**REFLECTION ON THE GOVERNANCE OF THE CONGREGATION**

**Point 2, letter A**

The mandate: **Personal proposal to review the structure of the Council and the principal occasions for animation:**

Composition of the Council: the current situation and the reforms of the composition of the Council according to each one’s perspective, in order to be able to accompany the Congregation in the various provinces.

**Everyone shares their perspective in writing, starting from what currently exists, then proposals for renewal:**

* + 1. Sectors
		2. Regions
		3. Secretariats

When identifying potential changes, it is always necessary to keep an overview of the work of the Council, and the current number of Councillors. It does not seem appropriate to increase this number.

**Contribution 1**

Regarding the composition of the Council, the current format should not be further increased but perhaps streamlined.

One possibility is that in addition to the Rector Major and the Vicar, [there be] the Economy, Youth Ministry and Formation Sectors.

It would then be appropriate to have some Secretariats such as Salesian Family, Communication and Missions: this is one possibility, but also to continue with the Sectors.

The three-year period of verification requested of the Vicar of the Rector Major was precisely to evaluate these kinds of things.

The biggest difficulty there has been is the lack of real coordination. It has not always been clear what the Sector collaborators do.

What has been more difficult has been coordination, and communicating the activities carried out by the various Sectors to the Council: which was what was intended.

As for the Sectors in the Regions, there is a need for Regional Councillors to visit the entire Region, regardless of whether or not there is an Extraordinary Visitation.

Over these three years this planned visit has been lacking; there is a need to accompany the provinces and the situation of the Congregation, but not through an increase in collaborators.

Looking at Art. 130 and 131 of our Constitutions, they ask us to help the Rector Major, but from a common view of things..

The Formation Sector needs to think about how, over 6 years, it can accompany all the houses of formation in the Congregation.

The most delicate point is our way of governing and accompanying the Congregation efficiently, which means teamwork and communication

**Contribution 2**

*Motivations.*

1. The ability to be faithful to the mandate of animation and governance. The real and organic/systematic accompaniment of the various provinces. I believe this may be the central point: since the current composition of the General Council took shape, the Congregation has changed a lot; it is evident that it is much more international, multicultural and diverse in terms of situations and contexts.

2. The experience of the Congregation must be brought together, not dispersed, so the point of reflection starts from the consideration that the current number of councillors, large though it may be, has proven itself over the years. The number is not a question of mathematics. It is an institutional mediation between the needs of the Congregation and the function of a Council that must not be too large, with the risk of paralysis. I believe that the overall number of Councillors should not increase; I believe that the big change should be in the way we work, work times and how work is coordinated.

3. The central point of animation and governance is accompaniment. The ability to accompany processes and provinces is at the heart of our service. Undoubtedly we struggle to accompany the provinces in an effective and timely manner (things are partially different for processes already underway). Our presence in provinces (which does not just mean going there) must be better attended to.

In particular, accompaniment by Regional Councillors is lacking (made impossible by the size of the Region or the complexity of a presence in the provinces). This accompaniment should ensure a kind of “inductive” accompaniment alongside the life of provincials, councils, confreres. There is also a lack of accompaniment in implementing decisions, instructions sent by the RM (through Extraordinary Visitations, Team Visits or in different or problematic situations...). The function of the Regional Councillor is much more than that of the Extraordinary Visitor: it was the clever intuition of the Special GC compared to the previous General Council.

The balance between the function of Visitors to provinces and other forms of animation needs to be evaluated. The presence of non-Councillor visitors (in reference to the Extraordinary Visitation) should be considered an exception, without establishing an official situation of Visitors who are not Council members. The problem here for the governance of the Congregation is not the individuals, excellent people, but the interruption of the flow of knowledge to the Council that is the bread and butter of every appointment and decision.

4. Another central point is the ability to think and reflect together as a Council, to coordinate reflection and, subsequently, animation. As a General Council we are taken up with ordinary functions and administration, and have no time for our own formation, updating and ability to reflect as a Council.

5. The presence of the Regionals needs to be re-organised and some regional circumstances need to be changed (in the first instance, Africa-Madagascar which is ready to evolve into two Regions... at least in terms of expectations). As with the Conferences, so the set-up of the Regions is the opportunity to give us the appropriate format to be able to accompany the individual circumstances found in the Region. In the current situations the complexities (which may be numerical, geographical, sociological or other) are exactly the thing to be evaluated, in my opinion, to determine whether the current configuration of the Region is adequate or not. And if not, then we should not be afraid to make decisions.

6. Enhancing Secretariats with a direct relationship with the Rector Major, and Sectors that can be coordinated in other ways. The Secretariats, due to the successful outcome of the SF secretariat “ad experimentum”, can also be applied to other Sectors (Social Communication and Missions). As said explicitly in reflection on point one of our work, there are Sectors that could become Secretariats and also increase their direct relationships with the RM, as has been the case over these years for the SF Secretariat.

This makes it possible to construct the work of the Council in three concentric circles: Sectors, Regions and Secretariats. Enhancing, not getting rid of. These three concentric circles should have common plenums (meetings together), but it is also possible to study different working methods; thus making the Council’s work (animation and governance, but also reflection) more flexible.

7. I believe that combining roles in the same councillor (there have been several experiments in the last 25 years, such as SF and Vicar, SC and SF) is not an appropriate model to be pursued or re-proposed.

**Contribution 3**

*The Sectors.*

I see the value in maintaining 5 Sectors. The Sectors have an overview of the entire Congregation. It would be an impoverishment to reduce this possibility. I propose a reorganisation maintaining Formation, Youth Ministry (including responsibility for joint formation), Missions, Economy and another: Communication or SF.

*The Regions.*

I see the need for two Regions in Africa and Madagascar to facilitate the accompaniment especially of the formation houses. I do not know if 2 Conferences is the solution.

*Secretariats.*

I do not have a clear understanding of the relationship between Secretariats and the General Council. As I have already said, either Social Communication or the Salesian Family can be a Secretariat.

**Contribution 4**

Currently, the organisation of the Council must face two needs at the same time, namely, that of specialisation of tasks (which leads to a correct division of labour, maximum efficiency and adaptation to the complex circumstances of the provinces) on the one hand, and that of coordination at different levels on the other.

The organisational structure of the Council has been characterised – for 40 years – by just two levels: one a vertical dimension (Regionals) and one horizontal (Sectors). Coordination of each Sector Councillor is substantiated through relationship with 11 individuals (!), plus the Vicar and the Rector Major, each with his own program, own team, and own rhythms. This organisation is unworkable; cross-collaboration on converging tasks becomes very complicated.

In the horizontal dimension (Sectors), the “total adherence” of all issues that refer to the Sectors involves problems, since the Councillor cannot be competent in all the situations that are submitted to him. It must also be taken into account that the high degree of centralisation on the Councillor causes an overload of responsibility, which also leads to slowdowns in processes and the accompaniment of collaborators.

Decision-making authority should be decentralised in degrees and levels.

Consolidating and standardising the Central Secretariats (R 108) and Offices (R 107) seems to me to be the solution. They have the formal authority to make ordinary decisions because they are a small group, SDBs and/or lay people grouped by areas of specialisation, similar competencies and procedures, able to gain insight into future scenarios. A group that can offer advice, suggestions or opinions with a view to supporting decision-making processes of greater relevance if there are such.

The main advantages of this second organisational level or degree (Secretariats and Offices) can be summarised as follows:

– greater accompaniment of provinces by focusing on specific areas of planning over the six-year period, thus avoiding the phenomenon of dispersion, duplication and overlapping of experiences;

– less time needed to develop initiatives and processes that allow for maximum flexibility and rapid decision-making;

– greater coordination with national and Regional structures, if they exist, closer to the front line [of action] and with greater understanding of needs;

– more streamlined channels of communication with Regionals, other Offices/Secretariats or Councillors;

– greater autonomy for individuals with a broader understanding of issues being animated and their practical implications.

Currently the animation style of Councillors with their collaborators is characterised by flexibility and sharing of ideas. In general they appreciate the trust shown them. However, this rethinking of the Offices/Secretariats would help us to better place our staff. It is not enough to be clear about their Job Description (we have gained a lot in this!), but also about the degree or level of animation that is given to them. For example, are their visits/trips related to a coordination or formation activity, or do they serve to “get to know”? Do these visits have an effective impact on the provinces?

However, there is no perfect structure, nor is there the ultimate one. In any case, I make this proposal:

- Secretariat of the Salesian Family and Secretariat of the Missions, directly dependent on the Rector Major.

- Secretariat of Social Communication (ANS, Institutional Communication - public relations, press office, spokesperson; Salesian Bulletin; SDB.org website) directly dependent on the Vicar.

- Education Office (School, VTC [Vocational Training Centres] and IUS) and an Advocacy and International Relations Office (DDBI, DB-UN, Reference person for works and services for young people at risk and social exclusion: an “institutional stance” on so many issues is needed!), directly dependent on the Councillor for YM.

- The Economer’s Office (production, enterprises, publishing and services; Planning and Development Office – PDO; Mission Offices) and a Human Resource management Office (responsible for the management of lay staff at Headquarters) dependent on the Economer General.

- I propose that the accompaniment of the Salesian Historical Institute and the Central Library come under the Councillor for Formation and not the Vicar of the Rector Major.

With regard to the Regions

A division of the Africa-Madagascar Region could be appropriate. Perhaps a first step would be to divide it into two Conferences, then to to work on this development over the next six years, in readiness for an actual division at GC30.

The choice of having one or two people to do some of the visitations has been ascertained and could continue especially as a help to the larger Regions.

**Contribution 5**

1. Personal proposal to review the structure of the Council and the main occasions for animation:

The first reflection concerns the current form of representation and the number of General Councillors. The model that has been implemented is a benchmark for the Congregation because it ensures good organisational coherence, both at the charismatic and institutional, administrative and legal levels.

Despite its limitations, and evidently with the need for an increase in organisation and operation, the current composition of the Council is representative, practical and favours collegiality, fraternity and unity in the governance of the Congregation.

I am of the opinion that the overall number of Councillors should not increase.

Along these lines, it would also be important to maintain the Sectors as currently established. However, it would be appropriate to redesign an organisational chart divided into three connected levels: Sectors, Regions, Secretariats. In this way we can facilitate teamwork and balance between administrative (technical) management and animation, accompaniment and formation.

The second point concerns the principles of collaborative management and government, that is, how we work as General Councillors. In my opinion there is a need to organise more frequent meetings between the Rector Major, his Vicar, and Members of the Council. The aim is to create the opportunity for greater dialogue, exchange of information to encourage discussion, evaluation and the growth of an overall perspective.

The third idea concerns the choice of a Salesian (executive secretary) with a profile and technical and professional capacity that allows him to collaborate directly with the Vicar, Sector Councillors and Regionals. The choice of this person clearly depends on how administrative and animation management will be organised.

The Social Communication Sector, as it currently operates, includes various services at different levels and with different needs: executive institutional communication (directly linked to the Rector Major), news service (ANS), social networks, sdb.org website, accompaniment of the Delegates for communication in the area of formation and organisation in the Regions, various events, meetings of communication delegates, Salesian Bulletin Editors, publishing houses and radio managers, study committees (artificial intelligence, young people and the digital world), preparation of texts and multimedia material, meetings at the level of the Salesian Family (FMA) and others.

Beginning with the way the Sector operates today, the initial proposal to modernise the Communication Sector implies:

- maintaining the Sector, delegating the executive services of institutional communication to the secretary/ies of the Rector Major;

- instead, all other services would be carried out by the Communication Sector.

Note: To achieve this management approach, it is essential to work with a management mindset that is collaborative, synergistic and shares responsibility.

Youth Ministry

To foster effective project integration and more coordinated and mutually supportive management in the Sector, it would be desirable to create three coordination areas to manage the various projects and keep the coordinators working together at Headquarters with the Youth Ministry Councillor.

Missions and Economy

To avoid fragmentation and dispersion in the management of the various social services, organise networking, with more synergy and collaboration in the management of projects related to NGOs, Mission Offices, the Don Bosco nel Mondo Foundation, in order to carry out these projects with unity, efficiency and Salesian institutional visibility.

For the Regions

Considering the huge growth in the number of Salesians in Africa, as well as the formative and financial challenges, it will be necessary to set a study process in motion for establishing two Regions in Africa.

Secretariats

Regarding the Salesian Family I propose that it continue to make reference to the Rector Major

**Contribution 6**

I is an objective fact that our Congregation is to be found in very many countries, cultures and contexts (I believe it is the most widespread Congregation across countries). I am against reducing the number of Sectors.

The reduction of Sectors would not facilitate coordination because it would make the reduced Sectors even larger. For me, reducing the Sectors once more would be a huge impoverishment, both in animation and in the potential for responding to the very different situations in which the Salesians work.

Already the Youth Ministry Sector has become a ‘Super Sector’ not easily managed by a single Councillor.

I am convinced that the way forward is not in the reduction of Sectors (although it is tempting because it might seem easy to do), but in a better rationalisation of the different services of the Sectors (i.e. more like an internal reorganisation than a reduction or amalgamation of Sectors). Along these lines, my proposals are:

1. Secretariat for education (SCHOOL, VTC, TVET and IUS) not under Youth Ministry. This is nothing new, because prior to the Special GC there was a Councillor for Schools. And up until the time of Fr Domenech, IUS was not under Youth Ministry.

2. The aspirantate can be under the Formation Sector. Already at the beginning of our mandate (May 2020) we decided (and I well recall having voted for it) that the aspirantate be under formation, while vocational animation be under YM The fact is that if a provincial needs confreres for the aspirantate, he does not look for someone pastorally trained but for a confrere who can be the ‘formator’ or spiritual and vocational guide.

3. Let parishes be under the Missions Sector.

4. There should be a central Office for Institutional Communication. At the moment we have a quite dispersed way of communicating: ANS, the sdb.org site, the Online Salesian Bulletin, a group that does the strenna. The relationship of the Communication Sector with these is not clear.

5. The accompaniment of the Provinces of the Africa-Madagascar Region is very important, because we will pay very dearly in the near future for the result of the lack of accompaniment that is closer to the growth and development of the provinces. Establishing Conferences will not solve the need for closer accompaniment. There is a need now to establish 2 Regions in the African continent.

NOTE

At this time between now and GC29, I believe it is necessary to recover the structure already in place to promote better coordination of the Sectors: in the previous six years, it was a sacrosanct principle that when the Council is in session (winter and summer) all of the collaborators must be there. Over recent years it is not easy because some are with the family for holidays.

**Contribution 7**

Our daily experience shows us that

- There are many interfaces in the life of a Province and it is not possible to make clear distinctions between the individual areas of our life, because we do not produce products, but we are a religious community. Our Constitutions stipulate that the General Council covers several areas, but that these must all be seen together and as a whole. Our mission has both an internal area, which we can see under the theme of community life and religious life, and a more visible external part which we can describe as the activity and expression of our charism.

- Religious life and the challenge of better maintaining and developing vital and exemplary communities is considered urgent by the majority of our Regional Councillors.

- Caring for the individual vocations that have brought the confreres to our communities requires greater commitment.

- The closeness of the Salesians to young people has been stressed several times by the GC.

Sectors.

Due to the diverse nature of the issues that accumulate in every province and at the general level of the Congregation, in effect we need more members on the General Council. In my opinion, however, this is neither conceivable nor constructive.

In my view, a reduction would be useful for more rapid coordination and more intensive consultation among Councillors with the RM. A combination of three Sectors would probably be ideal, provided that certain tasks/issues can be converted into secretariats.

In my opinion, the communication sector is outdated, firstly because the Provinces are much more advanced than we are at Headquarters. Secondly, because we have “watered down” the tasks and the sector in recent years through our internal reorganisation. Let the “public relations (PR)” of ANS or of a newly conceived body belong to the RM staff unit or to a Councillor appointed by the RM.

It is necessary to reflect on a change in the Formation Sector in which the care of vocations (existing and new) becomes the central task, which is also expressed through formation, continuing education, accompaniment, etc.

The interface of all the Sectors with Youth Ministry concerns above all vocation ministry and the thematic focus of the accompaniment, animation and leadership (SDB and laity) of our organisations.

Secretariats

Secretariats linked to the Rector Major’s office could be: Missions, Salesian Family, institutional Communication, international representation (New York, Geneva, Brussels, Addis Abeba, Diplomatic Corps...).

A “Chef de Cabinet” under the Vicar would be very useful for the daily organisation of the Council’s work (Agenda, topics of study,...) and communication between the Councillors.

I assume too that a reduction in the Sectors would not result in a reduction in staff, because the speed and above all the professionalism of the Council must increase if it is to compete with the dynamics of the provinces in the future. It is therefore necessary to decide what will be done in the future “in house” at Headquarters and what will be organised through “outsourcing”. Too little use is made of synergy with other parts of the Congregation, such as the thematic contribution of our universities, regional or national specialised centres, etc.

Regions.

I currently see the need to organise better management of the provinces in Africa. This could be done with a Regional Councillor and two assistants assigned to him. The visitations which cannot be carried out due to lack of time can be carried out by the representatives of the Rector Major.

In the next six years, the Oceania Region must ensure that cooperation between provinces is strengthened and that smaller units, such as Myanmar, Cambodia and Pakistan, are supported. Given the great cultural diversity, it would be appropriate to reinforce the current positive developments.

For all Regions it is advisable to reorganise the Regional structures so as to have better data on the developments of the Region in the General Council and to better accompany the implementation of strategic orientation.

**Contribution 8**

Structure of the General Council.

The vast size of the Africa and Madagascar Region and the absence of smaller structures like Provincial Conferences make mobility and animation difficult within greater Africa (30 million km2). If I have understood it well, some confreres in Africa clearly see the need and urgency of establishing two Regions. But if fears and hesitations persist for some reason or because of the status quo, it could be that the number of Chapter members ready to support this proposal at the GC29 is reduced.

And this hypothesis of two Regions in Africa means and implies a greater number of Regional Councillors in the Council, including one more for Africa, and perhaps a restructuring of Asia if necessary.

This would suggest that some Sectors be managed as we do now for the Salesian Family.

**Contribution 9**

Aspects we keep coming back to

- The need for greater coordination among Sectors and between the Sectors and the Regions

- Following on from the Extraordinary Visitation: how to accompany the provinces after the Visitation.

- The need for a competent team for the Sectors and for the Regionals.

- Insights that seem to be important

1.2.1 The process of inculturation, which takes place within the charismatic unity of the Congregation, still generates a certain tension in some regional contexts for which it requires an additional effort of reflection, experimentation, dialogue for mutual understanding between the General Council and the Regions.

1.2.2 The large number of guidelines and initiatives offered by the various animation structures of the Congregation (e.g., GC document, letters from the Rector Major, various documents of the Sectors, documents from Team Visits, Extraordinary Visitation report etc.) makes it difficult to generate processes of change and development due to the lack of any planning mentality, slowness in assimilating the contents and the weakness of animation of some provinces.

For the provinces: 1 PC in the six years and 1 General Assembly

- Impressions as to why, over so many years, these points of review have not come to fruition..

I can’t say. Maybe it is the fast pace of Chapter work; there are always other issues; the diversity of people who change, etc.

**Contribution 10**

Sector animation: our Congregation is huge in terms of geography, personnel, those we serve and our institutes. So far the whole Congregation is doing well with the animation, accompaniment and contribution of resources from the 6 Sectors. Each Sector has an efficient mechanism with a light structure of Regional coordination (which includes all the Sector Provincial Delegates) with annual meetings and periodic meetings (online) as well as formation programs for the new Delegates.

It takes time for individual Provinces (and each Councillor and/or Provincial Delegate) to get used to this form of mutual animation. And sudden changes will have an impact.

Four meetings a year: enough. The problems are: 1. the Regionals seem to have a limited understanding of the other Regions in order to provide good input in the meeting; 2. little time to reflect on important questions like the Ratio, Sector documents.

**Contribution 11**

Art. 130 and following describe the General Council and its functions. It seems to make reference juridically only to the General Council (regardless of the different roles). I don’t know if it is possible for there to be different “circles” in the one Council!

The Council, as such, has certain definite functions. The functions of the Councillors include those given by the Rector Major and those given by the General Chapter, always in union with the Rector Major (C 131).

According to Article 130 of the Constitutions, “it is the task of the Council to identify and study the problems which concern the common welfare of the Society, to promote fraternal union among the different provinces and to develop an ever more efficient organization for the fulfilment of the Salesian mission in the world.”

That would indicate a clear distinction from any other body that is not the General Council. It also means that the Council could propose studies not proposed by other bodies.

According to Art. 132, the Council has direct responsibility (all the Council members, independent of Sector or Regional roles) at least for all the matters listed for which the Rector Major requires the consent of the Council. Whose responsibility would it be if there were “circles” in the Council?

Art. 130 also indicates that it is the authority of the General Council with the Rector Major to decide on the development of efficient organisational structures for the fulfilment of the Salesian mission in the world. This gives the Council the power to organise styles of animation and governance (establish specialist offices etc.).

I do not understand the need to reduce the Sector Councillors, while increasing the number of people in the various teams (or by whatever term they are called)! Personally, I have not heard that the size of the current General Council is bulky. In reality, all the Councillors are overwhelmed by the work of animation. How can you expect that, by reducing the number of Councillors by one or two and adding more teams of three or four to manage the work under some Councillors, this can help? There may also be a danger of reducing diversity in the General Council of a very international Congregation! Adding one more Region (assuming Africa becomes two) would only add another Councillor... or two or three... Naturally, there remains the need for there to be an odd number for Council votes.

I appreciate the two kinds of General Councillor (Sector Councillors and Regional Councillors) since they bring different competencies to the General Council.

The idea of having a group of secretaries in the General Secretariat who could help the General Council with its various activities (e.g. preparing various types of reports in a uniform format, preparing studies, etc.) would be very useful.

What has been developed over the years in terms of teams of experts: the Statistics team, research, History, etc., is good. A periodic evaluation of efficiency must be done. This could all be under the Secretary General

As a principle, the various inter-provincial animation bodies around the world should have clarity on who from the Council is responsible for the body and its appropriate decisions. The separation between those who are “responsible” and those who are “in charge” does not usually lead to positive results! The regional Structures guided by Art. 135-142 of the Constitutions may need more clarity with regard to their authority figures (for example, inter-provincial structures, curatoriums, etc.). Recognition of the Rector Major, the Provincial and the Rector as levels of superiors may also need clarity and respect in cases of inter-provincial structures that place the Sector or Regional Councillors as a point of reference (bearing in mind that decisions are usually “of a guiding nature” (cf. C 139) with added conditions).

**Contribution 12**

It seems to me that by reducing the Sectors within the General Council and increasing the number of Regional Councillors, some balance would be lost Sector Councillors have a different role and a more concise knowledge, while Regional Councillors tend to look through the prism of the Region. Of course, it has to be considered whether the Sectors should remain as they are now, what their responsibilities are and what they should be called.

**Contribution 13**

Changing the name could help us visualise a different proposal. Charismatic perspectives (Sectors) and strategic commissions (Secretariats).

Council made up of

A. The Rector Major and his Vicar

B. a Councillor for [each of] 3 charismatic perspectives: Economy, Formation and Youth Ministry

C. a Councillor for each of the 8 Regions: Mediterranean, Central-North Europe, East Asia-Oceania, Asia South, America South Cone, Interamerica, North and South Africa.

Three strategic commissions: Social Communication, Salesian Family, and Missions.

The houses of RMG and UPS (University) should be integrated within the competent Region in their area

**Contribution 14**

In the summary we have received three words are repeated in a broader form: Coordination (there is a need for more coordinated work in all senses), Reduction (the desire for a simplification of structures while maintaining what is essential), Regionals (a broad issue with reference to the Regionals, but starting from a recognition of the importance of the role of the Regional) ... Always with a vision of better service to the provinces and the confreres.

We cannot approach this restructuring only from an organisational perspective. We cannot forget the service to charismatic fidelity, congregational and ecclesial communion. On the horizon we must consider the reality, also part of this scene, of the mission shared with the laity.

Proposal 1.

Regarding Regionals:

- Initially extend the Regions to 8 (eight). Establishing two of them in Africa-Madagascar. I do not believe that establishing two Conferences is sufficient to respond to the circumstances of this Region.

- When the Regional does not make the Extraordinary Visitation it weakens relationships with and knowledge of the province.

Proposal 2.

I am not clear about Sectors.

- I am aware that the Salesian Family Sector has improved, but in my visits I perceive that it has lost charismatic strength. It is one of the weakest Sectors. I am referring to the groups that are presented in our Constitutions as groups with which we have a special relationship (FMA, ASC., Past Pupils, ADMA...). Looking to the future, relationships must be ever stronger with reference to the shared Salesian spirit and mission. I think that returning to the presence of a Councillor for the Salesian Family in the Council could help.

- Missions: if the whole aspect of missionary animation, as happens in some provinces, passes to YM, could an Office or Secretariat be set up in direct dependence on the Rector Major, such as the Procurator or the person in charge of the Causes of Saints?

- Could the Social Communication Sector be set up in a Secretariat that serves right across the charism and mission?

- It has never been the case, but could the Economy Sector be considered as a Secretariat?

**Contribution 15**

*1. How things are at present*

Beyond the traditional areas (Ensuring constant fidelity to the charism - Rector Major and Vicar; formation and vocational accompaniment - missionary vocation *ad gentes* including confreres; pastoral mission - missionary animation included; the administration of the Patrimony with everything it brings with it - the funds from Mission Offices included; the accompaniment of the Regions... the accompaniment, development and expansion of the Salesian Movement cannot be neglected, not only with regard to the officially recognised Groups of the Salesian Family, but also the associations and groupings indicated by the Charter of Identity, family movements, the so-called Friends of Don Bosco even of different spiritual traditions. This is about a spiritual and charismatic patrimony - including Salesian holiness - that calls for acceptance, animation, sharing, witness, all at the service of the Church and for the good of the young.

On the other hand, there are needs as the world proceeds that in my opinion are not to be overlooked, such as “research, or development, quality”; the creation of culture (pedagogical, educational, spiritual, Salesian, socio-cultural...); the in-depth formation of potential leaders (Salesian and lay).

A serious reflection on the cultural and ecclesial areas of the future will certainly bring out needs that must be present in reflection on the animation and governance of our Congregation.

*2. With regard to the Regions*

Regionals? The number of “visitors” has increased in this six-year period (24 visitations have been conducted by Visitors who are not Councillors). This demonstrates that “regional” and “visitor” do not necessarily coincide.

If this is accepted, we could give more consideration to the figure of the “visitor” and reinforce the role of the “regional” in aspects we know are lacking. For this reason the number of regions could remain the same, or their geography could be modified.

But if the figure of the “visitor” is not to have more prominence then the number of Regions needs to increase (Africa, first of all) but being aware that the more specific role of the Regionals is not strengthened.

The other question is: How do the Regionals “participate” in Council reflection and decisions? Perhaps there is a need to establish a specific work time with those responsible for the Sectors, focusing on “continental” issues or on the kinds of issues that life throws up.

*3. Regarding Sectors and Secretariats*

It is clear that each of the areas or sectors must have a team and every team needs a manager (head, coordinator...)

Calling some of these areas ,“sectors” and others “secretariats” could cause problems given that the word “sector” is associated with “a councillor” and “secretariat” with “a delegate”. Yet it is one thing to be a “councillor” and another thing to be “responsible for a sector or secretariat”. Tradition always associates both things, and if this does not happen it seems that the sector or area loses out, as has happened for some with the Salesian Family. But does it have to be like this?

Not being part of the Council as a councillor does not mean that one loses the responsibility of “advising” The specific role of the councillor is “to collaborate by offering his opinion and with a vote”. All those responsible for a sector (be it a Sector or Secretariat) as such have similar responsibilities, obligations and demands of animation, accompaniment, coordination, vision and working together... and answering before the Council to their sector’s program.)

Other than the Rector Major and the Vicar, and the councillor for a concrete sector, could not the Council be made up of other confreres? This mindset could perhaps favour the presence of more brother confreres on the Council.

Proposal: do not differentiate between “sectors“ and “secretariats”. Identify them all with the same word “sector” (or some other more expressive term). The difference does not lie in the “kind of animation” because it is always animation concerning an aspect of the charism or the Salesian mission, with the aim of “animating everything among everyone”. The only difference is “election as a *councillor* responsible for some sector” and who, as such, has some specific functions.

If we reduce the sectors with councillors (which I consider desirable), it seems to me that they can be considered as secretariats with a central delegate according to the Regulations (categorised as sectors),

– Salesian Family (or Salesian Movement)

– Communication (or Creation of Culture)