



# acts

**of the general council**

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year XCIX

january-july 2018

**N. 426**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale  
Opere don Bosco  
Roma



# acts

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

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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Sede Centrale Salesiana  
Via Marsala, 42  
00185 Roma

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Tipolitografia Istituto Salesiano Pio XI - Via Umbertide, 11 - 00181 Roma  
Tel. 06.78.27.819 - Fax 06.78.48.333 - E-mail: [tipolito@pcn.net](mailto:tipolito@pcn.net)  
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***“Lord, give me this water”***

**(John 4:15)**

**LET US CULTIVATE THE ART  
OF LISTENING AND OF ACCOMPANIMENT**

*Strenna 2018*

Presentation. – I. AN ENCOUNTER THAT DOES NOT LEAVE INDIFFERENT: “Listening”. → *A Form of Listening that is RECEPTION and PERSONAL ENCOUNTER*. – II. AN ENCOUNTER THAT PUSHES THE PERSON FORWARD: “Discerning”. → *Faith and Vocation to the Joy of Love*. → *The Gift of Discernment* (RECOGNIZING – INTERPRETING – CHOOSING. – III. AN ENCOUNTER THAT TRANSFORMS LIFE: “Accompanying”. → *Accompanying, like Jesus*. → *Don Bosco, Educator and Spiritual Guide of His Young People*. – IV. IN VIEW OF WHAT KIND OF PASTORAL ACTION? Vocational Discernment as Suggested by Pope Francis. – V. IN COMPANY WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.

Dear brothers and sisters of the whole Salesian Family in the world,

As per tradition, at the end of the year I present the Strenna to our sisters, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and from that day it becomes a gift for our whole Salesian Family, in every part of the world. The purpose of the Strenna and of its commentary is to help us have the same heart and look in the many initiatives in all our works and in the mission each one is called to carry out according to the specific charismatic vocation of the groups of our Salesian Family.

The theme chosen is in continuity with that of the previous year and refers to the forthcoming major ecclesial event of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, convened by Pope Francis for the month of October 2018, which is entitled: *“Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”*.

This is a subject that directly concerns the heart of our charism and that we will try to prepare in the best possible way, sensitising ourselves and making many lay and young people

aware of this important event of the ecclesial life and of the need to take part in it. With this Synod, «the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love, and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today»<sup>1</sup>.

The Strenna I am presenting to you this year is proposed as a subsidy so that in all our presences in the world as Salesian Family we can achieve the objective stated in the Preparatory Document of the Synod.

The theme chosen, which I consider simple and very direct, contains two elements of vital importance in today's world: listening and personal accompaniment. To enlighten these two aspects I offer you a beautiful Gospel icon, which lends itself to multiple reflections: Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

An episode is narrated in which, despite the presence of ethnic diversities and religious antagonisms, the encounter takes place at the deepest level of the person, to the point of arriving at a change in life.

I invite you to accept the Strenna with the positive openness of each year and to benefit from what may be useful to you according to the different pastoral situations in which we operate.

I can testify to you that, in the hundreds of meetings I have had in these almost four years with young people from the five continents, I have gained the certainty that in the houses and works led by the groups of the Salesian Family there are thousands and thousands of good young people, open to life, eager to be formed, to learn; young people in search. Many of them have a great and generous heart, and wish to serve others, to do something for others, to help, to donate themselves.

They are young people who request our help to continue to grow and mature in their faith. And there are others who do not

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<sup>1</sup> SYNOD OF BISHOPS. XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. Preparatory Document and Questionnaire*, Vatican Publishers 2017, p. 22-23. Hence forth quoted as PD.

ask explicitly, but who feel a great need for a personal encounter and for being listened to.

There are many who would be willing to take a personal and communal path of discernment and accompaniment.

So I ask myself: what are we waiting for? Why do we not decide to be much more available to accompany all our young people in what is most important to their lives? What is holding us back? Why “being busy” or “spending time” in other things when this is a real priority for education and evangelization?

We will take many more significant steps, my dear brothers and sisters, on the day when we will truly convince ourselves that, more important than what we do, is what we are and who we are; that more important than the things and activities we offer to teenagers and young people and their families, is our presence, our listening and our openness to dialogue. This is what leaves “traces of life” forever. It leaves them in young people and in their families.

All this is at the basis and constitutes the real and profound motivation for this year’s choice of the Strenna.

## I. AN ENCOUNTER THAT DOES NOT LEAVE INDIFFERENT: “Listening”

I invite you as from now to a calm and meditated reading of the passage known as “the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman”. This icon will help us understand how the Lord establishes a relationship with her and what consequences the encounter with Him causes in the life of this woman.

*A Samaritan woman came to draw water,  
and Jesus said to her, «Give me a drink.»  
(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.)  
The Samaritan woman said to him,  
«How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?»  
(Jn 4:7-9).*

Jesus and the anonymous Samaritan woman come from two different peoples, who have lived in contrast throughout history and who consider each other radically distant from the ancient faith of Israel. We can affirm that their families considered themselves as enemies from a social, religious and political point of view, and not because they were different, but precisely because they were very similar and at the same time opposed: each one convinced that they were the authentic custodians and guardians of the original religion of ancient Israel. In fact, the two peoples considered each other to be impostors.

Here are the protagonists.

A Samaritan woman who, arriving at the well, recognizes without any doubt the origin of Jesus. He is a Jew given his characteristic way to dress. For the Samaritan woman, he is a stranger: he is thirsty, has no bucket available, and the water in that deep well is unattainable for him. On the other hand, the woman is not only in front of a stranger; in front of her, from a religious point of view, there is a "rival".

At the same time, from what can be understood by the whole story, the woman is a person marked, to say the least, by a dubious reputation, with a situation of "irregular" life. It can be inferred that the woman emotionally feels to be the victim of rejection.

Besides, between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, strong ethnic and religious prejudices are interposed: according to the customs of his time, Jesus has a reprehensible and transgressive conduct, for the fact that he asks water from this woman.

It is legitimate to suppose that the woman feels safe in front of Jesus, who is not from her village, is unaware of the "failures of her life", and is also part of a similar, even though heretical, religious group. Jesus would not have had the opportunity to get in touch with the Israelite-Samaritan leaders of her community and therefore she had nothing to fear or worry about.

From this situation we can draw some elements of great interest for us: the encounter takes place in a profane and "outdoor" place, a well in the middle of the countryside, which will become *a place of encounter with God*.

Jesus, the true protagonist and primary subject of the encounter, of listening and of the initial dialogue, “draws” the strategy of this encounter, beginning by **listening** to the other person and the situation, which He perceives.

The example of the Lord is extremely topical for us.

### ***A Form of Listening that is RECEPTION and PERSONAL ENCOUNTER***

**LISTENING** is always an art. «We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur»<sup>2</sup>. It is for this reason that the gift of the word, especially in personal relationships, must have as its counterpart the “wisdom of listening”.

This listening, which is so important in our mission as Salesian Family, must have as its starting point the *encounter*, which becomes an opportunity for human relations and humanisation, lived in complete freedom, «reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life»<sup>3</sup>.

In relations with teenagers and young people, with our students, with the families of the different presences, authentic listening will have to take into account some attentions:

- Encouraging *openness* to others: an openness with our whole person, for we certainly listen with our ears, but we can also listen to each other, when listening is authentic, with our eyes, mind, heart, with all our being.
- Paying full *attention* to what the person communicates and actively engaging in understanding what one wants to communicate, since the foundation of the listening we offer is deep respect for the other person.

<sup>2</sup> EG, 171.

<sup>3</sup> EG, 169.

- Accompanying the person, both young and adult, with *true concern* for what they seek and expect from themselves, with *true empathy*, which is the opposite of cold and formal courtesy. It is about identifying ourselves with and walking with the other person.
- Setting aside one's own world in order to *get as close as possible* to that of the other, with the capability to accompany without interfering.
- Listening is, in short, the art that requires *solicitous attention* to people, to their struggles and weaknesses, to their joys, sufferings and expectations. In fact, we do not limit ourselves to listening to something, but we are listening to someone. The pages of the Gospel that narrate the encounters of Jesus with his people are rich in this solicitous attention.
- Listening, when it refers to personal spiritual accompaniment, transcends the psychological dimension and acquires a *spiritual and religious dimension*, since it leads along paths in expectation of Someone.
- It also requires a *certain inner silence*, which has as its starting point the acceptance of people as they are and in the situation they find themselves in.
- Our look as educators, especially for adolescents and young people, and also for their families, assures us that there is a lot of *positive* in every heart<sup>4</sup>; we need to bring out these positive aspects. Therefore, listening must mean for us much more than listening patiently; it is making sure that we understand in depth what the persons tell us and why they tell us. It is paying attention to what really concerns the other, teenagers and young people, and their families.

Listening must lead us to an adequate understanding of the need of today's young people, and sometimes the need of their parents, or of the people with whom we are in contact in the pastoral

<sup>4</sup> «In every boy... there is a soft spot. The first duty of the educator is to locate that sensitive spot, that responsive chord in the boy's heart ». Cf. *MB* 237, quoted in *GC* 23, N.º 151.

environment. In fact, more often than not, young people or their parents, or both, do not approach us in search of accompaniment. On the contrary, they are often driven by some *necessities, doubts, problems, emergencies, difficulties, conflicts, tensions, decisions to take and problematic situations to face*.

And we well know from our own formation of educators and evangelizers that it is more common for them to come close if we ourselves make some gestures of *rapprochement*, if we show some interest in them; if we go and meet them, if we show we are available. These same young people, children of a “scientist” culture, dominated by technology and its world of possibilities, and who belong to an over-connected generation, «look for persons of reference who are able to express empathy and offer them support, encouragement and help in recognizing their limits, but without making them feel they are being judged»<sup>5</sup>.

This is why, sometimes, these meetings and casual conversations may “open doors” to a deeper and more profound path of growth....

This was the case during the encounter of Jesus with the woman, who had gone to the well simply to draw water.

Without any claim of suggesting listening techniques, however, I would like to stress that if we want to cultivate the most appropriate attitudes for authentic listening, we must be careful

- ✓ Not to be impatient in speaking instead of letting the other speak.
- ✓ To be careful not to interrupt the conversation continuously.
- ✓ Not to react in an impulsive way in the face of any disagreement.
- ✓ Not to neglect to pay attention to the person we are listening to.
- ✓ To keep in mind the need we all have to be listened to.

It will be equally important in these moments of listening:

<sup>5</sup> PD, p. 33.

- To give the persons the opportunity to communicate everything they have within themselves, and that can sometimes be a burden or oppression for them.
- To ask appropriate questions and avoid those that may cause mistrust or conflict.
- To accept silences with serenity, leaving all the necessary time without filling it with unnecessary advice or questions, because the moments of silence can easily put the other at ease and allow him to reflect on what he is listening to.
- To make sure that feelings, which are a very important part of every communication, can be “recognized”.
- To avoid loquacity, too many words, and immediate solutions. Let us not forget that in important matters we need time, we need to do a process.

I conclude this part dedicated to listening with a reference to Don Bosco. The language we use today to refer to listening (to discernment and accompaniment) undoubtedly shows substantial differences with respect to Don Bosco’s cultural and religious context. However, I find the following testimony is very beautiful and makes us understand how his boys and other people felt welcomed and listened to by him:

“Despite his many and serious occupations, he was always ready to welcome in his room, with a father’s heart, those young people who asked him for a special audience. Actually, he wanted them to treat him with great familiarity and never complained for the lack of discretion with which he was sometimes bothered by them.... He gave each person full freedom to ask questions, to put forward burdens, defences, apologies... He received them with the same respect with which he treated the great lords. He invited them to sit down on the couch, while he sat at the table, and listened to them with greatest attention as if the things they exposed were all very important”<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> *BM* VI, 246-248.

## II. AN ENCOUNTER THAT PUSHES THE PERSON FORWARD: “Discerning”.

As we continue to read the passage of Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman, that is leading us by the hand on this path of listening, discernment and accompaniment, we read:

*Jesus answered her, «If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.»*

*The woman said to him, «Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? » (...)*

*Jesus said to her, «Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty». (...)*

*The woman said to him, «Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty» (John 4,10-15).*

As a good expert of the human heart, Jesus uses all the resources of the word, of the conversation and gestures, to meet people.

- ✓ He addresses questions, he dialogues, explains, recounts, pays attention to the point of view of his interlocutor; he suggests, affirms, provokes reactions.
- ✓ Jesus makes it clear to the anonymous Samaritan woman that he understands her situation more than she can imagine, and that he senses the pain and suffering that, in a certain way, she must have endured.
- ✓ He places the woman in front of her real situation and her evasive responses; even in front of her most intimate truth, as in the moment she says: «I have no husband».
- ✓ At the same time, he shows her *compassionate empathy*.
- ✓ Jesus does not consider the dialogue to be closed, he does not give in to the initial resistance.
- ✓ Dialogue helps to clarify the misunderstandings and to manifest oneself in an authentic way; the enigmatic and provocative responses arouse closeness in the woman; she feels surprised

and shows trust, reaching a true desire for what can make her life better.

Jesus, who seeks the good of the other, instead of issuing a moral judgment of disapproval or reproach, establishes a personal relationship.

- ✓ Instead of accusing, he talks and proposes.
- ✓ His language and words are addressed to the hearts of those to whom he speaks.
- ✓ In his dialogue with the woman of Samaria he proceeds calmly, without any haste of presenting himself as the one who can change her life, awakening in her, little by little, the interest of access to a source of water that promises a life that is special, different and better.

Jesus, as an expert in humanity, is attentive and full of interest in the inner world of his interlocutors: he reads in their hearts, scrutinizes them and knows how to interpret them.

→ ***Faith and Vocation to the Joy of Love.***

Even in our day the Lord, as then with the Samaritan woman, fascinates many young people, and this attraction is in close relationship with faith and with the call that God addresses to each of his sons and daughters to live life as a vocation to the joy of love.

Faith makes young people feel won over by the way they see, welcome, relate with and live of Jesus; this expands their lives. As Pope Francis often says, «faith is no refuge for the fainthearted»<sup>7</sup>.

And for us who draw from the waters of the stream that flows from the Salesian charism stirred up by the Spirit in Don Bosco, this proposal of faith as the starting point for any further discernment is based on one sole certainty: *We truly believe that God loves us and loves the young. We believe that Jesus, the Lord, wants to share "his life" with young people; and we believe that the Holy Spirit is present in them, and is at work in each one of them.*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> LF, 53.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. GC 23, 95.

The light of faith that, gradually and following the processes will mature in the lives of young people who “*let themselves be touched by God*”, will allow them to become «aware of the God’s plan of profound love for each person»<sup>9</sup>, and will thus discover that «the vocation to the joy of love is the fundamental call that God has placed in the heart of every young person so that each one’s existence will bear fruit»<sup>10</sup>.

This journey requires an attitude of openness to the voice of the Spirit in dialogue with the Word of God, in that space, the most intimate and sacred that the human person knows, which is *conscience*.

We must keep in mind, with an educational and pastoral look, that young people, or married couples themselves in their marriage, or the families themselves, come to travel this path often driven by a thirst for research which originates from certain vital situations.

- Situations that lead the person, the youth, the couple, or some family member to experience the need to give life a profound meaning even in the perspective of faith. Sometimes this happens because we are going through situations in which we vitally realize that something does not work, is not good.
- Moments in which one is not well, does not live in inner harmony and does not find full meaning in what one lives, or in the “us” in marriage, or in the family. The situation can be concretely manifested in an “existential emptiness”, which often generates personal disorientation, malaise, sadness and lack of hope.
- Bearing in mind also that in some societies we live and are forced to live so outwardly projected, almost as if we were in a showcase where we sell the idea that there is no place for limitations or defects, and where one does not have the right to age or to grow old because “it is of bad taste”. More than

<sup>9</sup> PD, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

ever, there is a need for education, a personal and communal journey, for listening and dialogue that foster the depth and interiority of life.

→ ***The Gift of Discernment.***

What we have said so far and other things as well justify the Church's intention to reaffirm, through the journey of the Synod, «her desire to encounter, accompany and care for every young person, without exception» and «not to abandon them to the isolation and exclusion to which the world exposes them»<sup>11</sup>. This makes it possible to highlight how important, together with listening, is the gift of discernment. This in the tradition of the Church has been applied to a plurality of situations: discernment of the signs of the times; discernment of the way of moral action; spiritual discernment if it refers to the search for a path of full Christian life; discernment when it comes to one's vocation or a choice of life.

In any case, dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit are always essential because, as we pointed out earlier, we must be aware that «the person of Jesus and the Good News proclaimed by Him continue to fascinate many young people»<sup>12</sup>.

Why suggest or promote paths of discernment for all those who are in the situation of letting themselves be *freely* called or touched by God? Simply because we acknowledge that the Holy Spirit speaks and works in every person through the events of their existence and that of others. He also speaks through many mediations; but facts, experiences, events and experiences can in themselves be silent or ambiguous, since they are always subject to very different and subjective interpretations. Illuminating them with the correct method will be one of the fruits of the journey of discernment.

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* offers us three keys for discernment, including the study of the *signs of the times*, as Pope

<sup>11</sup> PD, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> PD, p. 36.

Paul VI already indicated.<sup>13</sup> These three keys or criteria are: recognizing, interpreting and choosing.

– **RECOGNIZING**<sup>14</sup>, in the Light of What the Spirit Inspires!

- ✓ To have lucidity in the moments of the ups and downs of life; in periods of true inner struggle.
- ✓ To bring out all the emotional richness that exists in the person, and to give a name to what we experience or have in ourselves.
- ✓ To grasp the “taste” that I feel in consonance or dissonance between what I experience and what is deepest in me.
- ✓ All this, enlightened by God’s word, must be meditated upon, putting at the centre the capability to listen and the very affectivity of the person, without being afraid not even of silence.
- ✓ Assuming everything as part of the journey of personal maturation.

– **INTERPRETING**<sup>15</sup>

- ✓ Understanding what the Spirit of God is calling to, through what he awakens in each person.
- ✓ Interpreting others and oneself is a very delicate task and requires patience, vigilance and also some learning. We must be aware that there are social and psychological conditionings.
- ✓ It will be necessary to deal with reality and, at the same time, not to be content with the minimum, not to tend only to what is easy, to be aware of one’s own gifts and possibilities.
- ✓ Naturally, this task of interpretation can develop in a believer, in a Christian, under certain conditions:
  - Cultivating a true dialogue with the Lord (like the dialogue that the woman of Samaria had with Jesus).

<sup>13</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam suam* (6 August 1964), 19: AAS 56 (1964), 632, quoted in *EG*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. PD, p. 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. PD, p. 46-47.

- Activating all the capabilities of the person, making sure that one is not indifferent to what happens, to what one experiences (as in the resonance that the dialogue with Jesus had in the heart of this woman).
- Letting oneself be helped by a person experienced in listening to the Spirit (who, in the case of the Gospel passage, was Jesus himself who guided).

## – CHOOSING<sup>16</sup>

This leads to the moment when the person, the youth, the spouses, the family – if discernment is done within the family environment – must take decisions, making an exercise of genuine personal or community freedom and responsibility, as appropriate.

The Samaritan woman had to choose inwardly between ignoring Jesus and continuing her life as if nothing had happened in that encounter, or taking the decision to let herself be surprised by Him and be involved to the point of going so far as to call her fellow countrymen and communicate to them the emotion she felt because that man had reached the depths of her inner world.

- ✓ The choice made when one discerns in the light of the Spirit very often gives people great freedom and, at the same time, demands coherence of life.
- ✓ For this reason, it can be affirmed that encouraging in people, and in a very particular way in young people, choices of life that are truly free and responsible, constitutes the point of arrival of every serious process of discernment in the journey of faith and personal growth (and of every vocational ministry that can be thought of).

Discernment – Pope Francis tells us – is «the main tool which permits safeguarding the inviolable place of conscience<sup>17</sup>, without pretending to replace it»<sup>18</sup>, following the example of Jesus who, in

<sup>16</sup> Cf. PD, p. 47-48.

<sup>17</sup> PD, p. 48.

<sup>18</sup> AL, 37.

dialogue with the Samaritan woman, accompanies her on her journey towards truth and the interiority of her own life.

### III. AN ENCOUNTER THAT TRANSFORMS LIFE: “Accompanying”.

*Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, «What do you want?» or, «Why are you speaking with her?» Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, «Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?»*

*They left the city and were on their way to him. (...)*

*Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, «He told me everything I have ever done». So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, «It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world» (John 4:27-30, 39-42).*

- The Samaritan woman has entered the evangelical scene as “a woman of Samaria” and comes out “knowing the source of living water” to the point of feeling the need to run to announce to her fellow countrymen what has happened to her; through her *testimony*, she allows many to approach Jesus.
- Having abandoned the jar, the woman runs to the village to talk to her people about this man. And she will ask them an important question: «Could not this man be the one Israel has been waiting for, for such a long time?»
- Likewise, as can be inferred from the context, Jesus makes his disciples understand that he is fulfilling the will of the Father; that will which is the Life of his life and which he wishes to transmit to others.

- Jesus does not offer an extension of knowledge and learning to the people he meets, as in this case with the Samaritan woman, but rather gives them a proposal to grow and change their lives. The very same “Jacob’s well”, which is the symbol of the wisdom that comes from the Law, loses its value and is replaced by the “living water”.
- The image of God, which is communicated in the encounter with Jesus, is not the image of the impassive, distant, philosophically cold god. On the contrary, Jesus reveals the God who gives Life, who can be called Father, who does not allow himself to be locked up, controlled or possessed, because he is Spirit (worship in Spirit and truth).
- The conclusion of the meeting goes beyond what one would expect in a normal ending, namely that the woman returns to her ordinary life with the jar full of water. On the contrary, the jar, which the woman abandons empty to go and call her own, speaks to us of a gain and not of a loss.

→ ***Accompanying, like Jesus.***

There are numerous biblical stories, which are, in the first place, narrations of the accompaniment God ensures to his people over time.

At the border of the two Testaments, John the Baptist appears as the first spiritual companion of the Gospels; before Jesus himself, John was able to give witness and prepare the way because God had spoken to his heart.

Jesus himself, in so many passages of the New Testament, becomes a neighbour and companion in the street to communicate and to meet in a personal way with the people of his time.

The encounter of the Lord with the Samaritan woman shows how the Spirit of God can act in the heart of every man and woman: that human heart which, because of frailty and sin, often feels confused and divided, “attracted to different and even contrary feelings”.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. PD, p. 50.

In the face of this human reality personal accompaniment appears as a very valid means of the Christian spiritual tradition, providing believers with instruments and resources that allow them to recognize the presence of the Lord, his demands and his calls.

How can we define accompaniment? «As a form of permanent dialogue among companions to welcome Life, accompanying life»<sup>20</sup>; a dialogue whose ultimate aim is to foster the relationship between the person and the Lord, helping them to overcome any obstacles.

As Jesus did in the encounter with the people of his time, in every experience of accompaniment the following are necessary:

- ✓ A loving gaze, like the one of Jesus in the vocational call addressed to the twelve (*John 1:35-51*).
- ✓ An authoritative word, as the one Jesus pronounced in the synagogue of Capernaum (*Lk 4:32*).
- ✓ The capability to become neighbour, like Jesus in the encounter with the Samaritan woman (*John 4:3-34. 39-42*).
- ✓ Choosing to walk side by side, to become a companion on the street, like Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus (*Lk 24:13-35*).

*For us, accompanying teenagers and young people, their families and adults in general, will involve:*

- Knowing the way they walk, to what extent they are located and where they are heading, so as to be able to walk together.
- Ensuring that the encounter takes place as an opportunity for a human and humanizing relationship, and not a utilitarian one. We are well aware of the importance of the encounter in Salesian pedagogy, which focuses on the person of the youth and of each person, with personal relationships that are based

<sup>20</sup> L. ARRIETA, *Aquel que acompaña sale al encuentro y regala preguntas de vida para andar el camino* (Apuntes provisionales). Simposio CCEE, Barcelona, 2017, 11. See also P. CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA, *Letter of the Rector Major: "Come and see" (Jn 1,39). The need for vocation ministry*. In AGC 409 (2011), p. 33-36; M. A. GARCÍA, *L'accompagnamento personale nella proposta educativo-pastorale salesiana*, pp. 261-282, in F. ATTARD-M. A. GARCÍA (A CURA DI), *L'accompagnamento spirituale*, Elle Di Ci, Torino 2014, 349.

on mutual knowledge, on the concern for the good of the other, on understanding, empathy and trust. And we know that Don Bosco was in this an *exceptional, incomparable teacher*.

- With an attitude of **listening** (again, one refers to the art of listening as the foundation of accompaniment!), which makes it possible to know and understand the reality of the other person, the path they are taking, the situation of pain, lack of hope, fatigue or search in which they find themselves, as well as the dreams, desires and ideals hidden in their heart.
- It will always be an encounter of **mediation**, because the true Accompanying Person is the Holy Spirit. Mystic St. John of the Cross strongly affirms this when he writes: «These directors should reflect that they themselves are not the chief agent, guide, and mover of souls in this matter, but the principal guide is the Holy Spirit, who is never neglectful of souls»<sup>21</sup>. And this is because it will never be said enough that the travelling companion of our entire educational, pastoral and evangelizing activity is the Holy Spirit.
- The accompanying person and companion in the street must be a witness to and announcer of the action of the Spirit in the person accompanied, but in a discreet way, remaining close, occupying only the space that belongs to him and not another one. Verily, the educator and evangelizer are formed as spiritual companions in *the founding experience of having first encountered Him*. This is so clear, explicit and radical for the fact that «the true educator of faith is the one who at a certain point must set himself aside, pulling himself back by creating that “empty place” which can only be occupied by the Lord»<sup>22</sup>, in order to allow, as the fruit and result of this accompaniment, the attainment of a true relationship or encounter of the youth, of the person accompanied, with God.

<sup>21</sup> JOHN OF THE CROSS, *The Living Flame of Love* 3,46 in F. ATTARD-M. A. GARCÍA (A CURA DI), *L'accompagnamento spirituale*, Elle Di Ci, Torino 2014, 268.

<sup>22</sup> R. SALA, *Pastorale Giovanile 1, Evangelizzazione e educazione dei giovani*, LAS, Roma 2017, p. 391.

- Discovering how God manifests Himself in our experience to the point of finding ourselves encountered by Him.
- Being aware that the initiative will always be God's; and (being also aware) that responsibility and freedom will be ours.

→ ***Don Bosco, Educator and Spiritual Guide of His Young People***<sup>23</sup>

To speak of Don Bosco as an educator means to highlight and be aware of the close relationship between his educational mission and the spiritual accompaniment of young people, and of its significance for their formation.

In order to be very brief and to underline only what is essential, I will highlight some elements that I consider to be of great value.

- ✓ Don Bosco is an evangelizer-educator who cares, with great intuition, to create an attractive educational environment, rich in educational proposals and human relationships; Don Bosco never renounces to gradually take concrete steps in the Christian formation of his youth.
- ✓ Don Bosco is for us *the brilliant companion of his children*, because he does not limit himself to personal dialogue, or to the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation (simply called confession at that time), but who sees everything in relationship and united with the other elements of educational action and daily life in its various moments.
- ✓ In Don Bosco's style, both the accompanying and the accompanied persons *are not limited to meeting each other* on the

<sup>23</sup> I invite you to refer to the existing abundant and rich Salesian literature; in particular I highlight: A. GIRAUDO, *Direzione spirituale in San Giovanni Bosco*, in F. ATTARD-M. A. GARCÍA (A CURA DI), *L'accompagnamento spirituale*, Elle Di Ci, Torino 2014, pp. 148-172; P. CHÁVEZ, *Letter of the Rector Major. "Come and see" (Jn 1,39). The need for vocation ministry*. In AGC 409 (2011), p. 33-36; pp. 9-16; J. E. VECCHI, *Spiritualità Salesiana*. Elle Di Ci, Torino, pp. 22-36, 117-124, 173-174; SALESIAN YOUTH MINISTRY DEPARTMENT, *Salesian Youth Ministry. Frame of Reference*, Rome 2014, 3 ediz., pp. 24-25, 78-103, 114-117; E. ALBURQUERQUE (COORD.), *Espiritualidad Salesiana. 40 palabras clave*, CCS, Madrid, 77-82.

basis of a specific agenda on a set day or time, but daily share environments, recreation spaces, and moments of work, prayer and joy.

- ✓ This leads one to think that *mutual knowledge, trust and even friendship* could easily be born; this favoured trust and the willingness to let oneself be guided.
- ✓ In Don Bosco, spiritual paternity is the consequence and the ripe fruit of educational paternity, which his children live with him on a daily basis. We find this paternity magnificently described in the following expressions: «For each boy, Don Bosco in his capacity as confessor and spiritual director is the one who has welcomed him with affection, sustains him, instructs him, educates him and encourages him to give the best of himself in the community and in his daily work. Next to him there are assistants, educators and young friends with whom one can share the same ethical tension, the same spiritual values, in a stimulating and fruitful dialogue exchange»<sup>24</sup>.

Ultimately, the emotional tone and the creation of trust and sympathy are for Don Bosco fundamental conditions of his educational method.

- ✓ Don Bosco *is always and at all times the educator* who not only provides his children with food, health and education. His educational commitment is always oriented towards the Christian education of his children. It is for this reason that we can affirm that «spiritual accompaniment to Christian perfection is an essential and necessary part of Salesian pedagogy»<sup>25</sup>.
- ✓ It is very enlightening to know that, in his accompaniment, Don Bosco did not establish the same relationship and bond with each of his children, but he did it with “*different tonalities and degrees*”. The situation was not the same with the boys he met only at the festive oratory on Sunday evenings and in confession, or with those who lived day and night in Valdocco, and,

<sup>24</sup> A. GIRAUDO, *o.c.*, p. 149.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

among them, with those who showed to be vocationally sensitive and available.

- ✓ A characteristic that “must be *very ours*”, because it was Don Bosco’s, is that of always taking *steps towards the creation of communities of life*, where cordial encounters, the continuous presence, the empathic closeness of educators (which is typical of Salesian assistance) that arouses trust and friendship, are the usual characteristic of that community of adolescents, young people and adults.

The goal towards which he always tended, as far as possible, was “*the conquest of the heart*”. This is wonderful! If one only thinks of what this can mean in a true evangelizer and educator!

- ✓ We also know that for Don Bosco *the quality of the educational environment*, which had to be offered and built together with the youth in Valdocco, was *the most effective accompaniment for each one*, whatever the situation in which they met.
- ✓ In his educational activity Don Bosco *tries to understand the children*, to be aware of their juvenile needs and desires; so in this educational relationship the young person feels *understood, welcomed, supported and loved*.

The children’s trust in their friend, educator and father, makes them open their hearts and accept to travel with him along paths that make them discover new and attractive realities.

An example of great significance and enlightening at the same time is offered by the initial resistance of young Michele Magone – as Don Bosco himself narrates – who only enjoyed singing, shouting, running and jumping<sup>26</sup>, until he reaches a “crisis” that upsets him, and a change that takes place thanks to the conversion of his heart<sup>27</sup> and makes him experience a great joy and an unexpected spiritual journey.

<sup>26</sup> G. BOSCO, *Cenno biografico sul giovanetto Magone Michele allievo dell’Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales*. Seconda edizione. Tipografia dell’Oratorio di San Francesco di Sales, Torino 1866, 15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-24.

For all this we affirm that «Don Bosco is a model: he tends to identify in himself the educator, the confessor and the spiritual director; he insists on affectionate welcome, on goodness, on magnanimity and the care for details, on the intensity of affection shown in such a way that the youth may entrust themselves to him, open their hearts and collaborate in the formation activity with prompt and hearty obedience»<sup>28</sup>.

All this is achieved through **a pedagogy of processes** that is so common in spiritual tradition. «Christian life is lived in a progressive way, according to distinct degrees of depth and fullness, and is constantly open to an ever greater growth»<sup>29</sup>.

- According to processes that *must not be forced* from either inside or outside.
- To the point of becoming aware of the process and of making it one's own, since it is the Spirit who unleashes it in each one.

#### IV. IN VIEW OF WHAT KIND OF PASTORAL ACTION?

##### **Vocational Discernment as Suggested by Pope Francis.**

I believe that everything we have said so far offers suggestions and pastoral paths that we must face. And the very fact that the Preparatory Document for the Synod of Bishops invites to pastoral action, allows me to suggest some guidelines to pay attention to. The same text to which I have just referred invites me «to focus on how earnestly to respond to the challenge of pastoral care and vocational discernment»<sup>30</sup>.

Taking these challenges seriously with a Salesian gaze could be translated into the following considerations:

1. We must be aware that this is the *favourable time* and we must continue to walk with boys and girls, with young people and

<sup>28</sup> A. GIRAUDO, *o.c.*, p. 160.

<sup>29</sup> S. DE FIORES: *Itinerario espiritual*, in S. DE FIORES - T. GOFFI - A. GUERRA (COORD.), *Nuevo Diccionario de Espiritualidad*, Paulinas, Madrid, 2004, p.755.

<sup>30</sup> DP, p. 53.

their families, with fathers and mothers who need and agree to walk these roads in company, instead of going through them in a harsh solitude in which they will never feel at ease.

Don Vecchi wrote it years ago in his letter "*Now is the Acceptable Time*"<sup>31</sup>. Pope Francis commented on it at different times in his Apostolic Exhortation and in this Preparatory Document to the Synod; many of us also know it for our own educational pastoral experience, and I myself have expressed it with strong conviction in motivating this Strenna. Don Vecchi wrote: «Individual conversations with young people have revealed how much they think about the radical following of Christ. But it often finds them unprepared to respond and, as has already been said so many times before, it finds them uncertain in the face of discovering the real possibilities that match their expectations for living out such a vocation for the whole of their lives»<sup>32</sup>.

2. We must cultivate in every moment **a vocational culture**, even in cultural contexts that may seem difficult to us.

This expression was used for the first time by Pope John Paul II in the message of the XXX World Day for Vocations.

As educators and evangelizers we propose to help young people to face life, the present and the future, with a deep self-knowledge and with an attitude of availability and generosity in listening to the voice of God in each one, accompanying them on their journey towards a personal and consistent project of life.

This will not only refer to some, as if they were an elite, but is an invitation and a call from God himself for the journey of each person towards their full development.

We wish young people to discover *a way of living and dreaming of their lives* in which values such as gratuity and donation, openness to others and openness to God may mature. We want to help these young people, and every person who is doing this

<sup>31</sup> J. E. VECCHI, Lettera del Rettor Maggiore, *Ecco il tempo favorevole*, ACG 373 (2000), pp. 3-49; Cf. anche P. CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA, Lettera del Rettor Maggiore, "Venite e vedrete" (Gv 1,39). *La necessità di convocare*, o.c., pp. 3-47.

<sup>32</sup> J. E. VECCHI, o.c., p. 10.

journey, to discover that life can be understood as a gift and a task<sup>33</sup>, and that this will make them happy. To discover that in the face of the dominant cultural tendencies conveying messages according to which the only important thing is one's own self, a significant alternative is to understand life as a gift, according to a plan of life that everyone feels "made to their measure and according to their possibilities" and in which one feels happy, as a response to the meaning of their life from the perspective of God and others.

We want this for all young people, always with great respect for their persons, and calling for their freedom as we walk together.

3. We must foster ***an intense spiritual atmosphere*** that constitutes the great help for the personal relationship with Jesus. My visits to the five continents make ever more profound my conviction that in the world the vast majority of "our" young people, those with whom we meet every day, are open if we present to them and bear witness to the God who dwells in us, who dwells in our person and in whose name we live for them.

I sincerely believe that if sometimes the "results" of our pastoral action are lacking, this may be due to the fact that we ourselves do not have the courage to be more decisive in our proposals. Perhaps, for fear of being rejected, we choose to stay in the "lukewarm path" that offers proposals that do not bother anyone.

I am more and more convinced that our young people around the world are *thirsty for spirituality, thirsty for transcendence, thirsty for God*, even if some times they do not know how to express it and how to ask us for an answer. With Don Bosco the youth learned to feel and to experience, almost spontaneously, that God loved them and that he had for each one of them a project of happiness and full life.

God's plan for each of his sons and daughters has not changed. It always remains the same. This spiritual atmosphere is, therefore, more necessary than ever and is cultivated through personal

<sup>33</sup> Cf. P. CHÁVEZ VILLANUEVA, *o.c.*, pp. 19-20.

the relationship with God and with our brothers and sisters, is nourished by prayer shared with the youth, by the celebration of faith in the sacraments.

It is nourished by listening, in the welcoming silence of the Word, in dialogue with it and in sharing it. And it is nourished with Marian devotion and with a strong feeling and experience of love for the Mother, Mary Help of Christians.

4. We must offer this opportunity **to all young people** and to all those who request it, without excluding anyone, because in each one the Holy Spirit is at work.

We believe that the vocation of each person is God's initiative. «You did not choose me, but I chose you» (*John 15:16*). Since the vocation of each person is a call and a gift that is received, no one can inspire or give birth to it except God Himself. However, we must accompany it with a path through which faith becomes as personal as possible; a path in which we grow in our interiority and in our encounter with Jesus the Lord.

The call Jesus addresses to the rich young man and his response make us understand that it is not enough to be enthusiastic and honest to respond positively to God's call. To respond to this call, the ethical and moral dimension of the person needs, first and foremost, the spiritual dimension and faith.

If this dimension is lived out, young people will be able to feel that call as a *project of life and God's dream on each of them*, and it will become possible to accompany them on every type of vocational journey: for lay Christian life, for consecrated life, for priestly ministry, for consecrated secularity...

5. We must propose a spirituality that fosters **a unified vision of life**. It is a trait that should be inherent to our Salesian spirituality of "union with God", which we have received as a spiritual patrimony from Don Bosco.

We speak of a spirituality in which the God who gives himself freely, the personal encounter with Christ and the freedom with which each person responds in faith to the Spirit who acts in each person, are closely united.

Don Bosco, a great teacher in the spirit for young people, lived with them a spirituality that was, in the first place, educational and helped them to live in a natural way a path that led them to a spiritual maturity for which «the presence of God becomes as “natural” as breathing, sleeping or thinking. It is a dynamism that does not only refer to the “religious” aspect but that affects the whole of life»<sup>34</sup>.

#### **6. *Witnessing to the Joy with Which We Live.***

Young people who dream of living their Christian life in an authentic way and who wonder what God wants from them, want to see our enthusiasm and want to experience it personally as well.

«No one will take away your joy» (*John 16:22*) says the Lord. This is possible when we ourselves, young people, adults, fathers and mothers who are in search, have lived the experience of the encounter of the Lord with us. And that experience must be translated into the joy of living, into the optimism with which we meet every day, into the serene courage with which we face problems and difficult times. There is nothing further away from God that fills life than an existence marked by disappointment, without vivacity, demotivated. This is the reason why I have repeatedly expressed in these pages that in accompanying others in the discernment of life and vocation we must be *significant and credible points of reference*. Otherwise we will end up performing a function that leaves no lasting, worthwhile trace in people's lives.

#### **7. *In the Logic of “Come and See”***<sup>35</sup>

It is clear that the young people of the five continents to which I have referred, fascinated by Christ, will follow the paths that attract them. As Don Vecchi says in the text already mentioned, young people will not be fascinated by our works and organizations, our structures, nor even by our work. At most they will be able to devote some time, perhaps a few years, to animation and service, but if they do not discover the depth and charm that Jesus

<sup>34</sup> M. A. GARCÍA MORCUENDE, *La educación es cosa de corazones*. PPC, Madrid 2017, p. 109.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *John 1:39* and J. E. VECCHI, *o.c.*, p. 25-26.

Christ arouses, sooner or later they will go in search of something else that will satisfy them more. The same applies equally to religious men and women and to young priests. Therefore, the experience of values such as the evangelical fraternity in the name of Jesus, the family spirit, which we feel "so very much to be ours", the atmosphere of family affection, prayer and the shared witness of the small or big things we live, will constitute what gives meaning to personal research and the "yes" as a response to God's call. It is that "more" that attracts, «the extra something which forms part of prophecy, of significance, of basic values; or () what might be called the "warm experience" which gives rise to inspirations and the desire for a life commitment»<sup>36</sup>.

The aspect that would be lacking in the presentation of this "come and see" is being aware, for any type of vocational discernment in the Church, that silent witness and vocational silence are not sufficient to make the vocation aroused by God become concrete. The personal invitation and the proposal of suitable paths for each person must be part of the "come and see".

8. *With an accompaniment in Salesian style, which is **not only individualistic or intimist but also communal**.*

In our Salesian style when we speak of accompaniment, we refer not only to individual dialogue, but to a much wider and richer reality that helps the person, especially the youth, to internalize the values and experiences they live. Among these, *service to others and solidarity for the most needy* are of great importance.

As was already the case with Don Bosco, accompaniment starts from an educational environment which favours the interiorisation of proposals and personal and vocational growth.

In addition to moments of personal and systematic dialogue, short and occasional meetings with other people are decisive in this journey, as also are simple and familiar meetings with other people, members of the Christian community, the faith group or religious communities themselves.

<sup>36</sup> J. E. VECCHI, *o.c.*, p. 26.

## V. IN COMPANY WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

I would like to conclude this commentary by imagining that, as she went to meet her fellow countrymen and spoke to them of the One who had fascinated her and helped her to meet herself, in her deepest truth, the Samaritan woman would perhaps take us also by the hand and

→ She would lead us to Jacob's well, the well of the encounter with Jesus who made her understand that He does not stop in front of our resistance and our being anchored in areas of comfort and security against what we do not know; He remains close to us until he leads us to discover our deepest thirst.

→ She would invite us not to let anything and anyone stifle or curb our deepest ideals, the ideal that filled us with enthusiasm at the beginning of our missionary vocational journey, or of married life, religious consecration, priestly ministry or lay consecration.

→ She would certainly propose us to do everything possible to be always open to the "gift" that comes from God; a gift we never succeed to discover completely and that we do not taste in full form because of our limitations.

→ She would convince us, starting from her own experience, of the importance of accompanying each other, of guiding and supporting each other in faith.

→ And she would confide how she herself learned from Jesus to be more humane, and perhaps even a little more "expert in humanity", which is a permanent challenge for us.

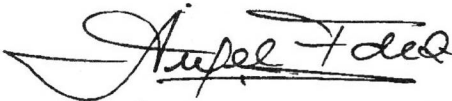
Like Mary, who lived the novelty of the Annunciation, the encounter with a "personal" God who knocked so delicately at the door of her freedom making fruitful what humanly would not have been possible, we are also invited to question ourselves on our faith, on our "abandoning ourselves" in God, who is a perennial novelty of life, and to let ourselves be carried by the Spirit.

May the Lord help us to follow this path and to help young people to walk along it.

May our Mother grant us the grace to be authentic mediation of the word of the Lord, which resounds, not always in an immediately comprehensible way, in the heart of every young person, in married couples, in families, in all those who are in search.

By invoking the Mediation of Mary Help of Christians to her Son and the protection of Don Bosco and all the members of our Family, who are already on the road to holiness, I greet you and wish you all good.

Rome, 31 December 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ángel Fernández Artime". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'A' and a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Fr Ángel FERNÁNDEZ ARTIME, sdb  
*Rector Major*

## 2. GUIDELINES AND DIRECTIVES

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### 2.1 FORMATION OF FORMATION GUIDES

Fr Ivo COELHO

*General Councillor for Formation*

“Formation,” said St John Paul II in *Vita Consecrata*, “is a sharing in the work of the Father who, through the Spirit, fashions the inner attitudes of the Son in the hearts of young men and women.” (VC 66) While the Father is “the educator par excellence,” and while the prime responsibility for the response falls on the one who is called, it has pleased the Father, in the work of formation, to make use of human instruments, “placing more mature brothers and sisters at the side of those whom he calls.” (VC 66)

The present guidelines would like to focus not so much on the formees as on the persons of the formation guides, in the light of the journey of the congregation since the Second Vatican Council: the awareness of the mission as setting the tenor of our life, of formation as a lifelong process, of the educative-pastoral community as the subject of the mission that we share with so many lay people and members of the Salesian Family, and of the role of the religious community within it; and, in recent General Chapters, the attention to our identity as Salesian consecrated persons living out our vocation in two forms, lay and clerical.

#### 1. Preparing formation guides and not just teachers

The recognition of the need for formation of formation guides is not absent from the magisterium of the Congregation, beginning from R 78 which reads: “formation communities must have a rector and a team of formation personnel who are specially prepared, above all as regards spiritual direction....” In the wake of *Potissimum institutioni* (1990), *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992), *Direc-*

*tives on the preparation of educators in seminaries* (1993), *Vita consecrata* (1996), and perhaps also *Inter-institute collaboration for formation*, (1998), the third edition of our *Ratio* (2000) takes up the theme of formation of formators and repeats it in various ways.<sup>1</sup> As the *Directives* of 1993 say, common sense alone is not enough: what is needed is a capacity for *discernment* that has been sharpened and refined by a good knowledge of the human sciences so as to be able to go beyond appearances and “to help the seminarian to know himself in depth, accept himself with serenity and to correct himself and to mature....”<sup>2</sup> The same document distinguished helpfully between an *initial phase* and a *successive phase* in the formation of formation guides (48-71), and *Vita consecrata* insisted on “appropriate *structures* for the training of those responsible for formation,” with the note that these be “preferably in places where they can be in contact with the *culture* in which their pastoral service will later be carried out.” (VC 66)

In a significant letter of 2009 entitled “Formation of formation guides in initial formation,” the councillor for formation, Fr Francesco Cereda, spoke of the need for careful selection and formation of formators, described the tasks of formators (helping transformation, accompanying, fostering primacy of the spiritual life, communicating Don Bosco’s charism, working as a team), and listed the various occasions for such formation at the personal, local, provincial, regional and world level.<sup>3</sup> The same guidelines were repeated in the *Assessment and Guidelines concerning Intellectual Formation during Initial Formation*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco* (online edition 2016) ## 237-239, 246, 284-286, 416, 489, 547-548, 571. Still, there is no section of our *Ratio* dedicated entirely to the formation of formation guides, and this is significant.

<sup>2</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Directives concerning the preparation of seminary educators* (1993) 57 (see *Origins: CNS Documentary Service* 23/32 [27 January 1994] 558-571, at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/priesthood/priestly-formation/upload/preparation.pdf> as of 11 February 2017. See FSDB (2016) 237.

<sup>3</sup> F. Cereda, “Formation of formation guides in initial formation,” AGC 404 (2009) 77-81 (section 4).

<sup>4</sup> *Valutazione e orientamenti circa la formazione intellettuale nella formazione iniziale. Valutazione e orientamenti approvati dal Rettor Maggiore e dal Consiglio generale*, Roma 25 luglio 2012.

The letter candidly admitted that “nowadays in the Congregation most of the formation guides have not received and currently are not receiving any or scarcely any specific preparation for formation. Often the Provinces prepare formation guides by getting them to obtain a degree in some particular field of study; this sort of qualification is necessary for the culture of the formation guide and as preparation for his teaching role, but it is not sufficient for his formation task.”<sup>5</sup> Some ten years down the line, the situation remains largely unchanged. In “Vocation and Formation,” Fr Pascual Chávez noted that the congregation needs “to prepare formation personnel and not just teachers.”<sup>6</sup> We might say that the preparation of guides for formation *has not yet become a systematic reality in the congregation*.

## 2. The model of formation

The goal sets the path, and so the formation of formation guides depends very much on the goal, on the kind of formation for which we want to prepare guides. The goal of formation to *consecrated life* proposed in *Vita consecrata* is neither mere external conformity, nor even a set of attitudes and competences, but rather the high one of “putting on the sentiments (*phronein*) of Christ” (Phil 2,5) – or configuration to Christ, putting on Christ (Rom 13,14), letting Christ be formed in us (Gal 4,19), sharing the Son’s total self-giving to the Father and to his brothers and sisters, becoming a living memorial of him to the point of sharing even his concrete life choices (VC 66, 22).

The goal of *Salesian* formation, we could add, is configuration to Christ the *Good Shepherd* in the footsteps of Don Bosco.

Now an authentic educational goal must be capable of transforming itself into a method. What are the operative consequences of the goal of “putting on the sentiments of Christ”?

<sup>5</sup> Cereda, AGC 404:75-76 (section 3).

<sup>6</sup> P. Chávez, “Vocation and Formation,” AGC 416 (2013) 10.

We insist again that formation is first and foremost the work of God. It is the Father who calls and who, through the Spirit, forms the inner attitudes of the Son in the heart of young people. But since God is utterly respectful of our freedom, formation, far from being a “one way” affair, involves our responding to the call of God. Formation therefore involves a dynamic of call and response, a dialectic of two freedoms and two loves. It is a divine work in which we are called to collaborate. This, in fact, is how our Constitutions see formation: as response to vocation. (C 96)

Formation guides take their place within the dynamic of call and response that is the formation process.

A first point that follows from this is that formation involves a *dynamic of freedom*. “If we must form the ‘heart’ in the biblical and full sense of the term, so that the young person might have the attitudes of Christ and discover the beauty of the *sequela*, the process of education has to be a *formation to freedom* (VC 66).”<sup>7</sup> Grace influences our freedom but never takes it away – not even the most powerful grace. Because grace is love, and freedom is a constitutive element of love: without freedom there is no loving and no possibility of a loving response to love.

If the goal of formation were preparation for a certain kind of apostolate or a certain style of life, or the possession of certain virtuous qualities in view of the ministry, the pedagogical methodology could be different (e.g., the strengthening of the will, the capacity for asceticism and renunciation, preparation for the apostolate), but if it is formation of the heart so that the young person has the attitudes of the Son, the only possible way is the way of freedom. The heart of man can and must be educated and evangelized, purified and liberated with all the suffering that this involves, to the point of experiencing those attitudes always more naturally and almost connaturally, thanks to a wise discipline. There is no authentic education to

<sup>7</sup> A. Cencini, “La formazione oggi: Ministero e mistero,” at [http://www.ofmconv.org/x/CENCINI.htm#N\\_13\\_](http://www.ofmconv.org/x/CENCINI.htm#N_13_) (as of 11 February 2017).

consecration to the kingdom that does not pass through the phases, negative and positive, ascetical and mystical, of a formation to freedom, to freedom – in concrete – as awareness of one's own internal conditioning, even unconscious, and the ability to be ever less dependent (freedom 'from'); freedom as a gift received from God in Christ and continually revitalized by the gift of the sacraments and of the new life in Christ (freedom 'in') and freedom as the richness of the interior life and of love for God, as the consequent quality of desires and the strength to pursue them ("freedom 'for').<sup>8</sup>

The climate of true freedom enables the young Salesian in formation to overcome inner resistance and fear, become aware of the many levels of his own deep motivations, and find the courage to express them to himself and to his guides. The external acts marking the journey of Salesian life – first profession and renewal of vows – will thus be ever more in harmony with the interiority of the person.

Education to freedom should therefore be "the" method of the process of formation to consecration. In fact, if the Preventive System can be described as a pedagogy of freedom, we could say that the Preventive System is, in fact, "the" method of formation.<sup>9</sup> In this context we can recall the now famous conversation of Pope Francis with the Superiors General in 2013:

Problems are not solved simply by forbidding doing this or that. Dialogue as well as confrontation are needed. To avoid problems, in some houses of formation, young people grit their teeth, try not to make mistakes, follow the rules smiling a lot, just waiting for the day when they are told: 'Good. You have finished formation.' This is hypocrisy that is the result of clericalism, which is one of the worst evils.... I summarize by some advice that I once received as a young man: 'If you want to ad-

<sup>8</sup> Cencini.

<sup>9</sup> C 104 asks that formation guides be capable, among other things, "of genuine dialogue with the young confreres." C 112 speaks of the director of novices as one who is "able to relate to other people, to engage in dialogue, and to inspire confidence in the novices by his kindness."

vance, think clearly and speak obscurely.' That was a clear invitation to hypocrisy. We need to avoid that at all costs.<sup>10</sup>

Second, formation involves a dynamic of *attention to experience*. Our Constitutions teach us that formation is a question of "learning by experience the meaning of the Salesian vocation." (C 98) If God is at work in us forming in our hearts the attitudes of the Son, the more attentive we are to this work, the better we can respond to it and collaborate with it. A good guide knows how to direct the attention of the formee to the working of God in his life, helping him to learn a permanent attitude of discernment (*docibilitas*) that allows him to see every experience as an opportunity for growth and for formation. This is the basis of all that our Constitutions have to say about formation – but since we already have a substantial reflection in AGC 425 on formation as lifelong, we will not dwell further on this point.<sup>11</sup>

Third comes the dynamic of beauty, the *via pulchritudinis*. (EG 15, 167) The situating of formation in the bosom of the Trinity makes consecrated life participate in the beauty of God himself. In the Apostolic Exhortation of 1996, beauty becomes a key to the reading of consecrated life. Vocation ministry and formation must know how to communicate the beauty of the *sequela*. (VC 64, 66) The young person must be formed to see and taste the beautiful (and not merely the holy and the dutiful) – the beauty, attractiveness and splendour of the Lord who calls and of the life to which he calls. And then it is by the beauty of their own lives that formation guides radiate their influence. This is the whole dynamic of example, witness, testimony. As the young Don Bosco learnt at the school of Don Cafasso, fire can be lit only by fire.<sup>12</sup> The beauty of our lives communicates the joy of the gospel: this is a great element in the teaching of Pope Francis, and with him we recall that

<sup>10</sup> Pope Francis with Antonio Spadaro, "Wake up the World. Conversation with Pope Francis about the Religious Life," 8, at [http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/PopeFrancis/Wake\\_up\\_the\\_world-2.pdf](http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/PopeFrancis/Wake_up_the_world-2.pdf) (see *La Civiltà Cattolica* 2014 I 3-17).

<sup>11</sup> See I. Coelho, "Formation is lifelong," AGC 425 (2017) 25-37.

<sup>12</sup> Giuseppe Cafasso, *Esercizi spirituali al clero*. I: Meditazioni, 641-642.

this must be especially true of consecrated persons, and even more so of those entrusted with the ministry of formation.

So the goal of Salesian formation – configuration to Christ the Good Shepherd – transforms itself into a method, a method that involves a dynamic of freedom, learning by experience, and beauty. And it is this goal and this method that will guide the preparation of formation personnel.

Two other points. We must avoid the assumption – so natural to modernity with its culture of the atomic individual – that formation is an exclusively one-to-one process. The subject of formation is the community, and this is absolutely as it should be, for us who believe that God is a communion of persons, and that formation is a profoundly Trinitarian process in which we are called to collaborate. It is very significant that all the recent church documents insist on the unity of the formation team,<sup>13</sup> and this is perhaps the intention behind the insistence of Fr Cereda that the crucial role of personal spiritual guidance should not in any way minimize the need for a team of formation guides.<sup>14</sup> It is within the context of the community and a harmonious formation team that the indispensable moment of the friendly chat and personal spiritual accompaniment takes its place. In the context of formation to priesthood, in fact, the new *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* insists that the journey “has an eminently communitarian character from the outset.”<sup>15</sup>

For us Salesian religious, the community is an *essential* part of our identity (C 3).

The mission is entrusted to the community and not to individuals (C 44), and this holds true also for the most delicate task of formation. Without a healthy formative environment, the work of even the most brilliant individual formation guide is ruined. This calls to be translated into much attention to the *formation of the*

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, OT 5; PI 32; PDV 66; *Directives* (1993) 29-32.

<sup>14</sup> Cereda, AGC 404 67.

<sup>15</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation: Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (Rome 2016) Introduction section 3.

formation teams at all levels, from the world and provincial to the local.

This might be the place to draw attention again to the expanding meaning of community for us. The Salesian religious community is part of the animating nucleus of the *educative-pastoral community* and of all those who share the mission of Don Bosco, members of the Salesian Family as well as lay mission partners. This conviction and the associated praxis has not entered in the same way in different parts of the congregation – and so it becomes even more urgent to work out and integrate it into the praxis of formation, building up convictions, processing pastoral-educative experiences of collaboration, and programming moments of formation together with our lay mission partners.

We might insist here also on the *specificity* that consecrated life brings to our vocation. Too long we have been content to think of formation to priesthood and to religious life as “quite similar.” Instead, the diocesan priesthood and the religious priesthood are two different states of life within the Church. “Unlike the ordained ministry that has an institutional consistency that transcends the person of the minister, so that it remains valid even if the minister is unworthy, consecrated life consists entirely in the quality of the loving response of those who live it.”<sup>16</sup> This difference has a decisive impact on how the process of conformation to Christ and growth in holiness are realized in each vocation.” Neglect of what is typical of our primary identity as religious leads to a genericism in formation and in the living out of our consecration that is, unfortunately, all too common. One of the great tasks before us is to work out in practical terms how to be formation guides for Salesian religious who are also priests.

<sup>16</sup> Andrea Bozzolo, “Salesiano prete e salesiano coadiutore. Spunti per un’interpretazione teologica,” *Sapientiam dedit illi. Studi su don Bosco e sul carisma salesiano* (Rome, 2015) 335.

### 3. Practical considerations regarding the formation of formation guides

a) At the very outset, we need to acknowledge the great diversity, as far as initial formation is concerned, in the different regions of the Congregation. We have, for example, many "classical" formation houses, but there is also a growing number of smaller houses that often bring together different phases of formation under one roof. With shrinking numbers and resources, several regions are, at the present moment, engaged in a serious if difficult re-organization of their formation houses. In this context, there is often the fear, on the part of provinces, of "being left with no formation houses." This last is, of course, not quite true, because almost every province has its own prenovitiate, and then all provinces have the phase of practical training – a most important formation phase that cannot be forgotten or overlooked. Besides, since formation is something that lasts all our lives, every local director is a formator and custodian of the charism. No province, therefore, can absolve itself of the need to prepare formators. It is in this light that we have recently asked all provinces to draw up a qualification plan to prepare confreres in the key areas touching our charism and for the task of formation.

b) There is need to promote a conviction regarding the formation of formation guides. Such formation has to become a mentality, a culture, if it is to become systematic. Certainly provincials and formation delegates have a key role to play. But not less important is the conviction on the part of those entrusted with the work of formation – and here, as we have said before, we must not forget directors of communities with practical trainees and, indeed, all directors of local communities.

c) *Basic components.* If formation guides are to help formees put on Christ, they themselves need to become true images of Christ. And if our specific vocation in the Church is to follow Christ as Salesian consecrated priests and brothers, guides will need to take care of their own growth as human beings into Christ, in the way of Don Bosco, and as consecrated persons.

In such formation of formation guides we could distinguish three areas: contents, skills, and the person of the guide.

As far as *contents* are concerned, we could presume that most formation guides have a sound basic philosophical and theological formation, but we will need to insist on a good grounding in the Salesian charism. Further, the UPS offers various possibilities for a sound theoretical and methodological basis along with the learning of useful methods and skills, both in the Faculty of the Sciences of Education and of Theology.

As far as *skills* and capacities are concerned, we have good courses, both in our own University and elsewhere. Courses that help develop and hone skills in listening, feedback, accompaniment, etc. are precious for a formation guide.

d) But above all we need attention to the *person of the formation guide*. The *Directives* of 1993 calls for a time "of prolonged formation and of radical review of formational topics" and adds:

The scope of such periods of formation is *to favor an accurate examination of the very personality of the educator*, his ministerial commitment, and his way of understanding and living his own mission of formation.

Periods of formation of this kind should include well chosen and appropriately planned courses, be it in the field of ecclesiastical or of the human sciences, *joined with practical exercises carried out with the help of a supervisor and submitted to him for attentive critical review*. In this way the educator will be able to become more actively conscious of his own capacities and attitudes, accept more serenely his own limits, and update and improve the criteria which inspire his action.

In programs of continuing formation of this magnitude, *prolonged periods of spiritual renewal should be planned* (Ignatian months, spiritual exercises, times of solitude) to allow the educator to review his own mission in its most profound spiritual and theological connections and roots.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *Directives concerning the Preparation of Seminary Educators* (1993) 70-71.

We have several precious elements here: a processing of the experience of the personal, pastoral and formation experience of the formation guide; supervised practical exercises; periods of spiritual renewal.

We might insist especially on the area of emotional and psychological growth. Formation guides need to learn to recognize and handle their emotions, by working through their own problems, inconsistencies, self-defeating behaviours and immature sexual tendencies, while at the same time enhancing their strengths and competencies.

There are few things so life-giving as contact with a formation guide who is healthy and free. Once again here we have the dynamic of beauty: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses,” said Blessed Paul VI (EN 41). On the other hand, a guide who is not well integrated can do immense harm to formees. Favouritism, possessiveness, rivalry, taking revenge, seeking sexual favours can leave scars in formees that can last a lifetime.<sup>18</sup> It might be a good exercise for formation guides to monitor themselves against the fifteen illnesses listed by Pope Francis to the Roman Curia in his Christmas Message of 2014.<sup>19</sup> As guides become healthy, integrated and free persons, they will become “bridges not obstacles” (PDV 43) for formees on their journey to God.

Our own tradition has always insisted upon adequate *pastoral experience* (C 104), and this is wonderful, provided the formation guide has been helped to process these experiences, to “learn by experience the meaning of the Salesian vocation.” (C 98) Mission, as Fr Chavez said, is the “casa” and the “causa” of formation.

<sup>18</sup> See Synod of Bishops, XV Ordinary General Assembly, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment: Preparatory Document* (2017) III.2: People of Reference.

<sup>19</sup> Francis, “The Roman Curia and the Body of Christ,” Presentation of the Christmas Greetings to the Roman Curia, 22 December 2014, at [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco\\_20141222\\_curia-romana.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/december/documents/papa-francesco_20141222_curia-romana.html) (19.06.17).

‘Immersed in the world and in the cares of the pastoral life, the Salesian *learns* to meet God through those to whom he is sent’ (C 95). Formation consists fundamentally and primarily in this learning process. The goal is to meet God in the life we are living as we respond to the call.... Wherever an awareness of our doing in God’s sight whatever He has entrusted to us is lacking, there cannot be any real formation no matter how much one studies nor however many years are spent in the so-called ‘houses and stages of formation’.<sup>20</sup>

It is easy to see that the most difficult and risky component in the formation of the formator is his own personal growth, and here formators need to find in themselves the willingness to engage and invest in such growth.

e) *Formation guides need to master the Preventive System as a pedagogy of freedom.* Especially in cultures where hierarchy and authority are important, formation teams will need to become aware of their operative model of formation and take steps to change, so that formation might truly touch the heart rather than merely (and often only temporarily) influence behaviour.

In this context, the period of *practical training* – which, from the Salesian point of view is the most characteristic phase of initial formation (FSDB 428) – is equally an extremely significant moment in the specific if remote preparation of formation guides. One who has not sufficiently attained the objectives of this phase, especially in terms of knowledge and practice of the Preventive System (C 115), will hardly be able to be a good Salesian formation guide.

One of the elements in the formation of formation guides will therefore be a processing of one’s own experience of practical training, revisiting the *overall assessment* called for by FSDB 444 (“*At the end of practical training, there should be an overall assessment of the whole experience carried out by the Provincial, the community and the confrere himself.*”) It would help, obviously, if this assessment were to be written and archived – and here is

<sup>20</sup> Chávez, “Vocation and Formation,” AGC 416 27.

something the various provincial and regional formation commissions can look into. Such an assessment would be the first element to be taken into consideration in the selection of formation guides.

Every attempt to “fast track” practical training – either in the hurry to “be ordained” or else to “privilege” some particularly brilliant confrere – is to be strenuously resisted.

Clearly, also, the directors of communities blessed with practical trainees are formation guides of the very first category, and all that we have been saying must be applied without fail to them: they need to be formation guides who have been prepared for their task. Provincials have a sacred responsibility in this regard, as also to ensure that the communities receiving practical trainees are themselves sane and healthy formation environments.

All this applies analogously also to the *quinquennium*, both for priests and for Brothers.

f) In our increasingly multicultural societies and communities, formation guides need to process their own attitudes to cultural differences, so as to be able to promote formation to interculturality. As *New Wine in New Wineskins* says: “The goal of consecrated life cannot be that of maintaining itself as a permanent state in the different cultures it encounters, but that of maintaining permanently the evangelical conversion at the heart of the progressive construction of a new intercultural human reality.”<sup>21</sup> Interprovincial or international structures for the formation of candidates call for formators who are truly convinced that

‘Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression, but rather, “remaining completely true to itself, with unswerving fidelity to the proclamation of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church, it will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and people in which it is received and takes root”.’ This involves the capacity and the humility to not impose a single cultural system but to fecundate every culture with the seed of

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<sup>21</sup> Congregation for Consecrated Life and for Societies of Apostolic Life, *New Wine in New Wineskins* (2017) 40.

the Gospel and of one's charismatic tradition, carefully avoiding 'a needless hallowing of our own culture.' (*New Wine* 37)

But the concrete way passes also through the person of the formator: when a formator has a certain inner strength, and if he has taken the trouble to process his reactions to the different and to the other, he will be in possession of a bridge to the experience of the other.

g) Given that we – and especially our younger confreres – live in a new media age, where technology is visibly creating and generating culture, formation guides need to be able to understand and relate to formees who are citizens of the digital continent.

h) *The “remote preparation” of Salesian formators, we could say, consists of the whole of initial formation, especially a good experience of practical training, and 2-3 years of accompanied pastoral experience during the quinquennium. The minimum package for the “proximate preparation,” instead, could consist of (1) a short course touching the person of the formator; (2) a short course on Salesian matters, including the processing of one's pastoral-educative experience during practical training and the quinquennium, and a working knowledge of the FSDB; and (3) a short course for the acquisition of basic skills such as listening, feedback, and processing. For directors, novice masters and prenovice directors, we could add (4) a serious course preparing the person for the ministry of spiritual accompaniment.*

While the formation of formators does not necessarily involve licentiate or doctorate, the licentiates in formation of formators in the Faculties of the Sciences of Education and of Theology remain valid offerings. Highly appreciated by an increasing number of religious as well as diocesan clergy is the semester-long course at the UPS for the ongoing formation of formators.

i) As far as *Salesianity* is concerned, we have the shorter courses in our various centres for ongoing formation (Quito, Paranaque - Manila, Berkeley, Bangalore), and the more substantial courses at the UPS in the Faculty of Theology.

While all formation guides require at least a short course in Salesianity, we must insist that every province would do well to prepare one or two experts in Salesianity with a licentiate or doctorate from the UPS.

j) *The formation of spiritual guides* is one of the great tasks before the congregation, as the Rector Major says in his Strenna for 2018: “Let us cultivate the art of listening and of accompaniment,”<sup>22</sup> very much in line with the journey of the Church towards the synod on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment.” The first and indispensable element in such formation is the formation guide’s own access to spiritual direction.<sup>23</sup> A practical course on spiritual accompaniment will enhance what one has already learnt personally in this way. Besides the opportunities available in various places in the Church, and also some within the congregation (Spain, Quito, Bangalore), we also intend to set up a Salesian School of Accompaniment<sup>24</sup> as one of the fruits of the seminar on Salesian spiritual accompaniment jointly conducted by the sectors of Youth Ministry and Formation.

k) Besides the courses mentioned above, there are also various initiatives for the ongoing formation of formation guides at the provincial, regional and world levels. Useful as they are, however, they cannot be considered to substitute or obviate the need for an initial formation of formation guides (see PDV 66).

l) I invite provincial and regional formation commissions to offer us reflections and suggestions on various elements in the present guidelines, as, for example, (1) how to form Salesian religious who are also priests, (2) how the pastoral experience of practical training and of the quinquennium might become an integral element in the preparation of formation guides, (3) how to make the shared mission with the laity and with the Salesian Family,

<sup>22</sup> Ángel Fernández Arttime, “‘Sir, give me this water’ (Jn 4,15). Let us cultivate the art of listening and of accompaniment. Presentation of the Strenna 2018,” Rome, 16 July 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (new ed. 2013) 73.

<sup>24</sup> See Cereda AGC 404 77-81 (section 4).

and especially the educative-pastoral community, an integral element in initial formation.

m) Finally, we can expect a change of policy: no appointment of formation guides without prior and specific formation; a modification of the forms for the appointment of rectors (especially of formation communities) and novice masters (F19 and F20) in this sense; and the introduction of a new form for the appointment of those in charge of prenovices.

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When the newly ordained John Bosco went to Fr Cafasso to seek his advice about the options at hand for his priestly ministry (assistant Parish Priest at Castelnuovo, chaplain at Murialdo, tutor for the children of a noble family in Genoa), Fr Cafasso told him – but at the end of a set of encounters that I find remarkable for their attention to inner experience – to set aside these offers and come to the Convitto for three more years of formation. These years turned out to be crucial: they made Don Bosco what he was, they were the ground and basis of all that he did.

To invest in formation for our Congregation is the holiest and most effective way to invest our resources, and it is deeply imbedded in our charism. This is the message we offer to the world and to the Church when we dedicate our lives and our resources to the formation of the young. This is what we do when we invest in the formation of those who will take care of the new generations of Salesians.

“The good that we are doing – we will never know how much good it is doing.” These words of our Father become even more significant when the good in question is the accompaniment of an aspirant, a prenovice, a novice, a young confrere. An unlimited potential is here entrusted to us. We cannot but give to it the best of ourselves as confreres, provinces, congregation.

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

*Below are some of the main activities of the Rector Major from July to December 2017.*

#### – July 2017

During the month of July 2017 the main activity of the Rector Major was presiding at meetings of the *summer plenary session of the General Council*. During this time, together with the Council he made a Retreat. In the following weeks at various times he received the members of the Council for private talks regarding their service to the Congregation. Another important feature was having personal meetings with the confreres recently appointed as new Provincials, and other people who had asked to speak with him. The new Provincials received by the Rector Major were: Ernesto Piccinini, BSP; Tim Zak, SUE; William Matthews, AUL; Owoudou Alphonse, ATE; Carlos Lira, CIL; Alfonso Bauer, URU.

In these weeks of July he also received, among others, the members of the Institute of Pastoral Theology at the UPS; lawyers and advisors; some of those responsible for

Mission Offices; the Rector Magnificus of the UPS, Mauro Mantovani, and the team for the Salesian places of special interest at Colle Don Bosco.

Accompanied by his secretary, on Friday evening 14<sup>th</sup> he went to the house of the FMA at Castelgandolfo to greet the new Provincials who were having their meeting with the Mother General, Sr. Yvonne, and other members of their General Council. On 24<sup>th</sup> the Rector Major returned to Castelgandolfo for the half-yearly meeting of the two General Councils, SDB and FMA.

On 26<sup>th</sup> he presided at a Festive Evening Meal (with an Argentinian “asado”) for the whole of the ‘Blessed Michael Rua’, Salesian community of the Generalate, to thank once again all the confreres for the service they provide for him, his Council and the whole Congregation.

Then 28<sup>th</sup> July was a very special day at the Pisana, because the Rector Major had decided to have a meeting with all the Generalate community to inform them of the decision to leave the Pisana and transfer everyone to another hou-

se in Rome, which one was at that time still to be determined.

### – August 2017

For the Rector Major the month of August 2017 began with the *Team Visit of the Mediterranean Region* held at the ‘Salesianum’ in Rome, between 31<sup>st</sup> July and the morning of 4<sup>th</sup> August.

Then on 4<sup>th</sup>, with his secretary the Rector Major left by car for Mornese to be – on the following day 5<sup>th</sup> August – with the FMA who were making their perpetual profession. In the evening of the same day 5<sup>th</sup> he arrived at Valdocco in Turin, where he spent the night before leaving next morning for Budapest, stopping off at Venezia-Mestre, the INE Provincial house. After that between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August in Budapest he presided at the *Team Visit for a part of the Central and North Europe Region (the Provinces of the East)*. On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August he arrived at Colle Don Bosco to take part in the “Gathering” of the Salesian Youth Movement of Europe (held between 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August), and on 16<sup>th</sup> presided at the Solemn Mass commemorating Don Bosco’s birthday.

Having returned to Rome on 17<sup>th</sup> August, the following day 18<sup>th</sup> Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime left for

Luanco, in Spain, to spend some days with his family.

### – September 2017

Having returned to Rome 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the following day 4<sup>th</sup> the Rector Major went to Malta, accompanied by his secretary and spent a week studying English. On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September he visited the Island of Gozo, with some Maltese confreres. He visited the FMA in Sliema, and also had a meeting with the Bishop Mgr. Mario Grech.

Between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September he visited the Delegation of Malta, accompanied by the Provincial of Ireland, Fr Eunan McDonnell. During this visit he met the Salesian Family, the young people of the Maltese SYM, the Council of the Delegation and almost all the confreres of the Delegation, as he visited the various works on the island. He had a special meeting with the small FMA community which had already welcomed him several times to study English, and with the young migrants at the Osanna Pia centre. He also found time to visit two very special places in Malta’s history: the Hal-Saflieni Hypogeum and the St. Angelo Fort.

Having returned to Rome on 13<sup>th</sup> September, in the evening in the Vatican he met Fr. Tom Uzhunna-

lil, a missionary in Yemen, just freed after a year and a half of captivity following his being kidnapped in his mission.

The following days the Rector Major met missionary confreres in the 148<sup>th</sup> Missionary Expedition. In addition he met the Superior and some members of the Council of the Vice Province of Sri Lanka (LCK) who had come to Rome specifically for this meeting (Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>); lawyers and advisors of the Generalate; the Provincial Secretaries at the 'Salesianum' for a formation course organized by the Secretary General. A special occasion on the 14<sup>th</sup> was his greeting the Provincials and Novice Mistresses of the Sisters of Charity of Jesus accompanied by their Superior General, Sr. Teresia Furuki, who then joined the Salesian community at the Pisana for supper.

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> the Rector Major spoke at the Press Conference organized by ANS (Salesian Information Agency) with Fr. Tom Uzhunnalil present.

Between 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September at Valdocco the Rector Major and his Vicar led and directed a meeting of Provincials who had completed half of their six year term of office. During this week the Rector Major spent some time with those taking part in the meeting of missionaries

called "Harambee" and on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians he presided at the Mass for the 148<sup>th</sup> Missionary Expedition.

At the end of the month of September, accompanied by his secretary, the Rector Major *visited the Province of the Czech Republic (CEP)* between 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. He visited the Salesian centres in Prague, Brno, Zlín and Fryšták, met the Provincial Council, the confreres of the Province, the young people of the SYM, the VDB, FMA and other members of the Salesian Family. On 28<sup>th</sup> in Brno, in the context of a meeting with young people he presided at the celebrations for the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Province, and Mass with the perpetual profession of the confreres Jan Fojtu and Jakub Svanda. On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> at Bratislava, Slovakia, he took part in the *beatification of the Salesian Fr Titus Zeman*.

### – October 2017

The Rector Major began the month of October 2017 at Vajnory, on the outskirts of Bratislava, thanking God for the beatification of Fr Titus Zeman which had taken place the previous day. In the evening, with his secretary he returned to Rome going to the new location of the Salesian Headquarters

situated at the house of the Sacred Heart, in via Marsala 42, beside the Central Railway Station.

Between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October he presided at the *intermediate session of the General Council*. Other events in the first days of the month to be mentioned are: participation in the 'Curatorium' of the UPS (2<sup>nd</sup> October); greeting those present at the annual meeting of the national teams of the works and social services in Italy, Spain and Portugal (3<sup>rd</sup> October); a greeting at the meeting of FMA Novice Mistresses held at the FMA Generalate (4<sup>th</sup> October).

On Friday afternoon 6<sup>th</sup> with his secretary he left for Spain to take part the next day in the celebrations for the centenary of the work in Villena (SMX Province). He presided at Mass in the Church of St James and visited the Town Hall and the local Cultural Centre with an Exhibition about the Salesians and the hundred years of their activities.

During the days spent in Rome, as well as the sessions of the General Council, he received in audience many confreres, in the first place his Councillors. It should be mentioned that on 10<sup>th</sup> October in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart he presided at Mass to thank God and the Church for the beatification of Titus Zeman: a Mass very well atten-

ded by confreres and members of the Salesian Family from the Rome area and some who had come from Slovakia, also including some relatives of Fr Titus.

On the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> he went to a meeting of CIVAM (Conference of the Provincials and Superiors of Vice Provinces in the Africa and Madagascar Region), which had planned to hold its ordinary meeting in Rome.

On the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> he presided at Mass for the opening of the Academic Year of the UPS.

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October, with his secretary he left for San Paolo, Brazil, to begin a *visit to the two Provinces of San Paolo (BSP) and Recife (BRE)*. Waiting for him in Brazil was the Regional Councillor for America-South Cone, Fr Natale Vitali, who accompanied him during almost the whole of his visit.

As in all the Provinces that he visits also in the *San Paolo Province* the Rector Major met the young people and the Salesian Family in addition to the confreres. The following are some of the Salesian places he was able to visit as far as distance permitted: *Santa Teresinha*, Provincial House of the FMA, the Sanctuary of *Coração de Jesus* and the high school, *Escola Salesiana São José*, *Liceu e Obra social Vida Nova di Campinas*, Americana,

*São José dos Campos*, Postnovitiate and College *São Joaquim de Lorena*, the social centre in Itaquera, the theologate (Lapa) and *Bom Retiro*.

A further detailed account of the various stages of the journey would start on 14<sup>th</sup> when, having just arrived he took part in the "Salesian Youth Festival" with more than 3,500 young people of the SYM and a large number of Salesians, FMA and other members of the Salesian Family. He spent the whole morning with them: celebration, sport and Mass. In the evening he met the FMA from their Provincial House.

On 15<sup>th</sup> he presided at Mass for the perpetual profession of three confreres, and after the festive meal opened the Exhibition on Don Bosco in the Salesian historical museum at San Paolo.

The following day he had a meeting with the Salesian educators from the various centres in Campinas and visited the social centre called "*Vida Nova*".

On Tuesday morning 17<sup>th</sup> he had a meeting with the leaders of the Province SYM at Americana. In the afternoon with his companions he went to São José dos Campos, where he prayed at the tomb of Venerable Fr Rodolf Komorek and presided at a crowded parish Mass.

On the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> he met with the Provincial Council and visited the postnovitiate community of Lorena and in the afternoon the headquarters of the "*Canção Nova*", at Cahoeira Paulista. Here he met Mgr. Jonas Abib, the founder of "*Canção Nova*", together with members of the General Council of the Association. He also presided at Mass which was broadcast by the media services of the Association to the whole of Brazil and beyond.

On Thursday morning 19<sup>th</sup> he visited the large social centre at Itaquera, in the San Paolo area which provides help for 7.000 people. In the afternoon in the Theologate of São Paulo - Lapa he met the young confreres in all the stages of initial formation.

On his final day in the BSP Province the Rector Major again met a group of young leaders of the SYM from around the capital and other educators. In the afternoon with the Regional Councillor and with his secretary he left for *Recife*.

Immediately after arriving at the airport he took part in a crowded news conference and then went to the Salesian Institute of Recife where he opened the XXII MGS Festival, an event that brought together about 1200 young people from over 50 centres of the Salesian Family in North East Brazil.

The Rector Major was again fully engaged in the event the next day Saturday 21 October, when he also presided at a solemn Mass during which he received the perpetual professions of three young Salesians. He also was in contact with the youngsters in various situations including the confessional, and finally he took part in the evening Vigil. It had been a whole day devoted to the young people.

On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> he visited the oratory at Jaboatão and in the afternoon presided at Mass for the Salesian Family pilgrimage to Colonia, where there is the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians. Before the Mass he also had a meeting with the Recife groups of the Salesian Family.

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> he had a meeting with the Provincial Council. Then he met the confreres of the Province from around Recife and presided at the Feast of the Province community.

The family meetings continued at Porto di Galinhas, a village on the sea where the Rector Major was invited to cook for 70 confreres, with various types of fish. This he did with the full cooperation of various confreres, beginning with the Provincial himself.

On 25<sup>th</sup> the Rector Major visited the city of Juazeiro do Norte, the

hometown of Father Cícero, a diocesan priest greatly loved by all the people of NorthEast Brazil. Thousands of pilgrims from the NorthEast and from all over Brazil have been coming here for many years. Here he met the Bishop, Gilberto Pastana de Oliveira, confreres and many members of the Salesian Family, among others the Sisters of Charity of Jesus, and friends of Don Bosco from round about the city. The Salesians are the heirs of this important work of evangelization according to Father Cícero's own wishes.

On his last day in Brazil the Rector Major went to Natal, where he met the Salesian educators of the area in the Regional Seminary for Salesian Education. After supper he left by car for the return journey to Recife and the next day left for Rome.

Having returned to Rome on 28<sup>th</sup> October, on 31<sup>st</sup> the Rector Major went to his home town in Spain for a couple of days on family business.

### – *November 2017*

The month of November 2017 was distinguished by *four extensive visits: two in the Indian subcontinent (INK and ING) and two in Africa (ANG and MOZ).*

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November, accompanied as always by his secretary, the Rector Major left Rome for Kochi (or Cochin), Kerala, India. Having arrived on 4<sup>th</sup>, in the afternoon of the same day he met the confreres of Kerala at Kochi - Vennala and then left for Aluva.

On 5<sup>th</sup>, after Mass with the young confreres and novices he met the family of Fr Tom Uzhunnalil and then left for Palluruthy where he met the youngsters there and then went on to 'Don Bosco' in Vaduthala, on the other side of the beautiful and large bay - crossing over on a 'Houseboat', with a small group of Salesians and Past Pupils. In Vaduthala he took part in a concert before returning to Aluva by car.

On 6<sup>th</sup> November the Rector Major, accompanied by the Regional Councillor for South Asia Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga, left for *Bangalore*, where waiting to meet him were the confreres from the state of Karnataka. In the afternoon everyone went to the 'Kristu Jyoti College' to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Theologate with a Solemn Mass and an academy.

The next day, 7<sup>th</sup> November, he met the FMA in their Provincial House, and later spent the whole morning with the Provincials of the South Asia Region taking part in their meeting. In the afternoon he

visited 'Bosco Mane' (a centre for young people at risk) and spent the evening with various communities located near the Provincial House.

On the following day 8<sup>th</sup> November, at Bangalore, in the morning the Rector Major met the Provincial Council and in the afternoon left for *Guwahati*, where in the evening he and his companions were welcomed with a real youth festival at DBI where he enjoyed the oratorian atmosphere in an amphitheatre that had become a great multicultural playground in true North-East Indian style.

On 9<sup>th</sup> November he met the young people from the DBG school and the aspirants and prenovices, and then went to the house of the "Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians" at Hatigaon to celebrate with them the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their foundation. He greeted the General Council and the Superior General Sr. Philomena Mathew, the Provincials and Superiors of this numerous Congregation, which is part of the Salesian Family. In the afternoon having returned to the SDB Provincial House, he met the confreres from the Guwahati area and the rest of the Province. Later he greeted the members of the Salesian Family.

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime met the Dau-

ughters of Mary Help of Christians in their Provincial House. Then with his travelling companions he went to visit the Salesian university campus of Tapesia meeting the young students and chatting freely with them. In the afternoon he met the 2000 street children gathered in the Salesian reception centre of Guwahati-Snehalaya.

The high point of the visit to the Guwahati Province was on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November, with a meeting with youngsters from North-East India and especially with the launch, in the Damra parish of the Salesian Youth Movement in that area. About 10,000 young people and adults from the whole region took part in a Youth Festival organised for the occasion, which also served to celebrate the 95 years of the presence of the Salesians in the region. In the afternoon the Rector Major, the Regional and the secretary left to spend a very busy day in Mumbai (Bombay).

On 12<sup>th</sup>, the last day of his travels in India, the Rector Major first visited the Salesian reception centre at Bombay-Matunga where he was welcomed with singing and cultural events. Then he presided at a solemn Mass in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians there which was celebrating the 60th anniversary of the spiritual centre, esta-

blished in 1957 through the efforts of the pioneer Salesian missionary in India, Fr Aurelio Maschio. Prior to that the Rector Major had been greeted by the Archbishop of Mumbai, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, and his Auxiliaries Mgr. Dominic Savio Fernandes and Mgr. Barthol Barretto. At the end of the day, after the solemn Mass he took part in a Cultural Event organized by all the staff of the Salesian Educational Centre that was also celebrating its Platinum Jubilee.

Then the same night the return journey to Rome began.

After a stay of two days in Rome, the Rector Major once again boarded a plane to begin his *visits to Angola and Mozambique*. During the two days spent in Rome he had several meetings with the members of the General Council who were present, received various people in audience and managed to make a recording for the video of the Strenna 2018.

The *visit to Angola* began 17<sup>th</sup> November. Having touched down in Angola after a flight from Rome, he then took another plane to Benguela where, after being welcomed in the airport, he met the young people from the Salesian house together with many lay catechists and co-workers. In the afternoon he spent time with the confreres of

the community and later with the young people of the SYM and the Salesian Family with whom he celebrated Mass in the house of the FMA. He later had supper with various pastoral workers from the parish as well as some diocesan priests and other religious who work with the Salesians.

On 18<sup>th</sup>, after saying Mass with the people, since the flight he was due to take was postponed to the afternoon, he was able to visit the location of the very large parish entrusted to the Salesians. He also received a visit from the Bishop emeritus.

Having arrived in Luanda, capital city of Angola, in the afternoon of 18<sup>th</sup>, the Rector Major went to Luanda-Palanca, where he met the young people of the SYM and later the FMA in the headquarters of their Vice Province.

The next day he visited the house of São José (Lixeira) where he presided at Mass attended by a very large congregation. In the afternoon he met the Salesian Family in the São Paulo centre also in Luanda.

On his last day in Angola the Rector Major had a meeting with the Council of the Vice Province in the morning, and in the afternoon with a good number of confreres who had come to Luanda-Palanca from throughout the Vice Province.

On the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> he left for *Mozambique*, with his secretary. After a day's journey they arrived in the evening at Maputo, where they were welcomed also by the Councillor for the Africa and Madagascar Region, Fr Américo Chaquisse.

The following day they left for Tete, in the north of the country. Met by the extreme heat of the city of Tete, they went to visit the community in São Paulo Chithatha, a small village that is the centre of the missionary work in a very large rural area. The Rector Major then went to nearby Moatize, the working centre and base of the Salesian missionary community. He visited the radio centre and presided at the parish Mass, attended also by the Salesian Family in the area. He had supper with the SDB confreres and the FMA Sisters.

The following day he visited the school at Matundo and left by plane for Maputo, headquarters of the Vice Province. Having arrived in Maputo, the Rector Major blessed an image of Don Bosco in the Salesian Institute and afterwards met the Provincial Council. Present at the evening meal were the Archbishop of Maputo and the Nunzio Apostolic.

In the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> at different times he met the novices and the

confreres of the Vice Province who had come from the various centres in the country. In the evening he visited the FMA in their Provincial house.

On 25<sup>th</sup> November he presided at Mass with the Salesian Family in the parish of S. José de Lhanguene, and then spoke with the members of the Salesian Family present. This was followed by a festive meal and a concert. In the evening he met the members of the family of the Regional, in their home.

On the last day of his visit to Mozambique the Rector Major paid a visit to the aspirantate at Matola, where he presided at Mass with a group of young people and youngsters from the oratory. From there he left for the airport and arrived in Madrid, Spain, where he opened the International Congress: "Youth Ministry and the Family" organized by the Youth Ministry Department. The Rector Major took part in the Congress staying in Madrid for the whole week until the afternoon of Friday 1st December.

### – December 2017

On the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> December the Rector Major left Madrid for his home town for a short visit to his family. He returned to Rome on 4<sup>th</sup>,

to begin in the early evening a meeting of the *winter plenary session of the General Council*.

During the month of December the main task of the Rector Major is to preside at the meetings of the General Council. However, at the same time there are meetings and talks with the Provincials who are taking part in the formation course for new Provincials. Other engagements in addition to personal meetings with many individuals, are: a meeting with those taking part in a gathering of Economers and Administrators organized by the CISI (Conference of the Provincials of Italy) (6<sup>th</sup> December); participation in the Academic Senate of the UPS (on the same day 6<sup>th</sup> December); visits to the community of the Generalate of the FMA (Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December), to the FMA community of *Casa Valsé* (12<sup>th</sup> December) to the FMA community of *Madre Santa* (December 23<sup>rd</sup>). Also to be mentioned are participation in the recording of the "Christmas Concert" in the Paul VI Hall in the Vatican (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December) and in the private audience that the Holy Father Pope Francis gave to the artistes and organizers of the Christmas Concert (Friday 15<sup>th</sup>).

On 14<sup>th</sup> December he received the Archbishop of Panama, accompanied by the Lady Ambassador of

Panama to the Holy See, as well as the Executive Secretary of the Organising Committee of the “2019 Youth Days” regarding the preparation of the Days, taking into account the significance of Don Bosco in Panama and of the Church of Don Bosco in that city.

In the days leading up to Christmas the Rector Major also received some of the different groups of the Salesian Family who had come to offer their greetings: FMA, SSCC, PastPupils, MSMHC, etc.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December at Genzano he took part in the Monthly Day of Recollection with the whole of the community of the Central Headquarters, including members of the General Council and the other communities in Rome that form part of RMG. He had the opportunity to meet the novices and the community of the novitiate.

On the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> he gave the official presentation of the 2018 *Strenna* in the Generalate of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Also present, in addition to the Sisters of the Generalate community, were the other FMA communities in Rome and various representatives of groups of the Salesian Family.

After the celebration of Christmas in the Salesian Generalate in Rome, towards the end of the

month of December, on 28<sup>th</sup>, the Rector Major went to Luanco, in Spain to spend some days with his family celebrating the New Year there.

## 4.2 Chronicle of the General Councillors

### The Vicar of the Rector Major

In the month of **August 2017** the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Francis Cereda, on the 17<sup>th</sup> held the opening meeting of the first formation course in Italian for Provincial Secretaries on the subject “Religious Life and Discipline”.

In **September** on the 8<sup>th</sup> in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin he presided at Mass for the first profession of the novices from Pinerolo. On 14<sup>th</sup> he held the opening meeting of the second formation course in English for Provincial Secretaries on the subject “Religious Life and Discipline”. On 17<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> in Turin Valdocco and in the Salesian special places he organised a gathering of the Provincials who were on the third year of their service of authority. On Sun-

day 24<sup>th</sup> he took part in the departure ceremony and the Mass for the consigning of the crucifixes to the SDB and FMA missionaries leaving this year.

In the month of **October** on 2<sup>nd</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> he took part in the intermediate session of the General Council. In Rome on the 8<sup>th</sup> he took part in a meeting and presided at Mass for the inauguration of the new FMA Vice Province comprising the communities depending directly on the Mother General. On the 9<sup>th</sup> he took part in the Theological Commission of the Union of Superiors General; and on the 12<sup>th</sup> he took part in the opening of the Academic Year of the UPS. On 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> at Amatitán, in the Province of Guadalajara in Mexico, he took part in the meeting of the Provincials of the Interamerica Region and visited the theologate in Tlaquepaque. Then on 22<sup>nd</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> he travelled to the Provinces of Colombia COB and COM, where he met the Rectors, the Provincial Councils and the Committees for Religious Life and Discipline, as well as visiting the theologate in Bogotá, the prenovitiate in Rionegro, the novitiate in La Ceja, and the postnovitiate in Copacabana.

In the months of *October and November* he assisted the community of the Salesian Headquarters in the

transfer to and the organisation of the new premises in Rome next to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, via Marsala, 42. He also oversaw the transfer of the Salesian Historical Institute and of the Salesian Central Archives together with the confreres and the lay people who work there to the Vice Province of the UPS. He had a meeting with the Superiors of the Secretariate of State of the Holy See for the renewing of the agreement between our Congregation and the Superiors of the new Secretariate for Communication, and the start of a new agreement of collaboration. In particular on 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> November he carried out the canonical visitation of the "Saint Francis of Sales" community in the Vatican.

### **The Councillor for Formation**

After the conclusion of the summer session of the General Council, between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017 the Councillor for Formation, Fr Ivo Coelho, together with Fr Francisco Santos Montero, took part in the *Team Visit of the Mediterranean Region*, at the Generalate, via della Pisana, and between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August in the *Team Visit of the eastern part of the*

*Central and North Europe Region* in Ezstergom, Hungary.

After having spent some days with his family in India, he went with Fr Cleofas Murguia to visit the formation houses of the Province of the Antilles (ANT) in Santo Domingo, and then he was to have taken part in the Regional Formation Commission of the Interamerica Region at Port-au-Prince, Haïti; but this had to be cancelled on account of the "Irma" hurricane.

Between 17<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August, with Fr Silvio Roggia, he went to the Vice Province of Madagascar (MDG), visiting the prenovitiate and the novitiate at Ivato, and taking part in the Regional Formation Commission of the Africa-Madagascar Region.

Having returned to Rome, he took part at Genzano, between 28<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October in the second seminar on Salesian Personal Accompaniment organized jointly with the Youth Ministry Department

The month of October was full of appointments and meetings in which the Councillor for Formation was directly involved:

- on 2<sup>nd</sup> October the 'Curatorium' of the UPS, held at the new Salesian Headquarters, via Marsala 42, Rome;
- on 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> October at Gerini, a meeting of the editorial board for the revision of the Salesian Rec-tors' Manual;
- during the intermediate session of the General Council between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October, together with Fr Silvio Roggia, presence at the meeting of CIVAM, in the 'Pilgrim House' at *Divino Amore*, in Rome;
- in the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> October the inauguration of the Academic Year at the UPS, and in the afternoon, at Genzano participation in a meeting organized by the Formation Department, between 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October about the specific formation of the Salesian Brother;
- between 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October, at Colle Don Bosco, the Councillor with all the team of the Department led a seminar for those responsible for the prenovitiates in Europe;
- on 26<sup>th</sup> October the presentation of the new book, *Formazione affettiva-sessuale*, by P. Gambini, M. Llanos and G. Roggia, UPS, Rome, with a talk by the Coun-cillor.

Between 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October there was the visitation of the formation houses of Slovakia (SLK) (the novitiate at Poprad and the

postnovitiate at Zilina), and the formation house for students of theology in Vienna (AUS), undertaken by the Councillor and Fr Francisco Santos.

Between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November, with Fr Silvio Roggia, he took part in the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Kristu Jyoti College” theologate at Bangalore (INK), and followed this with a visit to the prenovitiate at Mysore and to the novitiate at Padivayal. Between 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November they transferred to Myanmar (MYM), and visited the aspirantate (Anisakan), the prenovitiate (Hsi-paw), and the postnovitiate (Pyin Oo Lwin). There was also a meeting led by the Councillor for Formation with the confreres of the MYM Vice Province on the subject of Salesian consecrated life. During this same period he took part in the Regional Formation Commission for the East Asia-Oceania Region which took place in Anisakan. From Myanmar he moved on to Cebu (the Philippines), to take part for some days (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> November) in a seminar for those responsible for the prenovitiates of the two Regions of South Asia and East Asia and Oceania, at Lawaan, Talisay City, Cebu.

Having returned to Rome, between 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November he went to Jerusalem to visit the

“Ratisbonne” international community for students of theology.

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

After the conclusion of the summer session of the General Council, at the end of July the Councillor for Youth Ministry, Fr Fabio Attard, together with the Councillor for the Missions, Fr Guillermo Basaños, went to the New Rochelle Mission Office, in New York, to plan the next stage of the Salesian presence at the United Nations. The Regional for Interamerica, Fr Tim Ploch joined the other two Councillors there.

During the first part of August Fr Fabio Attard took part in two *Team Visits in Rome and in Esztergom*. Afterwards he took part in the European Gathering of the Salesian Youth Movement in Turin until 16<sup>th</sup> August 2017. As a follow up to this gathering the Councillor then took part in the General Assembly of the SYM Europe which was held in Bollington between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

From the middle of August until the first week of September, Fr Fabio paid two visits: to the Province of Vietnam and to the Vice Province of Myanmar, preach-

ing retreats and also giving three work-shops on Salesian Youth Ministry to Salesians and to members of the Salesian Family.

In the middle of September the Councillor took part in the annual meeting of the Youth Ministry Delegates of the Africa and Madagascar Region, which was held in Accra between 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Similar regional meetings for Youth Ministry Delegates were also held in the following Regions: Interamerica, at Guadalajara, Mexico, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017; America South Cone, at Campo Grande, Brazil, between 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017; South Asia, at Colombo, Sri Lanka, between 1st and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017; East Asia Oceania, at Dalat, Vietnam, between 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

At the end of September, the Councillor for Youth Ministry accompanied by members of the Department took part in a seminar organised by the Formation Department on accompaniment during the stages of formation.

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Fr Fabio Attard and Fr Patrick Antonyraj, a member of the Department with special responsibility for the Africa and Madagascar Region, took part in a meeting of the CIVAM at which there was discussion that

day with the Provincials on the progress of the "D.B.Tech. Africa" and the process being followed in the field of technical training in the Region.

Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Fr Fabio had been invited by the Conference of Religious in Spain to give an address on Youth Ministry and Vocational Ministry in the light of the approaching Synod.

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at Ratisbonne, Jerusalem, Fr Fabio Attard inaugurated the academic year with a formal lecture on *"Where Salesian Youth Ministry and the Preparatory Document for the XV Ordinary Synod Assembly meet – Young people, Faith and Vocational Discernment."*

The last engagement for the Councillor for Youth Ministry with the whole Department Team was the "YOUTH MINISTRY AND THE FAMILY" CONGRESS held in Madrid between 27<sup>th</sup> November and 1st December 2017. It was attended by 300 people including Salesians and members of the Salesian Family involved in the Salesian mission throughout the whole world. The Rector Major presided at the Congress, and among those taking part were Mgr. Bruno Forte, Secretary of the two Synods on the Family and Father Alexandre Awi

Mello, Secretary of the Pontifical Department for the Laity, the Family and Life.

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

When the summer session of the full Council finished, the Councillor for Social Communication, Fr Filiberto González Plasencia, had the following engagements between the months of August and November 2017.

**August 2017:** between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August he took part in the *Team Visit of the Mediterranean Region* held at the 'Salesianum' in the Pisana. Between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> he took part in the *Team Visit of the eastern part of the Central and North Europe Region* held in the Province of Hungary. On 18<sup>th</sup> he left for Mexico to meet with his family and visit several communities in the MEG Province: the Provincial house, the Theologate, the school communities and the parish communities.

**September 2017:** between 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September he presided at a meeting of Delegates for Social Communication (SC) of the Regions of America South Cone and

Interamerica, held at the Ongoing Formation Centre in Quito, spending two days on ongoing formation in Salesian Spirituality and three days on issues specific to SC. Between 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> he presided at a meeting about the radios and of the SC coordinators of the various houses in the Province of Bolivia, at Muyurina. Between 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> at Buenos Aires he presided at a number of meetings: of the National SC Team in Argentina, of the National Team of the Salesian Bulletin, of the Provincial SC Team of South Argentina (ARS), of those responsible for the Edebé and Don Bosco Publishers in ARS. Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in Córdoba he held a meeting with the SC Provincial Team of North Argentina (ARN), visited the postnovitiate of ARN where he held a meeting with the formation personnel and the postnovices. Between 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> he visited the Province of Uruguay where he had meetings with the Provincial, the SC Delegate and the Delegate for Youth Ministry, with Salesians and lay people from various works in the Province at a Congress on Salesian Digital sites, Religious Marketing and RE-Inspira. He also took the opportunity to meet the Province Team of the Salesian Bulletin, and the young people who produce the Salesian

digital radio services: "*Juventudes Radio*" and "*Vale la Pena*".

**October 2017:** between 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> he took part in the intermediate session of the General Council which on this occasion was held at the Sacred Heart in Rome. Between 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> he took part in the CIVAM, held in Rome at the *Divino Amore*. Between 16<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> he prepared Visas for entry to several countries, and re-organised the SC offices for the various services: ANS, SDB.org, *Bollettino Salesiano* in the new headquarters at the Sacred Heart.

**November 2017:** between 31<sup>st</sup> October and 6<sup>th</sup> November he presided at a meeting of SC Delegates in the South Asia Region in Chennai, on the subject "Media for Social Change". Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November he visited Cambodia: in Phom Pen he met the Council of the Delegation and took part in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival in the country of the FMA; he also visited the Salesians in Don Bosco Kep. Between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in the Province of Viet Nam, he visited Ho Chi Minh city and the postnovitiate in Dalat. Accompanied by Fr Juan Pablo Abreu, at K'Lon, he presided at a meeting of the SC Delegates in the East Asia and Oceania Region.

On this occasion for four days they shared accommodation, food and prayers with the Youth Ministry Delegates of the same Region. On one full day they had a presentation of good practice, some reflection and consideration of proposals for better future collaboration in the Provinces and Region. Present at this meeting were Fr Fabio Attard and Fr Václav Klement. Between 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> he visited Myanmar: visiting the communities in Yangon and Anisakan. With Fr Václav Klement he met the confreres of the Vice Province for a course on communication, met the postnovices, visited the aspirantate, visited two FMA communities, took part in a meeting of the Vice-Province Council and visited the Salesian community and work in Mandalay. He returned to the Sacred Heart in Rome on the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> he was in the Delegation of Malta: he paid a visit to the various communities and works, spent a day with the Social Communications Team; and in addition had a meeting with all the confreres in order to present the SSCS. Between 27 November and 2<sup>nd</sup> December in Madrid he took part in the "Youth Ministry and the Family" Congress. He then returned to Rome for the winter plenary session of the General Council.

## The Councillor for the Missions

As soon as the summer session of the General Council concluded, the Councillor for the Missions, Fr Guillermo Basaños, left for New Rochelle (USA) for a two-day meeting (28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> July) concerned with the representation of the Congregation at the United Nations. He also took the opportunity to take part in the installation of the new Provincial of SUE.

Returning to Europe, Fr Guillermo took part in two *Team Visits*. First that of the *Mediterranean Region* at the 'Salesianum' in Rome (between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August), and afterwards that of the *eastern part of the Central and North Europe Region* held in the UNG Province (between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August).

From Budapest Fr Basaños went directly to Thailand, where between 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August he took part in a FMA - SDB Seminar on Missionary Animation held in Sampran, attended by those responsible for missionary animation in the whole of Asia.

When the Seminar ended the Councillor left for Myanmar where he undertook an intensive visit involving missionary animation until 27<sup>th</sup> August. This was the first

time he had been able to visit the country.

Having returned to Rome, starting on 29<sup>th</sup> August he oversaw the work involved in the formation course for the new missionaries, members of the 148<sup>th</sup> expedition. As usual the programme was followed in Rome and Turin, ending with the missionary departure ceremony at Valdocco on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

Having returned to the Pisana, Fr Guillermo had to cancel a meeting in the Holy Land with a group of missionaries from Shillong, since it coincided with the week during which the Generalate was transferred to its new location in Rome.

When the work of the intermediate session of the General Council (held between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October) was over, the Councillor for the Missions took part in the assembly of the Provincials of the Africa Region (CIVAM), held at the Sanctuary of *Divino Amore*, in Rome until 14<sup>th</sup> October,

Between 17<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October, Fr Basaños made a visit of missionary animation to the Province of Perù, going particularly to the Vicariates Apostolic of Pucallpa and of Yurimaguas. In this last place he was able to go to the Amazon region spending two nights in

Kuyunza, to which place the remains of the great missionary Fr Luigi Bolla had recently been transferred.

Having returned to the Generalate, the Councillor had again to cancel part of his plans since the authorities in Eritrea had not granted him permission to enter the country.

Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November, Fr Guillermo was able to make another visit of missionary animation; this time to the Province of Hyderabad (INH). The main event was a Seminar on missionary animation for the Salesian Family held at Guntur on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>.

Finally the Councillor for the Missions was able to take part in the full programme of the "Youth Ministry and the Family" Congress, organized in Madrid by the Youth Ministry Team between 27<sup>th</sup> November and 1st December.

On the various occasions when Fr Guillermo was passing through Rome he was able to meet the Salesians at the UPS who were taking part in the Course of ongoing formation in missionary ministry as well as some of the young missionaries from the last expedition who, while living in the San Callisto community in Rome, are preparing the documents needed in order to enter their mission territory and at

the same time undertaking some missionary service with the confreres of that local community.

## The Economist General

For the Economist General, Bro. Jean Paul Muller, the month of **August 2017** began with the *Team Visit of "Europe Ksip Cimec"* held in Budapest between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August. After that, between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August the Economist General took part in a meeting in Rome with a coordinating group on the subject of the prevention of abuse in ecclesiastical centres. On the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August he attended the Symposium "Banks and the Church" in Amsterdam.

In the month of **September 2017**, on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> the Economist General took part in the CDA of the Mission Procurement Office of Bonn.

On 13<sup>th</sup> September the hearing of the Central Court of Appeal was held on the "Gerini Case", following which the transfer began of the Generalate from Via della Pisana 1111 to Via Marsala 42.

In addition, on 14<sup>th</sup> September the Economist General was engaged in the evaluation of the external Audit regarding the situation in Sri Lanka,

The month of **October 2017** began with the Intermediate General Council while the transfer continued of the Generalate to Via Marsala 42. In addition on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October the Economist General spent some time with those taking part in a meeting on the specific formation of the Salesian Brother held at Genzano.

In the months **September-November** the process was completed of the transfer to Via Marsala 42, and on 10<sup>th</sup> November in the presence of the Juridical Official the Economist General handed over to the new owners the buildings of the former Generalate located in Via della Pisana 1111.

On 16<sup>th</sup> November he went to Cologne for a conference on the educational method of the oratory on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presence of the Salesians, and at the end of the month of November he took part in the "Youth Ministry and the Family" Congress held in Madrid.

After his participation in the Congress on "Youth Ministry and the Family" the Economist General, again in Madrid, on 2<sup>nd</sup> **December** went to the Mission Office in Spain as a member of the "*Junta de gobierno*".

He then returned to Rome for

the winter plenary session of the General Council.

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

At the end of the summer session of the General Council, the Councillor for the Africa and Madagascar Region Fr Américo Chaquisse, left Rome for the ATE Vice Province for the installation of the new Superior on 30<sup>th</sup> July, at Yaoundé, Cameroun. There he also had a meeting of the Council for assessment and animation at Vice Province level. Afterwards between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> August he was in the AFE Province for a meeting of the presidential committee of the regional secretariate for the "Don Bosco Tech Africa" (DBTA) technical schools. He also had a meeting with the Provincial Council to undertake assessment and animation. The installation of the new Provincial took place on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

Between 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August he was in the MDG Vice Province for an animation visit. He went to the formation houses: the aspirantate, the novitiate and the postnovitiate. In each of the communities he had a meeting with the formation personnel. Finally he met the Council

of the Vice Province for shared assessment and animation. Then between 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August he was in the MOZ Vice Province and visited some of the communities, in particular the prenovitiate and the novitiate, meeting the formation personnel. Finally he had a meeting with the Council of the Vice Province.

Afterwards, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> August he was in the AET Vice Province where he met the confreres in the formation communities and had meetings with the formation personnel in each of the formation houses: the prenovitiate, the novitiate and the postnovitiate. Finally he brought the Council of the Vice Province together for assessment and animation.

Between 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August he was in the AFC Province for an animation visit. He took part in the 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee celebration for the Tujenge (Provincial animation group for the oratories in the Province) and presided at the celebration of the perpetual profession of one of the Brothers. He visited the houses of formation and held meetings with the formation personnel in each of them: the novitiate, the postnovitiate and the theologate. At the end he met with the Provincial Council for shared assessment and animation.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September he paid an animation visit to the new ACC Vice Province. He went to some of the communities meeting the confreres. On 8<sup>th</sup> September he presided at the installation of the first Superior of this new Vice Province.

After spending three days in Rome (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> September), between 13<sup>th</sup> September and 4 November – on behalf of the Rector Major – he made the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Haiti Vice Province (HAI)*. Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October he interrupted the Visitation to be in Rome for the annual meeting of CIVAM. During the Visitation in Haïti he met the Bishops of the Dioceses in which the Salesians are working. He also met the members of the Salesian Family. On 6<sup>th</sup> October he presided at Mass for the opening of the Academic Year of the Saint Francis of Sales Institute of Philosophy at Fleuriot-Tabarre. Having completed the Extraordinary Visitation of Haïti, he returned to Rome on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Once again in Africa, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November he was in Nigeria, a Provincial Delegation of AFW, for an animation visit. He went to the formation houses: an aspirantate, the prenovitiate and the postnovitiate. He took part in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Salesian

presence in Nigeria, and inaugurated the new headquarters of the Vice Province. He held a meeting with all the Rectors of the AFW Vice Province who were in Lagos for the jubilee celebration and the annual retreat. Between 15<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November he accompanied the Rector Major on a visit to the two Vice Provinces of ANG and MOZ. Then between 27<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December he took part in the Congress on "Youth Ministry and the Family" held in Madrid.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December he returned to Rome.

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

Having taken part in the General Council in the months of June and July, on 25 July, the Councillor for the Latin America-South Cone Region, Fr Natale Vitali, left for Córdoba, Argentina, to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the North Argentina Province (ARN)*.

In the course of four months he visited 26 Salesian religious communities, two of them interprovincial, and 10 works without the presence of a Salesian community.

The "Blessed Artemide Zatti" Province of ARN has 172 Salesians

and works in 37 colleges, 4 works of higher education, 20 parishes, 12 public churches, 12 social centres, 59 festive oratories, 3 formation houses and 3 media centres.

On 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August the Councillor for America-South Cone took part in the 'Curatorium' of CRESCO in Guatemala, together with the Regional for Interamerica and other Provincials who have their Brothers in that house.

Between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August in Brasilia he took part in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Salesian Youth Movement (SYM) in the six Provinces of Brazil, attended by the SYM National Council and more than 200 participants. On 27<sup>th</sup> in the National Sanctuary of Don Bosco in Brasilia, the crypt with the urn of Don Bosco donated by the Rector Major was inaugurated.

On 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September Fr Natale Vitali took part in Buenos Aires, in a meeting of the two Provincial Councils of ARN and ARS to consider some common items of interest such as initial and ongoing formation, the SYM, the Salesian Bulletin and other topics that the two Provinces are undertaking together.

Between 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September he accompanied the Rector Major on an animation visit he was making to the Province of San Paolo

(BSP) and afterwards between 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, also to the Province of Recife (BRE).

The Extraordinary Visitation of ARN was completed with a meeting with the Provincial Council on 13<sup>th</sup> November at Manucho and on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> with a meeting with all the Rectors, the confreres and the laity of the Province.

Between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November the Regional conducted the consultation for the new Provincial of Manaus (BMA): on 17<sup>th</sup> at Porto Velho, on 18<sup>th</sup> at Belém and on 20<sup>th</sup> in the city of Manaus.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November he held a meeting of the Provincials of Brazil at Brasilia. On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> there was a meeting with the Team of the Centre of Ongoing Formation in the city of Quito, together with the Regional for Interamerica, and afterwards he took part in the Congress on "Youth Ministry and the Family" in Madrid.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December he returned to Rome in order to take part in the winter session of the General Council.

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

The Councillor for the "Interamerica" Region Fr Timothy Plock,

had planned to carry out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the "Saint John Bosco" Province of the Antille* (Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba). But the Rector Major appointed Fr. José Miguel Nuñez, former Regional for Spain and Portugal, to take on and complete this Extraordinary Visitation in the Antilles, in this way allowing Fr Timothy Plock to be more concerned with the ongoing problems of his health and to prepare for a possible second operation on his shoulder in New York. In this way Fr Timothy spent the months from August to November in his Province of New Rochelle (SUE), seeing the doctors and surgeons in New York City and following a programme of physiotherapy.

In the New Rochelle Province there were many events in which the Regional was able to take part, especially the installation of Fr Timothy Zak, the new Provincial of SUE, accompanied by Fr. Fabio Attard and Fr. Guillermo Basaños of the General Council who were passing through SUE for other engagements. The Regional was present in North Haledon, NJ, for the canonical erection of the new "Saint Joseph" Province of the FMA, which united the two former Provinces of Canada and the East United States, and the installation

of the new Provincial, at which Mother Yvonne, Superior General of the FMA presided. In the same way he was present at the official unification of four parishes in Port Chester, NY (2 Salesian and 2 diocesan) into a new one, the parish of Saint John Bosco, entrusted to the Salesians of SUE by the Archdiocese of New York. In addition he took part in the regular meetings of the SUE Provincial Council and also in the joint meeting of the Provincial Councils of SUE and SUO at Stony Point, NY. Other events in the New Rochelle Province in which the Regional took part included the meeting of Rectors and the lay directors of works in SUE, the Spirituality Day of the Salesian Family (following the pattern of the Days of Salesian Spirituality of the Salesian Family in Rome), the opening of a retreat for the leaders of the Salesian Youth Movement, an afternoon of recollection for the Salesian community of Stony Point, a concert given by the Choir of the Sistine Chapel in St Patrick's Cathedral in New York (conducted by our confrere Mgr. Massimo Palombella), and the dedication and the blessing of a new building and a chapel at Don Bosco Prep, Ramsey. On two separate occasions the Regional presided at the perpetual profession

of two SUE confreres and gave a conference as part of the preparation programme for perpetual profession of two other SUE confreres. On one occasion he also met Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York.

Also at the Interamerica Region level, the Regional took part in meetings of the 'Curatorium' in the theologate of Bogotá, of CRESCO and of the postnovitiate in CAM. He was also able to take part in most of the meeting for the Provincial Delegates for Formation, held in Quito. In October he led the annual meeting of the Provincials of Interamerica at Amatitán (MEG), where at the same time the Youth Ministry Delegates were gathered together. This was immediately followed by a meeting for Provincial Delegates for the Salesian Family. He presided at the renewal of temporary professions of some confreres from MEG and MEM. He travelled to San Francisco (SUO) for the funeral Mass and the burial of Fr. Larry Lorenzoni. With Fr. Natale Vitali, Regional for the South Cone, he presided at the meeting of the "Extended Team" of the Centre for Ongoing Formation for America (CSFPA) at Quito, Ecuador, at the end of November. Finally the Regional for Interamerica was in

Santo Domingo for the official conclusion of the Extraordinary Visitation of the Antilles, carried out by Fr José Miguel Nuñez.

From Santo Domingo Fr Timothy Plock returned to Rome on 1<sup>st</sup> December for the winter session of the General Council, now for the first time at the new Salesian General Headquarters at the Sacred Heart in Via Marsala 42.

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

Immediately after the summer session of the General Council, Fr Václav Klement, Councillor for the East Asia and Oceania Region, made *three short animation visits* in a month. The first in the Vice Province of Papua New Guinea - Solomon Islands (PGS), 29<sup>th</sup> July-12<sup>th</sup> August) where the Regional was able to visit all the local communities. The second was a short animation visit to Thailand (THA, 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> August) and to Cambodia (THA, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> August) that was mainly concerned with meetings with the two Councils (Provincial and Delegation). The third visit was to the Province of Cebu (FIS, 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> August), where Fr Klement was able to meet in two islands (Cebu and Panay) almost all

the confreres and many members of the Salesian Family.

Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August the sector for the Missions (SDB & FMA) had prepared the most significant event of the whole six year period: Days for Missionary Formation and Animation for both the Regions of Asia (South Asia and East Asia - Oceania), in which 96 delegates for missionary animation took part. Also present were Fr Guillermo Basaños, SDB, and Sr Alaide Deretti, FMA. The topic "The First: Proclamation of Jesus Christ" is an inspiration for a new missionary movement in every Salesian presence and an invitation to a new style of life focused on the first proclamation.

As happens every year, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of August the 'Curatorium' was held for the formation communities in Parañaque (FIN, 24<sup>th</sup> August), attended by the Superiors or Delegates of the 10 Provinces in the Region. The previous day was devoted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Coordinators of the 5 sectors (formation, youth ministry social, communication, economy and Salesian family) at Regional level in East Asia - Oceania (Manila, 23<sup>rd</sup> August).

The *Extraordinary Visitation of Korea* (KOR, 26<sup>th</sup> August-1<sup>st</sup> November) was interrupted only once

during the autumn festival (Chuseok) for the animation of the single Salesian presence in Siberia (Russia, the autonomous Republic of Sakha, 30<sup>th</sup> September-8<sup>th</sup> October) celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mission with the three confreres present (Rector Fr Pavol Michalka, SLK). In the 14 communities in the Province of Korea the Regional recognised the challenge of pastoral discernment amidst the great and swift socio-cultural changes in the country.

In the last month before the winter plenary session of the General Council, Fr Klement took the opportunity to make *four other animation visits*. After the conclusion of the Extraordinary Visitation in Korea, the Regional devoted 5 days to animation in Manila (FIN, 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> November) moving on to the Delegation of Pakistan (FIS, Lahore and Quetta), 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> November), meeting all the four confreres present in the country. During the days following the regional meeting in Myanmar, he also made a second animation visit this year 2017 (MYM, 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> November) to Anisakan, Mandalay and Yangon just a few days before the visit of Pope Francis. The animation visit to Japan (GIA, 22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> November) was devoted to meetings of the Rectors, of the Provincial Council

together with the 'Project team', all focused on the discernment taking place for the restructuring of Salesian presences in Japan. The last stage of the animation visits was devoted to the Chinese Province (CIN, 26<sup>th</sup> November-3<sup>rd</sup> December), beginning in Taiwan (two days), continuing in Hong Kong (three days) and concluding in Macau (two days).

It should also be mentioned that in the month of November the Regional took part in *three regional meetings*. Two meetings were held simultaneously in the spirituality house in K'Long (Vietnam, 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> November): that for the Youth Ministry Delegates (led by Fr Fabio Attard) and that for Social Communications Delegates (led by Fr Filiberto Gonzalez). Some areas for closer collaboration between the two sectors at Regional and Provincial level were identified. At the same time the meeting included a celebration for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *AustraLasias news* (regional news items, 9 November 1997, [www.bosco.link](http://www.bosco.link)) with thanks to the three editors and more than 150 correspondents living in 23 countries in the AEO Region and others outside the Region. A third Regional meeting was that of the Formation Delegates, for which Fr Klement went to Myanmar (MYM,

15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November) where the meeting took place at the "Don Bosco Retreat Centre" in Anisakan, led by Fr Ivo Coelho with his assistant Fr Silvio Roggia and coordinated by Br. Raymond Callo.

Fr Klement returned to Headquarters (Sacred Heart, Rome) on 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

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

After the conclusion of the summer session of the General Council, the Councillor for the Region of South Asia, Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga, stayed in Rome for some days on personal matters and for a short pilgrimage to Fatima and Turin. He left for India, going to Chennai on 6<sup>th</sup> August. Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> August he went to Yercaud (INT) to visit the postnovitiate and to meet the Council of the Tiruchy Province. Having returned to Chennai, he had a meeting with the Council of the INM Province on 11<sup>th</sup> August. Afterwards, between 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August he went to Thailand for a joint meeting of the Provincial Delegates for missionary animation in the two Regions of South Asia and East Asia and Oceania, led jointly by the SDB and FMA Departments for the Mis-

sions. He took the opportunity to go to Cambodia to meet the missionaries from South Asia and visit the cultural centre of Angkor Wat.

Back in the Region, the Regional flew to Odxel, Goa, and began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Panjim Province (INP)* on 21<sup>st</sup> August with a meeting of all the Rectors and another with the Provincial and his Council. The Visitation took him to the 18 communities in the Province located in the three States of Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra, and continued until 30<sup>th</sup> September. He had taken a break in the Visits to hold the annual meeting of SPCSA Council in Dwarka, New Delhi, between 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August. The Extraordinary Visitation concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> September with a final conference to the Rectors, the Provincial Council and other confreres and with a thanksgiving Mass. During the Visitation, the Regional had also paid short visits to the houses of the Salesian Sisters and of the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate, members of the Salesian Family in the area.

Going on to Sri Lanka on 1<sup>st</sup> October, the Regional began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the LKC Vice Province* the same evening in the Provincial House in Dungalpitiya, with a meeting of all the Rectors and the members of the

Provincial Council. The Visitation took him to the 14 communities in the Vice Province. He also visited all the Bishops of the dioceses in which we are working and to the six houses of the Salesian Sisters on the island. He also visited the property at Ahungale, where the Salesian community had been, but closed some years ago. The Visitation ended on 27<sup>th</sup> October with the usual conference to the confreres and with Mass.

From Sri Lanka, the Regional went to the Guwahati Province and there carried out the consultations for the appointment of a new Provincial, between 28<sup>th</sup> October and 3<sup>rd</sup> November. He met the confreres in four different places: Guwahati, Tura, Bongaigaon and Tezpur. On 4<sup>th</sup> November he went to Kochi in Kerala *to join the Rector Major who was visiting three Provinces*. First of all the visit to the Bangalore Province (INK) took the Rector Major and the Regional to Kochi, Aluva and the houses in Bangalore. The high point was the celebration of the 'Golden Jubilee' of the 'Kristu Jyoti College' theologate in Bangalore. In addition the Rector Major met and encouraged all the Provincials of the South Asia Region on 7<sup>th</sup> November. Taking advantage of the presence of all the Provincials for the occasion, the

Regional also held a meeting of the Permanent Committee of the SPC-SA. The Rector Major with the Regional then went to the Guwahati Province between 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November. Here a high point of the visit of the Rector Major was the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. The visit ended with a great Provincial Festival of Faith at Damra, on the occasion of the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians in North-East India. Afterwards, the Rector Major, accompanied by the Regional, went to Mumbai on 12<sup>th</sup> November to take part in the celebrations for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Don Bosco School and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the renowned Sanctuary of Don Bosco's Madonna, both located at Matunga, Mumbai.

The day after the Rector Major's visit the Regional went to the Shillong Province (INS) for the consultations for the new Provincial during the period 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November. This took him to Agartala, Shillong and Silchar, where he held four separate discernment meetings. On 19<sup>th</sup> November he went to Chennai. Between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November he went to Varadarajanpet, to see his mother and relatives and also to meet with an agricultural and eco-

logical movement to the founding of which he had contributed.

Having returned to Chennai, he left for Rome on 24<sup>th</sup> November. Then he went to Madrid, where between 27<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> December he took part in the Congress on "Youth Ministry and the Family," organized and led by the Youth Ministry Department of the Congregation. Afterwards he returned to Rome for the winter plenary session of the General Council.

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

During the summer session of the General Council (June-July 2017) the Councillor for Central and North Europe, Fr Tadeusz Rozmus, took part in several Regional animation occasions: he accompanied the Rector Major in Poland at Poznań, for the celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the five beatified young oratorian martyrs; he was present at the ordination to the priesthood of one of the Salesian confreres in Glasgow (GBR), at the ordination to the diaconate in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians on the via Tuscolana in Rome; he represented the Rector Major at the instal-

lation of three new Provincials: Fr Wilfried Wambeken BEN, Fr Eunan McDonnald in Dublin (IRL) and Fr Reinhard Gesing in Munich (GER).

Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August he took part in the *Team Visit* arranged for the second group of the Provinces of the Region (CEP, CRO, PLE, PLN, PLO, PLS, SLK, UKR, UNG), held at Esztergom, near Budapest in Hungary. Immediately afterwards he went to one of the Austrian parishes to take part in the pastoral work there and at the same time to have a little rest.

Between 2<sup>nd</sup> September and 4<sup>th</sup> November, in the name of the Rector Major he carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Kracow Province (PLS)*, also including the Latin area of the Ukraine. Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November in the context of the *Extraordinary Visitation* he visited the Special Circumscription of the Ukraine, involving the works and the confreres of the Byzantine Rite.

After this *Extraordinary Visitation* the Regional Councillor went to three Provinces to carry out the consultations for the appointment of the respective new Provincials: SLO (21<sup>st</sup> November), CRO (22<sup>nd</sup> November), UNG (27<sup>th</sup> November). Afterwards he left for Madrid to take part in the Congress on

“Youth Ministry and the Family”, organized by the Youth Ministry Department. Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December he met the Provincials of Poland (PLE, PLN, PLO and PLS) and of the Ukraine in the context of the KSIP Conference. Before returning to Rome, in Krakow he took part in the celebrations in connection with the Centenary of the VDB and assisted in the installation of their new Provincial Superior.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December he returned to Rome to take part in the winter session of the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the Mediterranean Region***

When the summer plenary session of the General Council ended the Councillor for the Mediterranean Region Fr Stefano Martoglio went to Colle Don Bosco for two days to meet members of the community. Having returned to Rome on 30<sup>th</sup> July, with the Secretary of the Region Fr Joan Lluís Playà he finalised preparations for the Team Visit of the Rector Major to the Mediterranean Region.

The *Team Visit to the Mediterranean Region*, the first for the young Region, was held at the ‘Salesianum’ in the Pisana, be-

tween 31<sup>th</sup> July and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017, with a hundred or so confreres from the Region (the Provincials and their Councils, some representatives of the two National Centres of Madrid and Rome) and the Rector Major with all the General Councillors involved in the Team Visits.

They were days rich in communion, fraternity and assessment of the progress made within the life of the Congregation, and as a Region. In spite of the very hot weather and of the decisions taken in those days, the climate was serene and fraternal, a useful and important meeting.

When the Team Visit was over, on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> August 2017 the Regional Councillor presided at the two days of meetings of the Presidential Committee of the CISI, called together to implement some important decisions.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August he was present and presided at the liturgical ceremony for the first professions of the Novices of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from the two novitiates in Rome in the ‘*Santa Maria della Speranza*’ parish at the UPS.

On 7<sup>th</sup> August Fr Stefano Martoglio went to stay with his family for a period of rest. On 16<sup>th</sup> August he took part in “Don Bosco’s

Birthday" at Colle Don Bosco and from there went to Messina to join, for some days of formation, the young Italian Salesians who were preparing for their perpetual profession.

On 28<sup>th</sup> August the Regional Councillor presided at the installation of the new ILE Provincial in Milan, and on 1<sup>st</sup> September he did the same with the new IME Provincial at Pacognano di Vico Equense, in the province of Naples.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September the Regional Councillor *returned to Veneto to complete the Extraordinary Visitation* begun in the previous February. There were days filled with meetings including a week visiting the INE confreres who are living and working in Romania. Afterwards he went with the INE Provincial to Moldavia for three days of meetings with all the INE confreres in Romania and Moldavia.

On 21<sup>st</sup> September Fr Stefano Martoglio completed the visitation of INE and on 24<sup>th</sup> September he began the *Extraordinary Visitation of ICC*.

Since the Visitation of ICC will require the whole of the pastoral year 2017-18, in the period between the end of September and the end of November 2017 14 ICC houses were visited. The rest will be visited beginning at the end of January 2018.

From 21<sup>st</sup> November the Regional Councillor took part in the 'Curatorium' of the formation houses located in Italy and under the direction of CISI, going from Nave to Pinerolo; from Turin-Crocetta to Rome-San Tarcisio; from Genzano to Messina-San Tommaso, in order to be able to accompany the progress of the many confreres living in those houses either as formation personnel or as those in formation.

## 5. DOCUMENTS AND NEWS

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### 5.1 New Provincials

*Below (in alphabetical order) some information about the Provincials appointed by the Rector Major with his Council in the month of December 2017, in the course of the winter plenary session of the General Council.*

#### **1. ABRAHÁM Béla, Provincial of the Province of HUNGARY (UNG)**

To lead the "Saint King Stephen" Province of Hungary (UNG) Father *Béla ABRAHÁM* was appointed on 14 December 2017.

Born on 20 March 1968 in Budapest, Hungary, he was ordained priest in the Diocese of Esztergom on 15 June 1991. In September of the same year 1991 he asked to be admitted to the Salesian novitiate in Szombathely, Hungary. He made his first profession on 8 August 1992 and his perpetual profession on 28 June 1998.

Only one year after his perpetual profession, in June 1999 the Superiors decided to entrust him with the great responsibility of being Director of Novices and Rector of the novitiate in Budapest-Óbuda (where the novitiate of the Province had been transferred). He carried out this role until June

2005, when he was transferred to the community of Péliföldszentkereszt, as Rector of the community, parish priest of the local church and head teacher. In April 2012 he moved to the house of Budapest-Salesianum.

At province level he had various responsibilities: Provincial Councillor from 2000 (with the necessary special permission), from 2002 to 2011 Provincial Economist and at the same time for two years (from November 2006 to November 2008) also Vice Provincial. He was also for a number of years, Provincial Delegate for Schools and Provincial Delegate for the Salesians Cooperators.

#### **2. KOŠNIC Marko, Provincial of the Province of SLOVENIA (SLO)**

On 13 December 2017 the Rector Major with his Council appointed Father Marko *KOŠNIC* Provincial of the "Sts. Cyril and Methodius" Province of Slovenia. He succeeds Fr Janez Potočnik.

Born on 19 April 1972 at Kranj (Slovenia) he made his first religious profession as a Salesian on 11 August 1990 in the novitiate at Zelimlje and perpetual profession on 15 September 1996 at Ljubljana. After theological studies at Rome-

UPS, he was ordained priest on 29 June 2000 in Ljubljana.

After ordination he was appointed to the house of Ljubljana - Inšpektorialna Hiša, where he was a member of the council and Vice Rector 2009-2010. In September 2010 he moved to the house in Zelimlje, and in June was appointed Rector, a role he still held.

At Province level he was a Provincial Councillor from 2003 until 2012, when he was appointed Vice Provincial. He has also been Provincial Delegate for Youth Ministry and for marginalized young people.

### **3. *LYNGKOT Paul Olphindro, Provincial of the Province of India-SHILLONG (INS)***

Father *Paul Olphindro LINGKOT* is the new Provincial of the "Saint John Paul II" Province of Shillong, India, appointed by the Rector Major with his Council on 13 December 2017. He succeeds Fr George Maliekal.

Paul Olphindro Lingkot was born on 28 January 1968 at Jalaw (India) and has been a Salesian since 23 April 1990, the date of his first religious profession which he made in the novitiate of Shillong-Sunny-side, in what was then the Province of Guwahati. Perpetually professed

on 24 May 1996, he was ordained a priest on 30 April 2000 in Shillong.

After ordination he worked for a year (2000-2001) in the house of Nongstoin, and then again for a year (2001-2002) at Shillong - Don Bosco. Afterwards for two years he was in the Provincial house in Guwahati (2002-2004). In September 2004 he was sent to Italy, where he studied at the UPS, until September 2007 (followed by a short stay at Livorno).

Having returned to India, in April 2008, he was sent to the house of Tura - Rongkhon, where he was Rector for a short time, before moving to Guwahati - Don Bosco. In July 2011 he was transferred to Sirajuli as Rector of the community. In July 2012 he was appointed Vice Provincial of the Province of Shillong (INS Province erected in 2002), a role he held until the present time and his appointment as Provincial.

At Province level he was also Delegate for Vocations, for Youth Ministry and for Formation.

### **4. *SANGMA Januarius, Provincial of the Province of India-GUWAHATI (ING)***

Father *Januarius SANGMA* has been appointed by the Rector Major with his Council Provincial

of the “Mary Help of Christians” Province with headquarters in Guwahati, India, on 12 December 2017. He succeeds Fr Thomas Vattathara.

Januarius Sangma was born on 16 February 1965 at Mohoripara, Meghalaya, India, and has been a Salesian since 24 May 1969, the date of his first profession, made in the novitiate of Shillong-Sunnyside. Perpetually professed on 7 May 1995, he was ordained priest on 28 December 1997 at Tura.

After ordination he was appointed to the house in Kokrajhar, where he exercised his ministry until September 2001, when he was transferred to the house of Shillong - Salesian Training Centre. In March 2005 he was appointed Rector of the house of Tura - Don Bosco School, before moving in April 2007 as Rector to the community of Tura - Rongkhon. Later he was for a year at Tura - Don Bosco College and then in September 2009 again at Tura - Don Bosco School, as Rector and School Principal.

At Province level from April 2007 he was a Provincial Councillor and in April 2015 he was appointed Vice Provincial. He was also Delegate for Past Pupils and later also Delegate for Scholastic Education. Now he takes on the service of Provincial.

## **5. SANTOS DA SILVA Jefferson Luis, Provincial of the Province of MANAUS, Brazil (BMA)**

Father *Jefferson Luis DA SILVA SANTOS* is the new Provincial of the “Saint Dominic Savio” Province of Manaus, Brazil, appointed by the Rector Major with his Council on 12 December 2017. He succeeds Fr Francisco Alves.

Born on 6 November 1969 at Belém (PA), Brazil, Jefferson Luis Santos made his first religious profession as a Salesian on 31 January 1993 at Manaus and his perpetual profession, again at Manaus, on 31 January 1999. He was ordained priest on 8 December 2000 at Belém, his birthplace.

After ordination he was for two years at Manaus - Formation Centre and then at São Paulo - Lapa for a year (from February 2003 until February 2004). Then he moved to the house of Manaus - Alvorada, as Economist of the community (2004-2007). After some months at Manaus - Zumbi (CESAF), he was in Rome for two years at the “Blessed Zefirino Namuncurá” community as a member of the council. Having returned to Brazil in September 2009, he was sent to Manaus Aleixo, as Economist and in January 2010 to Porto

Veho - Dom Bosco, as Rector and Economer.

On 16 January 2013 he was appointed Provincial Economer a post he held for three years until January 2016. Then he went to the community of Manaus - Domingos Savio, as Economer. At Province level he was also Delegate for Youth Ministry and lately Delegate for the Salesian Family.

## **6. ŠUTALO Thomir, Provincial of the Province of CROATIA (CRO)**

Father *Thomir ŠUTALO* succeeds Fr Pejo Orkić as Provincial of the "Saint John Bosco" Province of Croatia, having been appointed to this role by the Rector Major with his Council on 9 December 2017.

Born on 3 January 1967 at Stolic, Mostar (Bosnia Herzegovina), Thomir Šutalo has been a Salesian since 14 August 1984, the date of his first religious profession which he made in the novitiate at Rijeka. Perpetually professed on 15 August 1991, he was ordained a priest on 25 June 1995 at Zagreb

After ordination he spent a year (1995-1996) at Zagreb-Srebrnjak, and then exercised his ministry at Žepce (Bosnia Herzegovina) for three years (1996-1999). Afterwards he was sent to the UPS in Rome,

where he remained until September 2002. Having returned to the Province he was again sent to the community of Žepce (Bosnia Herzegovina), where between 2002 and 2013 at different times he held various positions: School Principal, Economer, Rector (2010-2013). Then for a year 2013 -2014 he was in Rome - San Tarcisio, as a member of the house council. He returned to the Province in September 2014 to the house of Zagreb - Jarun, as director of the Oratory. In March 2015 he was appointed Provincial Economer a role he still held when he was appointed Provincial.

At Province level, in addition to being Economer since 2003, at various times he was Delegate: for Formation, for Social Communication, for the Salesian Family.

## **5.2 New Salesian Bishops**

*Below are some details (in alphabetical order) about the Salesian Bishops appointed by the Holy Father in the second half of 2017.*

### **1. FEKETE Vladimir, Prefect Apostolic of Azerbaijan**

On 8 December 2017 the appointment by Pope Francis was an-

nounced of the Salesian priest *Vladimir FEKETE* as a Bishop, on his being made *Prefect Apostolic of Azerbaijan*.

Vladimir Fekete was born on 11 August 1955 at Bratislava in what was then Czechoslovakia (today Slovakia).

In 1979 he obtained a degree in mathematics and geology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in the University of Bratislava.

Attracted to the Salesian vocation, on 31 January 1981 he made his perpetual profession in secret (given the communist regime then in power in Czechoslovakia), and after two years on 30 January 1983 he was ordained priest in Berlin.

Until the fall of the communist regime in 1990 he continued to work as a geologist in his own country. Then he did further studies in Theology, obtaining the degree of *Magister* at the University of Vienna (1995) and a Licence at the Catholic University of Lublin (1999).

Within the Province he held various offices: Rector of the community of Levoca and Provincial Councillor. In May 1993 he was appointed Vice Provincial, a role he occupied until December 1998, when he was appointed Provincial until August 2005. Then he was

Rector and Director of Novices in the Novitiate of Poprad (Slovakia).

In June 2009 he was sent as Rector of the community to the house of Baku, in Azerbaijan (a house dependent on the Slovak Province). At the same time the Holy Father appointed him ecclesiastical Superior of the *missio sui iuris* of Azerbaijan.

Now with the elevation of the “*missio sui iuris*” to a Prefecture Apostolic, the Holy Father has appointed Fr Vladimír Fekete Prefect Apostolic, raising him to the episcopal dignity and assigning him the titular see of Municipa.

## **2. LÓPEZ ROMERO Cristóbal, Archbishop of Rabat (Morocco)**

On 29 December 2017 the appointment by Pope Francis was announced of the Salesian priest *Cristóbal LÓPEZ ROMERO* as Bishop of the Archdiocese of Rabat, in Morocco.

Cristóbal López Romero was born on 19 May 1952 at Vélez Rubio, in the diocese of Almería, Spain. He has been a Salesian since 16 August 1968, the date of his first profession made in the novitiate of Godelleta, in what was then the Province of Barcelona, Spain. Perpetually professed on 2 August 1974, he was ordained priest on 19 May 1979 in Barcelona.

After ordination he continued his studies, obtaining a Licence in Information Technology at the Free University of Barcelona in 1982. At the same time he exercised his ministry on behalf of the marginalised in *La Verneda* Barcelona.

In 1984 he left as a missionary for Paraguay, appointed to the Provincial House. In addition to pastoral work in the Salesian College in Asunción he held various roles at different times at Province level, as Province Delegate for Youth Ministry, Director of the Salesian Bulletin. He was also a member of the Conference of Religious of Paraguay and a member of the Council of the Ministry of Education of Paraguay. He spent a year as parish priest in Fernando de la Mora (1993-1994). In June 1994 he was appointed Provincial of the

Province of Paraguay, a position he held until July 2000. Then between 2000 and 2002 he was Rector of the Asunción "Mons. Lasagna" House.

In 2003 he went to Morocco, to the house of Kénitra, as Rector for six years (from July 2003 to June 2009). In this period he was a member of the Council of Priests of Rabat.

At the beginning of January 2011 he was appointed to the Province of Bolivia as Provincial until June 2014, when the Rector Major with his Council appointed him Provincial of the "Mary Help of Christians" Province of Spain (SMX). Now after a three year period he has been appointed Archbishop of Rabat, in Morocco, where he had already been a member of the Council of Priests during his stay in that country.

### 5.3 Our dead confreres (2<sup>nd</sup> 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
P ANDREAZZA Essetino	Americana (Brazil)	04/09/2017	86	BSP
P ANJOS Amador	Manique (Portugal)	03/12/2017	98	POR
P ARIMPOOR George	Aluva, Kerala (India)	01/08/2017	84	INK
P ARRIETA GARMENDIA Ángel	Montevideo (Uruguay)	27/12/2017	92	URU
P BALLIN Giuseppe	Castello di Godego (Italy)	14/08/2017	95	INE
P BARBERO Carlos	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	16/09/2017	76	ARS
P BARGIONI Vincenzo	Genova (Italy)	08/08/2017	85	ICC
L BELIE Piet	Heverlee (Belgium)	08/12/2017	93	FRB
P BENEŠ František	Litomyšl (Czech Rep.)	23/10/2017	69	CEP
P BETTIGA Corrado	Torino (Italy)	27/08/2017	85	ICP
<i>He was for 6 years Rector of the Generalate</i>				
P BHENGRA Michael	Guwahati (India)	01/08/2017	58	ING
P BORELLO Mario	Santiago (Chile)	02/12/2017	94	CIL
P BOSIO Matteo	Turin (Italy)	11/11/2017	92	ICP
P BOSISIO Enrico	Turin (Italy)	10/08/2017	94	ICP
P BREEN Jeremiah	Melbourne (Australia)	01/09/2017	86	AUL
P BREGOLIN Afriano	Averau (BL, Italy)	23/08/2017	68	ICC
<i>He was Provincial for 6 years of the West Venice Province (1996-2002) and for 11 years (2003-2014) Vicar of the Rector Major</i>				
P BRISABOA Elvio	Córdoba (Argentina)	04/09/2017	89	ARN
P BUSTOS BALLESTEROS Víctor Hugo	Bogotá (Colombia)	13/08/2017	51	COB
P CARNEVALE Costantino	Sulmona (Italy)	07/10/2017	104	ICC
P CARRERO Luciano	Turin (Italy)	04/12/2017	80	ICP
L CEDAZO NEGREDO Carlos	Madrid (Spain)	30/11/2017	87	SSM
P CEJAS LEON Orlando Gabriel	La Habana (Cuba)	31/10/2017	90	ANT
P CHABERT Laurent	Toulon (France)	18/11/2017	96	FRB
P COLOMBO Giambattista	Turin (Italy)	16/10/2017	89	ICP
P CRIPPA Michelangelo	Arese (Italy)	31/08/2017	81	ILE
L CROTTI Andrea	Turin (Italy)	13/12/2017	89	ICP
L DAL CENGIO Luigi	Venezia-Mestre (Italy)	30/12/2017	83	INE
L DÍAZ HUALDE Javier	Logoño (Spain)	25/08/2017	82	SSM
P DMOCHOWSKI Misosław	Jaciążek (Poland)	26/11/2017	61	PLE
P DUMBLIASKAS Petras	Marijampolė (Lithuania)	04/10/2017	87	ICP
P FASANO Teresio	Turin (Italy)	27/12/2017	90	ICP
P FORTE PALAO Fernando	El Campello, Alicante (Spain)	14/09/2017	88	SMX
P FULHABER Joseph	Issenheim (France)	31/12/2017	96	FRB
P GEISSBAUER Sigmund	Graz (Austria)	04/12/2017	89	AUS
P GHIETTI Mario	Santo Domingo (Dominican Rep.)	07/09/2017	82	ANT

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
L GILLNER Hubert	Benedikbeuern (Germany)	12/11/2017	85	GER
L GLEISNER Cahill Francesco	Melbourne (Australia)	07/10/2017	87	AUL
P GONÇALVES Jair	Campo Grande (Brazil)	16/12/2017	84	BCG
P GONZO Benedetto	Venezia-Mestre (Italy)	18/12/2017	91	INE
P GORDO SANTASMARTAS Julián	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	18/10/2017	70	ARS
P GUZMÁN Román	Guayaquil (Ecuador)	18/11/2017	86	ECU
P HEYN SCHUPP Carlos Antonio	Fernando de la Mora (Paraguay)	14/10/2017	90	PAR
P HOLOWATY Esteban Pedro	San José (Argentina)	07/08/2017	81	ARN
P JECZALIK Edward	Miedzybórz (Poland)	25/11/2017	83	PLO
L KAWABE Kinshiro Aloisio	Beppu (Japan)	03/08/2017	88	GIA
P KAWALEK Józef	Kowary (Poland)	02/12/2017	68	PLO
P KIELIŃSKI Stefan	Rumia (Poland)	22/08/2017	84	PLN
P LAMON Frans	Heverlee (Belgium)	19/10/2017	89	BEN
P LE DUFF Jean-Yves	Caen (France)	03/11/2017	85	FRB
P LINGL Helmut	Ensdorf (Germany)	26/10/2017	76	GER
L LÓPEZ LARA Santiago	Guadalajara (Spain)	21/11/2017	66	SSM
P LORENZONI (Nerio) Larry	San Francisco (USA)	05/09/2017	94	SUO
P MALARTRE Jean Baptiste	Toulon (France)	15/01/2017	96	FRB
L MALGORN Alain	Caen (France)	18/08/2017	81	FRB
P MALLOY Austin	Manchester (Great Britain)	03/09/2017	94	GBR
P MARESU Luigi Baingio	Rome (Italy)	04/08/2017	66	ICC
P MATTAI Giuseppe	Rome (Italy)	05/12/2017	98	ICC
P MĘDRAŁA Stanisław	Zawiercie (Poland)	19/10/2017	79	PLO
P MELIDA AMEZGARAY Antonio	El Campello, Alicante (Spain)	13/10/2017	90	SMX
<i>He was Provincial for one year and for 6 years a General Councillor</i>				
P MIFSUD Carmelo	Birkirkara (Malta)	24/12/2017	96	IRL
P MIGLIO Angelo	Guayaquil (Ecuador)	30/12/2017	89	ECU
P MOLINA GAMBOA Mario Roberto	Santiago (Chile)	21/09/2017	72	CIL
P MONCECCHI Gianfranco	Lugano (Switzerland)	07/10/2017	70	ILE
P MONTELLA Francesco	Salerno (Italy)	20/08/2017	86	IME
P MONTINOVO Raffaele	Rome (Italy)	11/11/2017	92	ICC
P MORENO Antonio	Sevilla (Spain)	26/09/2017	95	SMX
L MORES Sante	Venezia-Mestre (Italy)	04/10/2017	90	INE
P MUNAFÒ Antonino	Catania (Italy)	08/12/2017	86	ISI
P MUÑOZ PÉREZ Félix	Arévalo (Spain)	10/08/2017	94	SSM
P NICOSIA Gaetano	Hong Kong (China)	06/11/2017	102	CIN
P OONUPALATHIMKAL Joseph	Aluva (India)	17/12/2017	87	INK
P OPOLKA Henryk	Wrocław (Poland)	16/08/2017	88	PLO
P PACHECO FERNÁNDEZ Javier	Sevilla (Spain)	01/09/2017	81	SSM
P PADAMATTUMEL Varkey	New Delhi (India)	19/11/2017	84	INN
P PAŃCZYSZYN Antoni	Wrocław (Poland)	27/08/2017	85	PLO
P PEPMAN Alfonso	Cordoba (Argentina)	02/08/2017	90	ARN
P PIAGGIO SOTO Mario	Montevideo (Uruguay)	09/11/2017	87	URU
L PILONERO MILAZZO Rosario	La Vega (Dominican Rep.)	09/11/2017	91	ANT
E POZZI José Pedro	General Roca (Argentina)	26/11/2017	92	—

*He was for 6 years Provincial; for 10 years Bishop of Alto Valle del Rio Negro and for 4 years Bishop emeritus*

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P POZZOBON Pietro	Venezia-Mestre (Italy)	05/10/2017	90	INE
P PULIS Joseph	Melbourne (Australia)	28/08/2017	84	AUL
P RENTMEISTER Heinrich	Köln (Germany)	07/08/2017	81	GER
P RODRIGUES Stephen	Mumbai (India)	18/10/2017	70	INB
P ROJON Yves	Lyon (France)	13/09/2017	92	FRB
P ROOSEN Albaert Lucien Gustav	Bangkok (Thailand)	11/08/2017	91	THA
P ROSCOE Daniel Arthur	Belo Horizonte (Brazil)	28/11/2017	88	BBH
P ROSSO Mario	San Francisco (USA)	15/12/2017	93	SUO
P SABA Marco	Rome (Italy)	20/10/2017	91	ICC
L SAGBAY SANCHEZ Luis	Macas (Ecuador)	14/11/2017	96	ECU
P SANZ VALDEZATE Andrés	León (Spain)	05/12/2017	103	SSM
E SAPELAK Andriy	Lviv-Vynnyky (Ukraine)	06/11/2017	97	—
<i>He was for 6 years (1961-1968) Auxiliary Bishop of Sebastopol; then for 10 years (1968-1978 ) Exarch for the faithful of the Byzantine-Ukraine rite in Argentina; then for 19 years (1978-1997) Eparch for the See of Buenos Aires; finally from 1997 Bishop emeritus</i>				
P SARDO Carlo	Turin (Italy)	30/11/2017	86	ICP
P SCHWEMHOFFER Franz	Viehdorf (Austria)	12/11/2017	86	AUS
L SECOLA Vincenzo	Rionero del Vulture (PZ, Italy)	13/11/2017	77	IME
P SHIRIEDA Tsuyoshi Antonio	Meguro (Japan)	06/10/2017	80	GIA
P SIMON Johannes	Amberg (Germany)	03/08/2017	79	GER
L SORTINO Vincenzo	Messina (Italy)	13/08/2017	85	ISI
P STEPANOWSKI Medard	Memmingen (Germany)	12/08/2017	90	GER
P ŠTUDENT Vladimír	Galanta (Slovakia)	02/12/2017	73	SLK
L TARDÍO Maria Jesús	Pamplona (Spain)	29/08/2017	87	SSM
P TOMBOSI Herminio	Viamão (Brazil)	21/09/2017	89	BPA
P UDOM NIDHIBHADRABHORN Edward	Bangkok (Thailand)	30/10/2017	69	THA
P UGALDE Jorge	Guayaquil (Ecuador)	23/09/2017	89	ECU
P VALINHO José	Manique (Portugal)	04/08/2017	90	POR
P VAN DER VALK Jan	Wateringeng (Holland)	20/09/2017	98	BEN
P VAN MAANEN Antonio	Caracas (Venezuela)	02/11/2017	88	ANT
P VENTURELLI Romano	Edmonton (Canada)	14/08/2017	76	SUE
P VIVAR REINOSO Efrén Horacio	Quito (Ecuador)	07/08/2017	77	ECU
P WĘDRYCHOWICZ Mieczysław	Bydgoszcz (Poland)	30/07/2017	62	PLN
P WEGNEROWSKI Bogdan	Stoccolma (Sweden)	28/12/2017	85	PLN
P ZAGO Pietro	Perosa Argentina (Italy)	28/12/2017	82	ICP
<i>He was Provincial for 6 years of the South Philippines Province</i>				
P ZDOLSKI Janusz	Piła (Poland)	20/08/2017	53	PLN





