has identified five challenges, which need to be addressed urgently: a) coopting competent and passionate new members - both "stabili" and associate; b) soliciting from both confreres and lay people historical contributions of value each according to their competence and possibilities; c) to make progress in Salesian historiography which has often limited itself to the mere transcription of chronicles or the compilation of simple data and this despite the fact that the series *STUDI* of ISS offers a number of model-vol-

umes from which, up to now, but few seem to have drawn inspiration; d) to raise the historical interest in the confreres, especially in those who are called upon to represent the Congregation in public (those in authority at different levels, preachers, lecturers, writers), providing them with incentives for updating themselves on the valuable recent publications; e) convincing the competent authorities at various levels to have recourse to urgent measures to protect and promote historical research tools - archives, libraries, monuments, paintings, etc.

Conclusion

From Don Bosco to our own days, there has always been evident in the congregation, an interest in promoting a culture which is in harmony with its charism. Hence, it is hoped, that taking into account the importance of ***keeping alive the memory of Don Bosco and his works spread the world over***, the Salesians at all levels, will strive to overcome the various challenges and collaborate with ISS in keeping alive and ever fresh the memory of Don Bosco and of the Salesian Congregation.

Fr Thomas ANCHUKANDAM
Director of the Institute of Salesian History

5.3 Decree on the Martyrdom of the Servant of God Titus Zeman, SDB

BRATISLAVENSIS DECLARATION OF MARTYRDOM and BEATIFICATION

OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

TITUS ZEMAN

PROFESSED PRIEST

OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
(1915-1969)

«This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters» (1John 3:16).

It was when listening to this Word of God during the celebration of the Eucharist that the Servant of God Titus Zeman felt in his heart the inspiration and the strength to sacrifice his own life, overcoming fear and declaring himself ready to follow the will of the Lord to the end, trusting in His mercy and hoping in eternal life.

The Servant of God was born in Vajnory, close to Bratislava (Slovakia), on January 4th, 1915, the first of ten children of a family of peasants and sacristans. At the age of ten, after having been ill for most of the time, he suddenly got healed through the intercession of Most Holy Mary and in those days he

promised her «to be her son for ever» and to become a Salesian priest. He managed to fulfil this vocational plan, entering the novitiate in 1931, pronouncing his temporary vows in 1932 and the perpetual ones in 1938 and receiving the priestly ordination in 1940.

When the Communist regime was established in post-war Czechoslovakia and a systematic persecution of the Church began, the Servant of God defended the symbol of the crucifix in public places, and because of this he was laid-off from the school where he taught. He providentially escaped from the “Night of the Barbarians” and the deportation of religious men and women of April 13-14, 1950. Since he was serving in a diocesan parish, he wondered what he could do to allow clerics to attain the goal of priesthood. He then decided, not without suffering, to cross with them the Iron Curtain, heading to Turin, where the Rector Major of the Salesians welcomed him and blessed the initiative, encouraging it.

After two successful passages, in April 1951 the expedition failed. From that moment, Fr Titus faced a series of sufferings: a week-long torture between his capture and arrest (April 9-16, 1951); ten more months of pre-emptive detention, during which he was always heavi-

ly tortured, till the process of February 20-22, 1952; another twelve years of detention (1952-1964); almost five years of freedom on parole, being always followed by spies, shadowed and persecuted (1964-1969).

In February 1952 the General Prosecutor requested for him – who was charged with espionage, high treason and illegal crossing of the borders – the death penalty, which, to general amazement, was commuted into twenty-five years of heavy, unconditional prison. He was the first person, charged with such crimes, not to be executed in the Czechoslovakia of the time. Fr Zeman was however labelled as “m.u.k.l.”, i.e. “a person destined to elimination”, and he experienced the hard life in prisons and hard labour camps, next to persecuted priests, political adversaries of the regime and many criminals, who were detained in jail together with religious people. He was forced to manual and unprotected trituration of radioactive uranium; he spent long periods in solitary confinement, with a food ration about six times inferior to the one of other detainees; he was hardly cured, in a state of growing cardiac, pulmonary and neurological jeopardy.

On March 10th, 1964, when he had served half of his sentence, he

was released from jail for a trial period on parole: some time ahead of this, he had been submitted to oxygen therapy and his lungs presented visible spots. When he returned home he was beyond recognition and lived a period of intense, also spiritual suffering, because of the prohibition to exert his priestly ministry in public.

He died – pardoned in extremis (the pardon being effective 18 days before his demise) – on January 8th, 1969, after three myocardial infarctions linked to arrhythmia, and after having being treated as a “guinea-pig”, applying on him a risky method that was not used ever since. Also in death he was accompanied by the fame of martyrdom and even the spies present at his funeral wrote of him on their records as a martyr who had suffered for the Church. After less than one year, still under full communist regime, a revision process denied the legitimacy of his sentence for espionage and high treason. In 1991, the rehabilitation process definitively declared him innocent.

The life of the Servant of God – well known because of his crossing the border together with clerics and priests, to save vocations or protect their ministry – is marked with interior passages that characterize his human and Christian growth and

above all the progressive acceptance of his call to martyrdom. With his sacrifice, Fr Titus Zeman directly saved sixteen vocations (clerics who arrived in Turin with him) and indirectly many others he sustained and encouraged in those difficult years. His work guaranteed continuity in the Slovak Salesian Congregation and allowed Salesians to “ensure” the future apostolic generation in those lands.

The testimony of Fr Titus is the incarnation of the vocational call of Jesus and of the pastoral predilection for children and youth, especially for young Salesian confrères; a predilection that was shown, like in Don Bosco, in a true “passion”, seeking their good, spending for this all the energies, all the strength, all life in a spirit of sacrifice and offering

The fame of martyrdom of the Servant of God spread in the ecclesiastical community, and so from February 26th, 2010, to December 7th, 2012, the Diocesan Enquiry was celebrated at the Ecclesiastical Curia of Bratislava, and its juridical validity was recognized by this Congregation with decree dated June 28th, 2013. After preparing the *Positio*, according to the usual procedure, there followed a discussion as to whether the death of the Servant of God was a true martyrdom.

On April 7th, 2016, the Peculiar Congress of Consultant-Theologians was celebrated, and they expressed their favourable opinion. The Father Cardinals and Bishops in the Ordinary Session of February 21st, 2017, presided over by me, Card. Angelo Amato, recognized that the above-mentioned Servant of God was killed for his fidelity to Christ and to the Church.

Of all the above, a detailed report was submitted to the Supreme Pontiff Francis by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect; and the Holy Father, accepting and ratifying the votes expressed by the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, on this day declared: *“The cause of martyrdom of the Servant of God Titus Zeman, Professed Priest of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, is ascertained in the case and to the purpose that are being dealt with”*.

The Supreme Pontiff then ordered this decree to be made public and be registered in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Issued in Rome, on the 27th day of the month of February of a. D. 2017.

† ANGELO Card. AMATO, S.D.B.
Prefect

† MARCELLO BARTOLUCCI
Tit. Archbishop of Mevania (Bevagna)
Secretary

5.4 Decree on the heroic practice of virtues and consequent Venerability of the Servant of God Francesco Convertini, SDB

KRISHNAGARENSIS

BEATIFICATION and CANONIZATION

OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

FRANCESCO CONVERTINI

PROFESSED PRIEST

OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
(1898-1976)

DECREE ON VIRTUES

«I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children» (Mt 11, 25).

The hymn of jubilation flowing from the heart of Christ resounds with force in the life and spirituality of the Servant of God Francesco Convertini: the joy of faith and communion with the Lord was the source of his generous missionary activity.

The Servant of God was born in quarter Papariello of Locorotondo, in the province of Bari and Archdiocese of Brindisi-Ostuni, on August 29th, 1898. He lost his father when he was three months old, and at the age of eleven he also lost his mother. He was entrusted as a little shepherd to a couple who treated

him like a son. At eighteen he joined the army. On the front of Isonzo he lived the tragic defeat of Caporetto and then the experience of the Trentino Offensive (Bataglia degli Altipiani), where on December 23rd, 1917, he was captured and interned in a concentration camp next to the Masurian Lakes in Poland. After the war, entirely reduced to a skeleton, he caught meningitis and came close to death. In 1920, after his recovery, he joined the "Guardia di Finanza" (Finance Guard). He was in Trieste, Pola and eventually in Turin. Here he had the decisive encounter of his life: he got acquainted with the Salesians and was fascinated by the figure of Don Bosco, he too an orphan and a little shepherd. And so he decided to become a Salesian and a missionary.

He was sent to "Cardinal Cagliero" Institute in Ivrea, which was crowded with a large number of missionary aspirants. There young Convertini made his very best emerge: simplicity, sincerity, availability to any sacrifice, constancy. His sole great difficulty was the school; and thus it will also be in future, despite his great effort.

In 1927 he was among the missionaries destined to India and received the Crucifix by Blessed Philip Rinaldi, the third successor

of Don Bosco. In Shillong he did his novitiate, the Novice Master being Venerable Stefano Ferrando, and he also knew another great Salesian figure, Servant of God Fr Costantino Vendrame, with whom he walked for miles to visit villages and houses to narrate to children and adults the life of Jesus.

After he concluded his studies of theology, he was ordained a priest on June 29th, 1935. He was asked to leave Assam and go to Bengal, where on six million inhabitants, Catholics were only one per one thousand, whereas the majority were Hindu and Muslim. That was a very difficult field of work, open to the highest heroism of self-denial and sacrifice. Fr Convertini devoted himself totally to his people. He was vicar in the parish of Bhorpara till 1939, then in Ranabondo till 1942 and in Krishnagar till his death. He never learnt the language perfectly, yet he managed to be in tune with the people to such an extent that everybody considered him like their great friend. "Nobody in Krishnagar – his Provincial wrote – had so many friends, so many spiritual children among the ignorant and the wise, rich and poor. He did not deliver great sermons or speeches, because he was not capable of doing so, but he spoke face to face and he en-

tered in all the families". He was the only one to have access also where no stranger could enter. He was constantly on the move from village to village, with makeshift transport, mainly by horse or bicycle; but he preferred to carry his knapsack on his shoulders and walk, so he could meet many people and speak to them about Christ. The bishop and the priests, nuns and lay people, all wanted him as their confessor, because they found in him the personification of God's mercy.

The life of Fr Convertini is rich of heroic expressions linked to his charity, his penances and his appeal as a man of God who brings "the water of Jesus who saves". The Baptisms he gave were by the thousands. He divested himself of everything to donate it to the poor: even his very clothes, his shoes, his bed and food. He always slept on the floor, did long fastings, and was poor to an unbelievable degree. He belonged to all without any distinction of religion, caste or social condition. He was loved by all. This could be seen at his death, when a crowd of Christians, Muslims and Hindus flooded the cathedral. He died on February 11th, 1976. His last words were: "Mother, I never displeased you in my lifetime. Now, you help me!".

Fr Francesco Convertini is undoubtedly a model of Salesian missionary life, an example of true inculturation of the Gospel, a master of interior life and exceptional self-denial in a pastoral key, who turned his life into an adventure in the Spirit with the apostolic heart of Don Bosco.

By the force of his fame of sanctity, the Diocesan Enquiry was celebrated at the episcopal Curia of Krishnagar from December 12th, 1997, to June 20th, 2005, and its validity was recognized by this Congregation for the Causes of Saints with Decree dated June 19th, 2006. After preparing the *Positio*, according to the usual procedure, a discussion was held as to whether the Servant of God had exerted virtues to a heroic degree. On November 11th, 2015, the Peculiar Congress of Consultant Theologians was held with a positive result. The Cardinals and Bishops in the Ordinary Session of January 10th, 2017, presided over by me, Card. Angelo Amato, recognized that the Servant of God exerted theological, cardinal and other related virtues to a heroic degree.

Of all this, an accurate report was submitted to the Supreme Pontiff Francis by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect; and His Holiness, accepting and ratifying the

votes expressed by the Congregation for the Causes of Saint, on this day declared: *"It is ascertained that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity towards God and towards the Neighbour, the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude and other related virtues, were practiced to a heroic degree by the Servant of God Francesco Convertini, Professed Priest of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, in the case and to the purpose that are being dealt with"*.

The Holy Father commanded that the present decree be published and registered in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Issued in Rome on the 20th day of January of A.D. 2017

† ANGELO Card. AMATO, S.D.B.
Prefect

† MARCELLO BARTOLUCCI
Tit. Archbishop of Mevania (Bevagna)
Secretary

**5.5 Decree on the heroic practice
of virtues and consequent
Venerability of the Servant of
God Octavio Ortiz Arrieta,
SDB**

CHACHAPOYASENSIS
BEATIFICATION and CANONIZATION
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD
OCTAVIO ORTIZ ARRIETA
OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
BISHOP OF CHACHAPOYAS
(1878-1958)
SUPER VIRTUTIBUS

*«I will give you shepherds after
my own heart, who will lead you
with knowledge and understand-
ing» (Jeremiah 3:15).*

With these words of Prophet Jeremiah, God promises his people never to leave them without pastors that gather them and guide them. The Church, the people of God, always experience the realization of this prophetic announcement and, in joy, continue to give thanks to Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd who entrusted his apostles and their successors with the task of feeding God's flock. Among the witnesses of this pastoral charity shines the figure of the Servant of God Octavio Ortiz Arrieta Coya, the first Salesian priest of Peru and bishop of Chachapoyas.

The Servant of God was born in Lima on April 19th, 1878. In October 1892, next to the oratory, the Salesians decided to open a vocational school for the neediest youth, comprised of three laboratories: carpentry, tailoring and shoemaking.

In December 1893 the Servant of God entered the School as a carpentry apprentice, then joined the students. He did his novitiate in Callao and in 1902 he pronounced his perpetual vows. He continued in the same house as assistant, teacher, student of philosophy and then of theology. In 1906 he was sent to found a new vocational school in the city of Piura. On January 27th, 1907, he was ordained a priest.

After the house of Piura, Fr Ortiz was called to direct the works of Cuzco and Callao. Here, while he was busy with his work among the youth, on November 21st, 1921, he received the news of his appointment as bishop of the far away diocese of Chachapoyas, on the North Andean Mountains. He was ordained a bishop in the Temple of Mary Help of Christians in Lima on June 11th, 1922. After one month's journey, the new bishop reached the see of his diocese, a small town located over two thousand metres above sea level, which had been va-

cant for the past five years. His life was a continuous travelling for long days, by horse, by foot, on the mountains, in forests and on rivers. He climbed up frozen peaks and then climbed down torrid valleys.

Since the beginning he organized Missions and Spiritual Retreats for his people and priests. He extended this intensive programme, that varied every year, to all the centres of his diocese. Catechesis and preaching, care of priests and seminarians, fostering of vocations were the simple and concrete work of his thirty seven years of episcopal ministry.

He always kept the Salesian style: loving, welcoming, usually cheerful, close to the people. The youth filled the halls of his old episcopal house. With passion for catechism rooted in his heart, he taught it whenever time allowed him to do so. He was a born organizer: he did eight pastoral Visitations, celebrated three diocesan Synods, organized a successful Eucharistic Congress, organized parish archives, created Associations and Confraternities, published a newspaper. He strongly incarnated in his pastoral ministry the spirit of Don Bosco, to the extent that he inserted in his episcopal motto: *«Da mihi animas, caetera tolle»*.

He was the bishop of a large diocese, one of first evangelization and

rather secluded; he planned and did his apostolic action with great passion and a spirit of sacrifice: from vocational ministry to a concrete support of seminarians and priests, from catechetical and human formation of the youth to family ministry. He persevered in heroic poverty, evangelical fortitude and radical fidelity to the Church.

The spirit with which he did his numerous works and initiatives reflects a style that is more eloquent than many words, and turned him into a living catechesis, all the more assertive because it was addressed to simple people to whom the meaning of gestures was more efficacious than the meaning of words. The Servant of God devoted most of his energies to the priests and the faithful. For them he prayed, to them he wrote and for them he suffered, especially when he saw that they were in danger, astray from the right path. He addressed all, uniting two typical qualities of his temperament: frankness and charity, sincerity in speaking and prudence in keeping silence, firmness in correcting and promptness in consoling.

The Servant of God knew how to interpret, understand the signs of times and to act consequently. He was an authentic witness of the faith and an intelligent pastor of souls, a master of spirituality and a

point of reference on the path to sanctity. His spirituality was entirely centred on the devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist, on filial entrusting oneself to Mary Help of Christians and on obedience to the Pope, of whom – as he used to say – «even the wishes were as valid as many orders».

When the archiepiscopal see of Lima remained vacant, the Apostolic Nuncio offered it to him on behalf of the Pope. Monsignor Ortiz thanked and declined the offer, saying that he had “displaced” his diocese and wanted to remain among the people of his *pueblos* to the last day. He died in Chachapoyas on March 1st, 1958.

The fame of the Servant of God commenced during his life and soon after his death. On the days of his demise and of his funeral, at the beginning of March 1958, a thought was unanimously shared: «A Saint has died». In virtue of this fame, the Diocesan Enquiry was celebrated from July 8th, 1992, to December 22nd, 2001, at the Ecclesiastical Curia of Chachapoyas, and its validity was recognized by this Congregation for the Causes of Saints with decree dated October 3rd, 2003. After preparing the *Positio*, according to the usual procedure, there was the discussion as to whether the Servant of God had

exerted virtues to a heroic degree. On February 19th, 2015, there was the Peculiar Congress of Consultant Theologians with a positive result. The Cardinals and Bishops in the Ordinary Session of February 14th, 2017, presided over by me, Card. Angelo Amato, recognized that the Servant of God exerted the theological, cardinal and related virtues to a heroic degree.

An accurate report of all this was submitted to the Supreme Pontiff Francis by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect; and His Holiness, accepting and ratifying the votes expressed by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, on this day declared: *“It is ascertained that the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love towards God and the Neighbour as well as the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude and other related virtues were exerted to a heroic degree by the Servant of God Octavio Ortiz Arrieta Coya, Bishop of Chachapoyas, of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, in the case and to the purpose that are being dealt with”*.

The Holy Father Francis ordered that the present Decree be published and registered in the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Issued in Rome on the 27th day of February of A.D. 2017.

† ANGELO Card. AMATO, S.D.B.
Prefect

† MARCELLO BARTOLUCCI
Tit. Archbishop of Mevania (Bevagna)
Secretary

5.6 Decree on the heroic practice of virtues and consequent Venerability of the Servant of God Jozef Wech Vador, SDB

SANCTAE CLARAE
BEATIFICATION and CANONIZATION
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD
JOZEF WECH VADOR
PROFESSED PRIEST
OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
(1909-1979)
DECREE ON VIRTUES

«For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me» (John 6:38).

This was the fundamental inspiring reason of the life of the Servant of God Jozef Wech Vador. In all circumstances, above all in the difficult and painful ones that required a spirit of sacrifice and joyful acceptance of the will of God, he used to repeat: «If you want it O Lord, I also want it».

The Servant of God was born on October 29th, 1909, in Dorog (Hungary) to a family of peasants. He was baptized on October 31st, 1909, and was confirmed on May 29th, 1920. At the age of thirteen he left Dorog to attend the royal state High School of Esztergom. In search of his vocation, he met the Franciscan reality and was admitted for a trial period. Following the advice of a Franciscan Father, at the age of sixteen he asked to enter as an aspirant in the Salesian college of Peliföldszentkereszt. On August 2nd, 1927, he became a novice and on October 3rd, 1928, he did his first profession. After he pronounced the perpetual vows, on August 3rd, 1932, he left Hungary and went to Italy where he commenced the studies of theology at the Salesian Pontifical University in Turin-Crocetta, bringing them to completion in June 1936.

Before leaving to Italy, Jozef Wech changed his surname from "Wech" to "Vador", which in Hungarian means "pilgrim", hoping in this way, during the years of Nazism, to put into oblivion his surname of clear German origin. This name however proved to be prophetic: for many years, his life would have been a continuous pilgrimage, marked by stages, interruptions and new starts. On July 5th, 1936,

he was ordained a priest and was immediately destined to apostolic work in the Great Antilles. He left to Cuba on September 1st, 1936.

From 1936 to 1979 the life of the Servant of God was characterized by continuous displacements, due above all in the first years to the sudden closure of the Salesian works he was called to run. He invested all his missionary energies in diverse tasks: he was a collaborator in Guanabacoa, rector of the "Escuela Salesiana" in Moca of Santo Domingo, Novice Master in Matanzas, administrator of the "Colegio de Artes y Oficios" in Camagüey, confessor of the Salesian community in Santiago de Cuba and from 1951 to 1953 also confessor of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Peñálver. From 1954 he lived in the city of Santa Clara, with the task of dedicating himself to the pastoral care of the Church of Our Lady of Carmel and to the construction of a college.

Although he was Hungarian, he proved capable to understand in depth the Cuban people, making his own their hopes, their fears and their expectations. He was a "messenger of truth and hope" and a worker of peace. In particular, in 1958, during the famous battle of Santa Clara, the latest military appendix of the Cuban revolution,

which ended on January 1st, 1959, with the victory of the Castrist component, the Servant of God endangered his own life as a mediator to negotiate the truce. In those difficult days he saved many lives. From 1956 to 1961 he was rector and teacher at the new college and rector in charge of the pastoral work in the church of the Carmel, which will become a parish in 1965; besides, from 1956 to his death, he was uninterruptedly rector of the Salesian community.

Fr Vandor was by now known by the entire city as operator of reconciliation and concord, an exemplary priest, a man of profound union with God, very sought after as a spiritual director. Rooted in a profound spirit of faith and prayer, he proved to be a true parish priest with the heart of the Good Shepherd and with the style of the preventive system of Don Bosco. Doing good and caring for the salvation of souls was his unique concern. In his spiritual profile one may discover the traits of affinity with St. Francis de Sales, for his patient docility, his prudent dedication, his illumined wisdom, and with St. John Bosco, for his apostolic dynamism, love for the poorest, serene cheerfulness and cordiality. The faithful appreciated in him the very much-requested confessor and the ailing person who,

oblivious of himself, visits and comforts other ailing people.

In fact, ever since 1961, the Servant of God suffered from various illnesses, which he lived with a great spirit of abandonment and conformity with the will of the Lord, participating ever more intimately in the mystery of the Cross. He died on October 8th, 1979, after fifty-two years of religious profession and forty-three of priesthood. The funeral was presided over by the diocesan bishop, with an extraordinary attendance of people and faithful, in a mixed atmosphere of grief and joy: joy, because, according to the testimony of many, «a saint had died»; grief because they did not want to be parted from their own «father».

In force of this fame of sanctity, from October 8th, 2003, to August 10th, 2008, the Diocesan Enquiry was celebrated at the episcopal Curia of Santa Clara, and its validity was recognized by this Congregation for the Causes of Saints with Decree dated March 11th, 2011. After preparing the *Positio*, according to the usual procedure, there was the discussion as to whether the Servant of God had exerted virtues to a heroic degree. On February 18th, 2016, there was the Peculiar Congress of Consultant Theologians, with a positive result. The Cardinals and Bishops in the Ordinary Ses-

sion of January 17th, 2017, presided over by me, Card. Angelo Amato, recognized that the Servant of God exerted theological, cardinal and related virtues to a heroic degree.

An accurate report of all this was submitted to the Supreme Pontiff Francis by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect; and His Holiness, accepting and ratifying the votes expressed by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, on this declared: *“It is ascertained that the theological, virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity toward God and the Neighbour, as well as the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude and other related virtues were practiced to a heroic degree by the Servant of God Jozef Wech Vándor, Professed Priest of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, in the case and to the purpose dealt with”*.

The Holy Father Francis ordered that the present Decree be published and registered in the acts of the Congregations for the Causes of Saints.

Issued in Rome on the 20th day of January of A.D. 2017.

† ANGELO Card. AMATO, S.D.B.
Prefect

† MARCELLO BARTOLUCCI
Tit. Archbishop of Mevania (Bevagna)
Secretary

5.7 New Provincials

Here below find (in alphabetical order) some biographical details on the Provincials and Superiors of Vice-Provinces appointed by the Rector Major with his Council in the semester January-June 2017

1. BAUER ORMAZÁBAL Alfonso María, Provincial of the Province of URUGUAY (URU)

At the head of “St. Joseph” Province in Uruguay, on June 9th, 2017, was appointed Fr *Alfonso María BAUER ORMAZÁBAL*. He succeeds Fr Néstor Castell.

He was born on July 23rd, 1968, in Montevideo, and is a Salesian since January 31st, 1988, when he did his first profession in Montevideo. He pronounced his perpetual vows on January 31st, 1994, and was ordained a priest on November 16th, 1996.

After the priestly ordination, he exerted his educative pastoral ministry in Sarandí del Yi from February 1997 to December 2002. Later on, from 2003 to 2008, while residing in the house of Montevideo-Theologate, he had various tasks at provincial level (delegate for Youth Ministry from 2004 to 2007, then delegate for Formation from 2007 to 2009). During the triennium 2006-

2009 he was Rector of Montevideo-Theologate. He then spent two years at UPS in Rome (2009-2010). On his return to the Province he was sent to the house of Montevideo Villa Colón, as Rector.

In May 2012 he was appointed Provincial Vicar. Now he takes over at the head of the Province as Provincial.

2. GIACOMAZZI Giuliano, Provincial of the LOMBARDO-EMILIANA Province (ILE)

On June 8th, 2017, the Rector Major with his council appointed as Provincial of “San Carlo Borromeo” Lombardo-Emiliana Province in Italy (ILE) Fr *Giuliano GIACOMAZZI*. He succeeds Fr Claudio Silvano Cacioli.

Born on January 7th, 1967, in Milan, he did his first religious profession on September 8th, 1988, at Colle Don Bosco and his perpetual profession on September 11th, 1994, in the house of Sesto San Giovanni.

He was ordained a priest on June 19th, 1999, in Milan, upon completion of the studies of theology he did in Cremisan in the Holy Land and was then sent to the house of Milan – Sant’Ambrogio, where he exerted his ministry from 1999 to 2006; successively, from September

2006 to June 2008 he worked in the house of Milan – San Carlo. In June 2008 he was appointed Rector of the community of Parma, a task he accomplished till June 2013, when he was appointed Rector of the community of Sesto San Giovanni (until he was appointed Provincial).

At Provincial level he filled several tasks, among which the one of Delegate for Missionary Animation (2004-2006) and later on for Youth Ministry (2006-2009). Since June 2016 he was a member of the Provincial Council.

Now the Rector Major with his Council entrusts him with the guidance of the Lombardo-Emiliana Province, according to the Constitutions.

3. *LIRA AIROLA Carlo Andrés, Provincial of the Province of CHILE (CIL)*

Fr Carlo Andrés LIRA AIROLA is the new Provincial of “St. Gabriel Archangel” Province in Chile, appointed to this service by the Rector Major with his Council on June 15th, 2017. He succeeds Fr Alberto Lorenzelli.

Carlo Andrés Lira A. was born on January 5th, 1969, in Valparaíso (Chile) and is a Salesian since January 30th, 1992, when he did his

first religious profession in Santiago-Macul. He pronounced his perpetual vows on November 8th, 1997, and was ordained a priest in Santiago on August 14th, 1999.

After his priestly ordination and after completing his studies in the theologate of Santiago-La Florida, he exerted his ministry for one year (2001-2002) in the community of Santiago-Patrocinio; then, from 2002 to 2005, in the community of Santiago-La Gratiud Nacional and, from 2005 to 2008, in Valdivia. In December 2008 he was appointed Rector of the philosophate in Santiago-La Florida, a task he accomplished till February 2013. From December 2014 to his present appointment as Provincial, he was Rector in the community of Concepción.

At provincial level, he was a member of the Provincial Council in two periods and from 2013 to 2015 he was the Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry.

4. *MARAVILLA Alfredo Ignacio, Superior of the Vice-Province of PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND SOLOMON ISLANDS (PGS)*

Fr Alfredo Ignacio MARAVILLA was appointed by the Rector Major with his Council as Superior of “Blessed Philip Rinaldi” Vice-

Province of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (PGS) on January 23rd, 2017. He succeeds Fr Pedro Junior Baquero who had been appointed Superior of the Vice-Province in June 2016 and in January 2017 was elected by the Holy Father as Bishop of Kerema (Papua New Guinea).

Alfredo Ignacio Maravilla, was born on July 31st, 1962 in Silay City (Negros Occidental, Philippines), he did his first religious profession on April 1st, 1982, in the Province of Philippines North. After three years since his first profession, he went as a missionary to Papua New Guinea, and resided in Gabutu. He pronounced his perpetual vows on March 25th, 1988, and was ordained a priest on August 15th, 1992, in his hometown, upon conclusion of the theological studies he did in Cremisan, in the Holy Land.

After the priestly ordination he was for two years in Rome (1992-1994) for the studies of Missiology at UPS and successively for one year in charge of the prenovitiate in Canlubang (Philippines). He then returned to Papua New Guinea, for two years in Gabutu (1995-1997), and then he was superior for one year in East Boroko. In December 1997 he was appointed Rector of the house of Gabutu, a task he filled till February 2002, when he was

transferred to the house of Kumgi-Kundiawa (Papua N.G.).

In February 2007 he returned to Rome, continuing his studies at the Gregorian University, where he obtained his Master's Degree in Theology.

When he was in Rome, he was called by the Rector Major to collaborate in the Dicastery for the Missions at the General House, offering the competence he had gained as a missionary and with his studies (He authored the book, "The First Announcement Today").

Towards the end of 2016 the Superiors had decided that Fr Alfredo Maravilla return to the PGS Vice-Province. Because of the election of Fr Pedro Baquero as Bishop, as hinted above, the Rector Major with his Council appointed him as Superior of the Vice-Province.

5. *MATTHEWS William, Provincial of the AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC Province (AUL).*

Fr *William MATTHEWS* was appointed by the Rector Major with his Council as Provincial of "Mary Help of Christians" Australia-Pacific Province (AUL), on June 20th, 2017.

He was born on June 3rd, 1971, in Mandalay; he did his first religious profession on January 31st, 1997, in

Lysterfield and his perpetual profession on November 29th, 2003, in Ferntree Gully.

He was ordained a priest in Perth (W.A.) on December 9th, 2005, and exerted his ministry for a three-year period (2006-2009) in Ferntree Gully; he was then transferred to the house of Brooklyn Park from 2009 to 2011, where in 2011 he was appointed economer of the community. In August 2011 he was appointed Rector of the community of Sunbury, a task he accomplished till his present appointment as Provincial.

At provincial level, from February 2009 onwards he was the Delegate for Social Communications.

6. *MENDONÇA José Aníbal, Provincial of the Province of PORTUGAL (POR)*

Fr José Aníbal MENDONÇA succeeds Fr Artur Pereira as Provincial of "S. Antonio" Province in Portugal (POR), appointed to this task by the Rector Major with his Council on June 8th, 2017.

José Aníbal Mendonça was born in Murça (Tras-os-Montes), Portugal, and is a Salesian since September 8th, 1985, when he did his first religious profession in Vilarinho. He pronounced his perpetual vows on July 18th, 1992, and was or-

dained a priest on July 10th, 1994, in Porto, upon conclusion of the theological studies he did in Turin-Crocetta.

After the priestly ordination, he exerted his ministry for one year in Manique, and then in the Prenovitiate of Porto, from 1995 to 1997, as Vicar. Successively he spent a year (September 1997-September 1998) at UPS in Rome and later again in the Prenovitiate of Porto from September 1998 to September 2000 as Economer. He was transferred to Manique for three years, and in June 2003 he was appointed Rector of the community of Poiareda Regua for six years. Later on, since June 2014 he was Rector in Manique, till his present appointment as Provincial.

At provincial level he was a member of the Provincial Council during the six-year period 2009-2015 and in different times Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry (and Sports Animation) and of Youth and Vocational Ministry.

He now takes over the service of Provincial.

7. *OWOUDOU Alphonse, Superior of the Vice-Province of TROPICAL EQUATORIAL AFRICA (ATE)*

Fr Alphonse OWOUDOU is the new Superior of the Vice-Province

“Our Lady of Africa” of Tropical Equatorial Africa (*ATE*), appointed to this task by the Rector Major with his Council on June 14th, 2017. He succeeds Fr Miguel Angel Nguema.

Born on April 30th, 1969 in Ebolowa (Cameroun), Alphonse Owoudou did his first religious profession as Salesian on August 16th, 1990, in Lomé (Togo) and his perpetual profession on August 9th, 1997, in Yaoundé (Cameroun).

He was ordained a priest on July 11th, 1999 in Yaoundé, and began his pastoral-educative ministry in Port-Gentil (Gabon), where he worked from 1999 to 2003. He was then in Rome – UPS from September 2003 to September 2007. He returned to the Vice-Province and worked for a triennium (2007-2010) in the postnovitiate “Maison Don Bosco” in Lomé (Togo). From September 2010 to September 2011 he was again for one year at UPS in Rome. Later on he returned to the postnovitiate of Lomé as Principal. In June 2015 he was appointed Vicar of the Vice-Province.

Now he takes over the charge of Superior of the Vice-Province

8. *PICCININI Justo Ernesto, Provincial of the Province of BRAZIL – SÃO PAULO (BSP)*

As Provincial of the Province of “Mary Help of Christians” of São Paulo in Brazil (*BSP*) the Rector Majos with his Council, on June 14th, 2017, appointed Fr *Justo Ernesto PICCININI*. He succeeds Fr Edson Castilho.

Justo Ernesto Piccinini was born on December 12th, 1960 in Massaranduba, SC, Brazil and is a Salesian since January 31st, 1981, when he did his first religious profession in São Carlos. He is perpetually professed since January 31st, 1987, and was ordained a priest on January 6th, 1990, in Massaranduba, his hometown.

After the priestly ordination he remained in the theologate of São Paulo-Lapa till February 1992, when he was transferred to the community of Lorena – San Gioacchino. In March 1994 he returned to São Paulo – Lapa as Economist, till November when he was appointed Rector of São Paulo – Bom Retiro, till December 2004. Later on he was transferred to the community of São Paulo – Santa Teresa as Economist, till February 2009. Once again in the theologate of São Paulo – Lapa, he was Economist and Parish Priest. In October 2013 he was appointed Rector of the community of Cruzeiro, a task he accomplished for one year, when he was appointed Provincial Economist

At provincial level he was a member of the Council for three years and from October 2014 he was Provincial Economist, a task he was filling till his appointment as Provincial.

9. *THEKUMCHERIKUNNEL Joy Sebastian, Superior of the Vice-Province of AFRICA MERIDIONALE (AFM)*

Fr Joy Sebastian *THEKUMCHERIKUNNEL* is the new Superior of "Blessed Michael Rua" Africa Meridionale Vice-Province (AFM), appointed by the Rector Major with his Council on June 14th, 2017. He succeeds Fr François Dufour.

Joy Sebastian Thekumcherikunnel was born on August 14th, 1958 in Chemmamalamattom, Kerala, India and is a Salesian since May 24th, 1977, when he did his first religious profession in the novitiate of Yercaud, India. After the perpetual profession he did on February 12th, 1983, in Shillong, he continued his studies in the theologate of Shillong. He was ordained a priest on January 1st, 1986, in his hometown.

After the priestly ordination, he worked for one year in the provincial house of Dimapur as Economist and successively from September

1987 to September 1992 in Dimapur – Don Bosco, always as Economist. In September 1992 he was transferred to the house of Senapati to exert his ministry, and from May 1995 to the Parish of Golaghat.

In February 2001 he joined the Vice-Province of Africa Meridionale and was sent to the house of Maputsoe (Lesotho) as Economist and from February 2005 also as Vicar. From February 2011 to November 2012 he was Economist in the house of Walkerville-Don Bosco. In November 2012 he returned to Maputsoe as Rector and then also as Parish-Priest. After three years in Maputsoe, he was appointed Rector and Parish-Priest in the house of Ennerdale, a task he was accomplishing till his appointment as Superior of the Vice-Province.

At provincial level, from December 2012 he was a member of the Council of the Vice-Province. He was also, at different times, Delegate of the Vice-Province for Formation and Delegate for the Missions.

10. *ZAK Timothy John, Provincial of the Province of UNISTED STATES EAST (SUE)*

At the head of the Province "St. Philip Apostle" of United States South (SUE), the Rector Major

with his Council, on June 7th, 2017, appointed Fr *Timothy John ZAK*. He succeeds Fr Steve Shafran.

Born on November 16th, 1962, in Stoughton (Massachusetts, USA), Timothy John Zak is a Salesian since August 25th, 1983, when he did his first religious profession. Perpetually professed on August 19th, 1989, he was ordained a priest in the house of Boston on May 26th, 1991.

After the priestly ordination, he worked for one year (September 1991 – September 1992) in the Salesian house of Marrero, and then in the house of Orange (1992-1997). In September 1997 he was transferred to the house of Port Chester – Holy Rosary, till September 2005, when he returned to Orange as Rector of the oratory. In January 2007 he was appointed Rector of the house of Chicago, where he also exerted the ministry of Parish-Priest. In September 2013 he was once again sent to the house of Port Chester – Holy Rosary, where he was Rector and Parish-Priest.

On March 31st, 2015, the Rector Major with his Council appointed him Provincial Vicar. He is now called to exert the ministry of Provincial.

5.8 New Salesian Bishops

Here below find (in alphabetical order) some biographical details of the Salesian Bishops appointed by the Holy Father in the first semester 2017.

1. BAQUERO Pedro Junior, Bishop of the Diocese of Kerema (Papua New Guinea)

On January 20th, 2017, there was the appointment, on behalf of Pope Francis, of Salesian Priest *Pedro Junior BAQUERO* as *Bishop of the Diocese of KEREMA*, Papua New Guinea.

Pedro Junior Baquero was born on September 15th, 1970, in Manila, Philippines. Accepting the Lord's call to Salesian religious life, he did his novitiate in Bacolod, where he did his first profession on April 1st, 1990, in the Province of Philippines North. During his practical training he was sent as a missionary to Papua New Guinea (in the two houses of Gabutu and Araimiri). He pronounced his perpetual vows on March 24th, 1998, and was ordained a priest on December 8th, 1999, in Parañaque City, where he had done his studies of theology.

After the priestly ordination, in the year 2000 he returned to Papua

New Guinea, in the house of Lari-au, where he worked as Parish-Priest and in the triennium 2004-2006 also as Rector. In November 2006 he was transferred to Araimiri as Rector till the beginning of 2010 (serving also as Parish-Priest and Principal). In September 2010 he was sent to the house of Gabutu, where in 2013 he was appointed Rector. In September 2011 there was the creation of the Delegation of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, depending on the Province of Philippines North. Fr. Baquero was first Councillor of the Delegation and in December 2013 he was appointed Delegate.

After the Delegation of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands was erected as Vice-Province, in July 2016, the Rector Major with his Council appointed him Superior of the Vice-Province. But after less than six months Pope Francis chose him as Bishop of the Diocese of Kerema. His episcopal consecration took place on March 25th, 2017.

2. KRIVITSKIY Vitaliy, Bishop of the Diocese of Kiev-Žhytomyr (Ukraine)

On April 30th, 2017, there was the appointment, on behalf of Pope Francis, of Salesian Priest Vitaliy KRIVITSKIY as Bishop of

the Diocese of KIEV-ŽHYTOMYR (Ukraine).

Vitaliy Krivitskiy was born on August 19th, 1972, in Odessa (Ukraine) and he is a Salesian since January 1st, 1991, when he did his first religious profession in Odessa. On July 27th, 1996, he pronounced his perpetual vows and on May 24th, 1997, he was ordained a priest in Kraków (Poland).

After the priestly ordination, he was sent to the House of Odessa (Ukraine), where he exerted his religious-pastoral ministry for a period of six years (1997-2003). He was then transferred to the house of Korostyshev (Ukraine), and served for three years as Parish-Priest and Rector from 2004 to 2008. In July 2009 he was appointed Rector of the same community for a period of three years (till September 2012). Later on he spent two years in the house of Peremyshlany (Ukraine) as Rector of the Oratory. In September 2014 he returned to Odessa where he was Vicar of the Rector and for a period also Economer. On April 30th, 2017, he was appointed Bishop of Kiev-Zhytomyr, as mentioned above. On June 24th, 2017, he was consecrated a Bishop in the course of the concelebration that was presided over by Abp. Claudio Gugerotti, Apostolic Nuncio in Ukraine.

3. NGUEMA BEE *Miguel Ángel, Bishop of the Diocese of Ebebiyin (Equatorial Guinea)*

On April 1st, 2017, there was the appointment, on behalf of the Holy Father Pope Francis, of Salesian Priest *Niguel Ángel NGUEMA BEE* as *Bishop of the Diocese of EBEBIYIN (Equatorial Guinea)*.

Miguel Ángel Nguema Bee, born on July 13th, 1970, in Mokomo (Equatorial Guinea), did his first religious profession in the Salesian Society on August 13th, 1992, in Lomé (Togo) and his perpetual profession on September 19th, 1998 a Bata (Equatorial Guinea). On July 24th, 2000 he was ordained a priest in Bata.

After the priestly ordination, from 2000 to 2004, he exerted his ministry in Pointe-Noire (Congo), where he was also Economist of the community. From 2004 to 2008 in

Yaoundé (Cameroun), headquarters of ATE Vice-Province, he was Councillor of the same Vice-Province and Delegate for Youth Ministry. He then spent two years at UPS to study Pedagogy. In September 2010 he returned to the headquarters of the Vice-Province in Yaoundé, appointed Vicar of the Vice-Province. Successively, on May 30th, 2015, the Rector Major with his Council promoted him Superior of the same Vice-Province.

While he was fulfilling this task, he was reached by the appointment, on behalf of Pope Francis, as Bishop of Ebebiyin. His episcopal consecration took place on May 24th, 2017, in Mongomo (Equatorial Guinea) in the course of the celebration that was presided over by Card. Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

5.9 Our dead confreres (1st list 2017)

"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" (*Const. 94*).

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
L ABEBE KASAHUN Mellese	Lyon (France)	08/04/2017	35	AET
P AGUILAR Ramiro	Medelli (Colombia)	05/03/2017	82	COM
P ALFANO Alfonso	Naples (Italy)	26/01/2017	80	IME
<i>Was Provincial for 6 years</i>				
P ALFANO Salvatore	Messina (Italy)	02/02/2017	83	ISI
P ANJOS José Gomes dos	Natal (Brazil)	23/03/2017	88	BRE
P ARBULU SÁNCHEZ José Luis	Logroño (Spain)	09/05/2017	75	SSM
P ARIZMENDI GARATE F. Javier	Logroño (Spain)	30/01/2017	84	SSM
L AULEDAS I COLL Joan	Barcelona (Spain)	05/06/2017	91	SMX
P AYUSO ORTEGA Faustino	La Coruña (Spain)	05/07/2017	94	SSM
P BANACH Czesław	Łódź (Poland)	15/06/2017	84	PLN
P BARCELLONA Nunzio	Palermo (Italy)	31/01/2017	85	ISI
P BASSO Giovanni	Castelfranco Veneto (Italy)	01/05/2017	83	INE
P BERNARDI Roberto	Rome (Italy)	15/02/2017	87	ICC
P BIANCHI Bruno	Manaus (Brazil)	06/01/2017	89	BMA
P BIGAULT Christian	Mulhouse (France)	19/06/2017	87	FRB
P BLIŽINSKÝ Jozef	Žilina (Slovakia)	22/01/2017	66	SLK
L BONATO Remigio	Turin (Italy)	15/06/2017	79	ICP
L BOZZA BASTIANELLO Stefano	Jarabacoa (Dominican Rep.)	14/07/2017	90	ANT
P BRUNI Giorgio	Rome (Italy)	28/05/2017	88	ICC
P CANTONI Dino	Sondrio (Italy)	19/02/2017	85	ILE
P CASTENETTO Antonio	Castelfranco Veneto (Italy)	26/04/2017	83	INE
P CEMIN Adriano	Porto Alegre (Brazil)	03/07/2017	77	BPA
P CHIESA Giuseppe	Turin (Italy)	24/06/2017	93	ICP
P CHIPFUKHO Salew Thomas	Imphal, Manipur (India)	10/01/2017	43	IND
P COTE BARROSO Armando	Mosquera (Colombia)	08/01/2017	88	COB
P CREMON Francesco	Doba (Chad)	30/03/2017	76	INE
P CRESSMAN Richard	Tampa, Florida (USA)	03/07/2017	88	SUE
L CUTINHA Dennis Wilfred	Tirupattur (India)	04/01/2017	72	INM
P DANIELI Enrico	Bangkok (Thailand)	12/03/2017	80	THA
P DE LIBERALI Ferdinando	Campo Grande (Brazil)	13/07/2017	69	BCG
P DE VEGA DE VEGA Jesús	Madrid (Spain)	08/01/2017	88	SSM
P DE WITTE Jozef	Sint-Denijs-Westrem (Belgium)	24/03/2017	92	BEN
L DI CICCIO Angelo	Salerno (Italy)	03/05/2017	95	IME
P DI FIORE John	West Palm Beach, Florida (USA)	26/07/2017	65	SUE
P DI PRINZIO Giuseppe	Beppu, Oita (Japan)	22/04/2017	90	GIA
P DOMÉNECH COROMINAS J. Maria	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	01/05/2017	69	ARS
P ERCOLINO Donato	San Giovanni Rotondo (Italy)	10/04/2017	84	ICC

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P ESPINAL Alberto	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	05/03/2017	86	ARS
L FABRI Senibaldo	Rome (Italy)	05/01/2017	96	ICC
P FIEDOROWICZ Jan	Warsaw (Poland)	05/06/2017	89	PLE
L FINKERS Johannes Bernard	San Antonio (Venezuela)	29/04/2017	91	VEN
P FOSTER John	Naas Kildare (Ireland)	10/03/2017	89	IRL
P FUSARI BOTTARO Abel	Montevideo (Uruguay)	06/02/2017	91	URU
P GALLAGHER George	Lansdowne (South Africa)	06/07/2017	90	AFM
P GEROSA Roberto	Arese (Italy)	20/03/2017	93	ILE
P GÓMEZ SAN JUAN José Luis	Jarabacoa (Dominican Rep.)	25/03/2017	82	ANT
P GOPU ANANDA Reddy	Nalgonda (India)	07/04/2017	49	INH
P GRIFA PLACENTINO Gennaro	Rome (Italy)	15/04/2017	86	ICC
P GRUSZKA Jozef	Wrocław (Poland)	05/01/2017	82	PLO
P GUEBEY Hubert	Angers (France)	13/06/2017	89	FRB
P GUILLEM Norbert	Marseille (France)	22/07/2017	86	FRB
E GURRUCHAGA EZAMA J. Ramón	Lima (Perù)	11/04/2017	86	—
<i>Was Provincial for 11 years, Bishop of Huaraz (Peru) for 10 years, Bishop of Lurin (Peru) for 9 years and Bishop emeritus since June 2006.</i>				
P HEUN Gerhard	Essen-Oldenburg (Germany)	13/02/2017	83	GER
P JAŠEK Karel	Ostrava (Czech Rep.)	05/02/2017	77	CEP
P JÁUREGUI EPELDE Ignacio	Barcelona (Spain)	11/03/2017	84	SMX
P JIMÉNEZ ROMERO Antonio	La Orotava, Tenerife (Spain)	22/07/2017	94	SMX
L JOJO Andrew	Hatia, Ranchi (India)	13/04/2017	73	INN
P KAŁOL Zbigniew	Szczecin (Poland)	27/07/2017	55	PLN
P KINDSLEHNER José	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	12/07/2017	87	ARS
L KOWALA Edward	Hong Kong (China)	10/02/2017	90	CIN
P KOZERA Stanisław	Rumia (Poland)	09/04/2017	85	PLN
P LA MANTIA Vincenzo	Messina (Italy)	26/03/2017	103	ISI
P LA ROSA	Messina (Italy)	06/01/2017	88	ISI
P LAGORIO Angelo	Milan (Italy)	27/06/2017	76	ILE
P LAM Jhon Chung-kei	Hong Kong (China)	09/07/2017	79	CIN
P LE BRAS Casimir	La Navarre (France)	01/07/2017	91	FRB
P LE HUONG Isidoro	Da Lat, Lam Duong (Vietnam)	04/04/2017	91	VIE
P LEMMA Guido	Pau (France)	03/06/2017	81	IME
P LORENZO FERNÁNDEZ Amable	León (Spain)	18/01/2017	89	SSM
P LUCAS GONZÁLEZ J. Salustiano	Sevilla (Spain)	20/01/2017	90	SMX
P LUPPENS Amaat	Anderlecht (Belgium)	10/02/2017	89	BEN
P MANGANA CID Luis	Panama (Panama Rep.)	24/06/2017	82	CAM
P MARINONI Enrico	Turin (Italy)	09/05/2017	85	ICP
S MATEQUE Domingos C. Oliveira	Luanda (Angola)	05/06/2017	25	ANG
L MENA GÓMEZ Deogracias	Alicante (Spain)	01/03/2017	66	SMX
P MONTERO (UMAÑA) Joaquin	San Salvador (El Salvador)	15/06/2017	91	CAM
P MORENO VIÑUELAS Inocencio	Arevalo, Ávila (Spain)	23/03/2017	79	SSM
L MOŚ Edmund	Oświęcim (Poland)	10/06/2017	95	PLS
P MUKALA George	Dimapur, Nagaland (India)	14/03/2017	85	IND
P MURILLO CHAVERRI Dorilo	San José (Costa Rica)	08/05/2017	91	CAM
P MURPHY John Francis	Warrnambool (Australia)	30/04/2017	92	AUL

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P NETTO Ivor	Frimley Park (Great Britain)	26/06/2017	75	GBR
P NIEDZIELA Marian	Przemysł (Poland)	03/02/2017	70	PLS
P OBONYA Julius	Topolčani (Slovakia)	17/03/2017	70	SLK
P O'BRIEN John	Norwalk, California (USA)	06/07/2017	84	SUO
P OCHOA Felipe	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	22/07/2017	87	ARS
P OLIOSSO Aldo	Bardolino (Italy)	02/04/2017	82	INE
P OLIVEIRA Geraldo Arsenio de	Belo Horizonte (Brazil)	17/05/2017	83	BBH
P PASCUALINI Agustín Nazareno	Luanda (Angola)	09/01/2017	76	ANG
P PATER Tadeusz	Wrocław (Poland)	28/03/2017	83	PLO
P PETERSON Harry	Santiago del Chile (Chile)	02/07/2017	86	CIL
L PINTARELLI Modesto	Rome (Italy)	07/06/2017	95	ICC
P PINTO Augusto	Lima (Peru)	21/02/2017	90	PER
P PIQUER ALONSO Bernardino	Sueras (Spain)	03/01/2017	77	SMX
P POLÁČEK Klement	Rome (Italy)	03/03/2017	87	UPS
L POZUELO SÁNCHEZ Ruperto	Seville (Spain)	26/02/2017	95	SMX
P PREISLER Josef	Prague (Czech Rep.)	25/04/2017	83	CEP
P PRYPUTNIEWICZ Krzysztof	Poznań (Poland)	16/04/2017	74	PLO
P PUNCHEKUNNEL Thomas	Nzaikoni (Kenya)	04/01/2017	69	AFE
P QUÉRÉ Jean	Caen (France)	18/03/2017	88	FRB
P RIVERO PATRÓN Anibal	Montevideo (Uruguay)	04/05/2017	98	URU
L RIZZETTO Umberto	Pinerolo (Italy)	21/01/2017	75	ICP
L RODRÍGUEZ Elmer	Makati City (Philippines)	21/07/2017	60	FIN
P ROMO ESCUDERO Julián	Villamuriel de Cerrato (Spain)	23/06/2017	88	SSM
P RONCONI Juan Francisco	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	12/06/2017	80	ARS
P ROSA Julio	Manique (Portugal)	11/03/2017	87	MOZ
P ROSSATO Dino	Alasio (Italy)	26/06/2017	80	ILE
P ROSSI Nicolangelo	Salerno (Italy)	06/02/2017	85	IME
L SALCIDO VEGA Francisco	Irapuato (Mexico)	27/03/2017	96	MEG
P SÁNCHEZ VELASCO J. Francisco	León (Spain)	11/03/2017	88	SSM
P SANTANA BONILLA Franklin	Jarabacoa (Dominican Rep.)	24/05/2017	74	ANT
L SANTI Giuliano	Chennai (India)	30/04/2017	84	INM
P SANZ BAYÓN José	Arévalo (Spain)	09/06/2017	92	SSM
P SANZ RAMÍREZ Francisco Javier	Madrid (Spain)	14/02/2017	56	SSM
P SATTLER Orestes	Viamão (Brazil)	22/04/2017	97	BPA
L SAUCEDO CASTRO Julio	El Alto, La Paz (Bolivia)	02/03/2017	58	BOL
P SCANDIUZZI Amedeo	Venice (Italy)	24/07/2017	91	INE
P SCARPARO Giulio	Guayaquil (Ecuador)	13/01/2017	77	ECU
P SEMPRINI Pietro	Turin (Italy)	24/05/2017	86	ICP
P SMUNIEWSKI Stanisław	Ślupsk (Poland)	18/02/2017	87	PLN
P STAŘÍK Stanislav	Přibyslav (Czech Rep.)	02/02/2017	90	CEP
P STELLA Teodosio	Salerno (Italy)	28/02/2017	94	IME
L STÜRMER Karl	Ensdorf (Germany)	07/01/2017	93	GER
P TAMPONI Sergio	Rome (Italy)	27/02/2017	90	ICC
P VALLEJO LÓPEZ Julián	Montevideo (Uruguay)	23/07/2017	92	URU
P VALNEGRI Claudio	Milano (Italy)	15/01/2017	84	ILE
P VAN MUYLEM Denis	Heverlee (Belgium)	29/04/2017	78	BEN

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P VETTORI Teobaldo	Turin (Italy)	17/02/2017	91	ICP
P VIVAS I SOLÀ Josep Maria	Barcelona (Spain)	10/05/2017	89	SMX
P WILLIAMS George	Manchester (Great Britain)	06/06/2017	101	GBR
<i>Was Provincial for 6 years and General Councillor for 12 years</i>				
P WINNICKI Tadeusz	Legnica (Poland)	01/04/2017	71	PLO
P WONG Kin Kwok Francis	Hong Kong (China)	24/04/2017	75	CIN
P XAVIER Edward	Kotadeniyawa (Sri Lanka)	13/02/2017	67	INT
P ZANARDINI Giorgio	Arese (Italy)	15/02/2017	83	ILE
P ZANON Carlo	Castelfranco Veneto (Italy)	16/02/2017	89	INE
P ZAPPALÀ Carmelo	Catania (Italy)	04/02/2017	76	ISI