



# ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

## OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

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S. G. S. - ROMA

## I. THE LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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*Rome, January 1976*

*Dearest confreres and sons,*

First of all, I would like to express once again my sincerest thanks for your fraternal and affectionate participation in my Golden Jubilee celebration. I was deeply moved by your good wishes, gifts, prayers, and most of all by your promise of renewed fidelity to Don Bosco. May I ask you to continue to assist me with your prayers and good Salesian spirit. At the same time I assure you of a remembrance in my daily prayers.

### **The Centennial of the Salesian Missions: the Opening Celebrations**

We began the celebration of the Centennial of our Missions last November in Turin. You will find a full account of the events of those beautiful days in this issue and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Here I would only like to remark that those days were characterized by an exuberant enthusiasm shared by all the participants, and in particular by the veteran and the young Salesian missionaries. The latter had been preparing themselves during the preceding month at the Salesianum in Rome, and received the crucifixes during the concelebrated Mass presided over by Cardinal Agnelo

<sup>1</sup> See *ANS*, December '75 and below, pp. 53-57.

Rossi, thus re-enacting in a way the same ceremony that had taken place one hundred years earlier in the same place with the first ten Salesian missionaries. This time there was also a group of Salesian Sisters, accompanied by their Superior General Mother Ersilia Canta and members of her Superior Council.

Days later all these missionaries were granted a special audience by Pope Paul VI, who addressed them with great affection and expressed his sincere appreciation for the missionary work done by both Congregations. His thoughts and feelings are reported below, in the eighth section of this issue.<sup>2</sup> I hope that we will all be inspired by them to be as grateful and loyal to the Holy Father as Don Bosco was.

The official commemoration of the Centennial was held on December 11 in the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) Auditorium in Rome, in the presence of Card. Baggio, who delivered the keynote address, of the President of the Italian Republic, of distinguished personalities of the Italian government and of the Church, and many friends.

Significant and pleasing as these celebrations were, we, of course, cannot stop at them. Our Centennial could only be fittingly celebrated by doing our best to promote the missionary spirit at all levels, with all means available, beginning with our own boys. The reports that are beginning to pour in from the periphery are a proof that this desire to promote the missionary spirit is alive among us and is expressed through various initiatives. This should create a climate which is suitable for the growth of new vocations. For it should never be forgotten or doubted that the missionary spirit is for us the tradition-honored high road to new vocations.

Let us therefore, my dear confreres, carry forward this missionary enthusiasm and express it in every way we can think of.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 81-86. The official text appeared on the *Osservatore* Nov. 23, 1975, Ital. Ed.

And now to the "traditional" letter, which will deal with a topic of special significance nowadays, inasmuch as it affects the very future of our beloved Congregation. Besides, certain theories and praxes have been developed on this subject, which are at variance with the teaching of the Church and with the explicit will of our Congregation. The topic of our letter is:

### **PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**

#### **We need men of God to guide us**

I will take the clue from an event in the life of Don Bosco which happens to be chronologically related to the Centennial we are now celebrating, but is of a totally different nature.

In those extraordinarily busy months of 1875, Don Bosco had to endure a most distressing situation, which struck at the very root of his role of priest and guide of souls. In fact, in the Fall of that year, his faculties for confession were revoked by his Archbishop. I invite you to read the story of this incident — considered by Fr. Ceria as "the sad case about hearing confessions" —, as is told in the 9th volume of the Biographical Memoirs.<sup>3</sup>

It was the kind of trial that humiliated him in his priestly honor and hampered him from exercising the ministry of the confessional, which was a key factor in his educational system and a major function of his role as priest and superior of his community; yet, Don Bosco did not lose his self composure. He did what a Saint would do. Not to cause "scandal and gossip", he quietly left the Oratory and retired to Borgo San Martino. In a very respectful letter to his Superior he wrote: "I humbly beg you... to deliver me from this situation which, if it is sad for everyone, it is much more so for the Superior of a community,

<sup>3</sup> MB 9: 478-483.

who is the minister of confession and communion in many houses".<sup>4</sup> The matter was straightened out soon enough. To those who would have preferred a more energetic reaction to the unfair treatment received, Don Bosco would only say: "It is better for us to bow our heads, keep silent and suffer".<sup>5</sup>

At the conclusion of the account of this most regrettable episode, Fr. Ceria wrote: "The spiritual heirs of Blessed Don Bosco were to gain many souls to God in the years to come. Therefore the Lord enriched him with the treasures of his grace, and helped him grow in perfection through most grievous trial, which led him to the apex of holiness and made his Congregation expand so widely".<sup>6</sup>

The recollection of this trial of Don Bosco as a confessor and spiritual guide, presents me, as I said above, with the opportunity of sharing some reflections on this timely and important topic with you.

### *Two basic statements*

The topic of confession and spiritual direction is extremely wide, and could be considered from various points of view. We will consider it this time only from the viewpoint of *personal* or *individual* formation, leaving the community aspect of direction to another time and place. We will develop our topic on these two basic statements: there is no spiritual formation unless it is personal; in Don Bosco's style, personal spiritual formation was achieved through confession and spiritual direction.

As you can see, we are here dealing with a vital matter, that touches the lives of all of us, since all of us are sinners, all of us have limitations, all of us need spiritual help. But to a greater degree it interests those who are responsible directly for formation

<sup>4</sup> MB 11: 481.

<sup>5</sup> MB 11: 469.

<sup>6</sup> MB 11: 489.

and those who are in formation, that is, among the latter, novices, students of philosophy and theology, those in *tirocinium*, Coadjutor Brothers in the second period of professional training, and young priests. These are the future of our Congregation; and, in the words of Vatican II, the future of religious Institutes "depends very largely on the training of their members".<sup>7</sup>

## 1. FORMATION MUST BE PERSONAL

In my letter of July 1975 I expressed my great pleasure at the signs of recovery I saw during my visit in Latin America. I told you about the "splendid and original new developments for poor boys; fresh and lively modes of prayer among the young confreres; ... the influx of very mature young men trying their vocation" — things that I found there.<sup>8</sup> Now I am going to add that the reasons for my hope and optimism go deeper still.

I see that not a few confreres are acquiring a keener awareness of the truth so clearly stated by the Special General Chapter: "In order to work out this necessary discernment and renewal, historians are not sufficient, nor theologians nor politicians, nor organizers: we need *spiritual* men, men of faith, sensitive to the things of God and ready to work with courageous obedience as our Founder did".<sup>9</sup> More and more among us come to realize that is not enough to get excited and get involved in discussions, projects and activities... "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain".<sup>10</sup> Without the Blessed Mother every work of ours is sterile, because, as Don Bosco said, "it is because of her that our Congregation exists and prospers".<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Perfectae caritatis*, 18 (W. Abbott, *Documents of Vatican II*, p. 478).

<sup>8</sup> ASC No. 279 (July-Sept. '75), 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Acts of SGC*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Psalm* 126, 1.

<sup>11</sup> MB 12: 578.

### *Many initiatives on spiritual formation*

This awareness is at the root of the many initiatives concerning spiritual training, which were hardly conceivable in times past, but can be seen all around us today.

To mention just a few of them:

— the international Courses on On-going Formation being held since 1974 at the Salesianum in Rome, with very encouraging results;

— the "Roman Encounter" of all the Masters of Novices of the Congregation, which lasted over a month and helped reach an agreement on practical guidelines on the training of novices;

— the very important "Days of Reflection on Salesian Priestly Formation", held July 6-19, 1975 in Rome and attended by over forty Directors and Confreres in charge of our studentates of philosophy and theology;

— the long-awaited and well-attended "World Congress of the Coadjutor Brothers", in which problems on formation were often at the center of debates;

— the "Intercontinental Meetings" of the European, Latin American and Far-Eastern Provincials, where the topic "The Province as a Formative Community" was discussed;

— the "European Salesian Symposium on the Renewal of the Spiritual Retreat", which was most favorably rated by the participants and has already produced fine results;

— the first "Two-year Course on Spirituality" at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, which has recently ended (July '75) with gratifying results;

— the "Course on On-going Formation for the Coadjutor Brothers of Latin America", which is now on its second cycle.

I only mentioned the initiatives on international scale; the national and provincial ones would make the list too long for this letter. All this gives us good reasons to hope for the future.

*But initiatives are not enough...*

We would, however, only fool ourselves unless we realized that we are going through a cultural and religious crisis, that is shaking the very fiber of our existence. The initiatives to which I referred are certainly necessary, but are not enough. Rather, they cannot achieve their intended purpose, unless the supernatural values which they are meant to convey, are not fully accepted by the confreres, especially the younger ones, and made part and parcel of their living experience.

The intellectual, psychological, social, cultural and technical elements and aspects of formation, useful as they are for the harmonious development of the person, are inadequate for the job of formation, until they are brought back to their original and unifying principle, that is, one's conscience, understood as one's interior awareness of values and free assent to them.

The spiritual formation of the young confreres becomes, then, essentially the issue of forming their consciences. Since the conscience of a Christian — and *a fortiori*, of a Religious — is necessarily shaped by the action of the Holy Spirit living in it, it follows that his personal spiritual formation is actually nothing but his habitual capacity to freely respond to the action of the Holy Spirit within him.

This is the thought of our Special General Chapter. “(The young Salesian’s) formation,” it says, “must be centered on the person and mystery of Christ, and founded on the mystery of the Church and a living experience of faith. It must be carried out in a spirit of prayer and nourished at the genuine sources of Christian spirituality”.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Acts of SGC*, 664.

### *Training one's conscience*

Fr. Ceria tells us that this was Don Bosco's constant concern: "The Christian training or shaping of the consciences of the young has been the goal of Christian educators in all ages: Don Bosco undertook this task at a moment in history when the need was most urgent".<sup>13</sup>

Our "moment in history" demands just as urgently that we accomplish this same task. We only need to look about us to see that in this secularized world of ours, in which our boys have to live and work, only those of them will survive, religiously speaking, who possess a mature well-trained conscience. There was a time when the mere walls of our schools and the majesty of the law were sufficient protection for them; but this no longer holds true today, when even the most cherished and sacred religious norms seem to have been toppled.

In the Foreword to the new Constitutions, I called your attention to the fact that the "style in which they come to you is something so new in tone and form that some may get the impression that there has been a weakening in the norms themselves". But "this is not the case", I said. "The new Constitutions are offered, with the awareness of today's attitudes, to adult persons who, having made a generous choice, with full knowledge of doing something hard, need to recall to mind again and again those things they must be forever renewing, rather than to hear imperatives... They need instead to be reminded of the grand, enthralling pledges they have made to Christ the Lord in whose footsteps their consecration bids them follow".<sup>14</sup>

A similar thought is found in the Constitutions of other Religious Families and in the "*Ration Formationis*" for seminaries. "The entire substance of the *Ratio*," says the Italian Episcopal

<sup>13</sup> E. Ceria, *Don Bosco con Dio*, p. 224.

<sup>14</sup> Foreword to the Const., the Rector Major to the Salesians, p. 6.

Conference in its introduction, "addresses itself to one's conscience. The *Ratio* stimulates reflection, calls for personal and community effort, stands on one's sense of responsibility, guides towards personal maturity — that maturity which cannot be imposed from without, but must proceed from one's inner, free, and deliberate response to the action of the Spirit".<sup>15</sup>

But there is no need for me to elaborate further what is certainly evident to all of us. Are not the crises of many priests, clerics and Coadjutor Brothers in reality crises of stunted or immature consciences? "For from the inside, from a man's heart", said Jesus Christ, "come the evil ideas... ".<sup>16</sup>

### **Those who take the leading part in spiritual formation**

At this point a question could be asked: In our Salesian praxis who are the people who take the leading part in spiritual formation?

The reply is: In the first place, the individual in formation — not alone, but with the formative community, and in particular, the Director, the Confessor and the Spiritual Counsellor (or Director).

#### *a) First and foremost, the individual in formation*

The concept of a young confrere to be molded like clay according to an ideal and abstract Salesian model is no longer operable, if it ever was in our true Salesian education system.

Today, the Constitutions speak of a "more personal and more responsible" formation... "Each member in training is invited to assume gradually the responsibility for his own formation and

<sup>15</sup> Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, *La preparazione al sacerdozio ministeriale - orientamenti e norme*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>16</sup> Mk., 7: 20.

to give due value to the various phases of his life";<sup>17</sup> to develop "his own personal gifts" and "thus give to the Society a more effective service".<sup>18</sup> Therefore, those in formation are, under God and with the help of their Superiors, first and foremost responsible for their own formation. This is nothing but the teaching of the Church, which, under certain conditions, considers each Christian personally responsible for his own eternal destiny.

This, of course, does not mean that the young confreres in training should be abandoned to their own devices, but that they should be assisted in their gradual achievement of responsibility, by which they become able to give God, the others and themselves a personal, adequate, evangelical and Salesian response. Needless to say, this responsibility is not a once-and-for-all achievement, but a continuous process due to last one's lifetime.

b) *The Formative Community*

The local and provincial communities, as everybody knows, play very important roles in the training of the confreres. Our Constitutions tell us that "all these communities should be conspicuous for their Salesian spirit".<sup>19</sup> God trains and educates us *in and through* such communities, which are the embodiment of Christ's mysterious presence. "The success or failure of the renewal of formation", underscores our Special General Chapter, "depends very much on the capacity of those immediately in charge of formation. Hence confreres chosen to hold a formative role in the Congregation ought to be keenly aware of the extent to which the formation of the students depends on their way of thinking and acting".<sup>20</sup> Their main effort and concern should be

<sup>17</sup> *Const.*, 105.

<sup>18</sup> *Const.*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> *Const.*, 105.

<sup>20</sup> *Acts of SGC*, 672.

directed both to the individuals in formation and to a “suitable environment”, whose creation and maintenance is a great part of the formative success in our Salesian pedagogical praxis.

In some houses serious difficulties with regard to the formation of such a “suitable environment” have been experienced by both those in charge of formation and those in formation. The question to be considered would, then, seem to be how to harmonize the values of the individual with those of the Community, even though they at times might seem irreconciliable.

### *Community or individual?*

To set up this problem in contrasting and exclusive terms is to misstate the case, as Card. Garrone, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, told the participants at the Salesian Priestly Formation Workshop in July 1975 at the Generalate (cfr. Acts of the Superior Council, No. 280, October-December 1975, p. 12).

I consider it most appropriate to report here, at some length, what he said on that occasion.

“In the formation of priests”, he said, “when ‘personalization’ is stressed, inevitably the rapport with the community is brought under closer scrutiny and at times, sadly, called into question. The Church, however, looks upon true priestly formation as a formation to be given and received within a community, whatever its form or dimension may be.

In the aftermath of Vatican II, as we tried to personalize formation, we at times pushed aside the community. In the seminaries where this happened, that is, where the community ‘got the ax’, the individuals flew in all directions like chips: they began by leaving the community buildings, and ended by leaving the community itself. As everybody can see, today there is no longer any community life in many seminaries. The young men live in groups of two or three, here and there, anywhere they like, like students enrolled in a secular institution. And so, under the

pretext of total personal freedom and responsibility, community living was done away with".

*No real conflict between individuals and community*

"The conflict between a personalized formation and community living", continued Cardinal Garrone, "is merely seeming, is unreal. Anyone who would insist on seeing a necessary conflict between the two, would only prove that he has lost sight of the real meaning of personhood, personalization, or personal aspects of formation. A community — this needs to be stated very strongly — does not compete with persons, does not militate against them: rather, it complements them.

Certainly, whenever community has been sacrificed to the individuals, this has been done because there has been a confusion about the respective functions of person and community in the formative process. Community provides the individual with the suitable environment or atmosphere for his complete formation.

Whenever individuals get together to pursue a common goal, a certain environment is formed where common ideals, shared beliefs and joint efforts have a discernable influence on the development of the individuals themselves as well as the community. Understanding the reasons for, and value of, the environment as a formative tool is one of the first steps to be taken by everyone in charge of, and in the process of, formation. Once the community is understood as the proper formative environment of the individuals, then it becomes the place where true personhood blooms and matures, and thus avoids the pitfalls of selfish, anti-social behavior, and other forms of stunted personal growth.

Evidently the formation of a suitable environment should be the concern and task of every one who is involved in formation. Everyone who works for the establishment of such environment will surely arrive at a deeper understanding of the value of community living as a complementary and indispensable element of

personal growth". Thus far Cardinal Garrone. There is no room for doubting that his words reflect the thinking and feeling of the Church on the matter.<sup>21</sup>

c) *The Director, the Confessor, and the Spiritual Advisor*

Among those directly in charge of formation the Director, the Confessor and the authorized and capable Spiritual Advisor (or Counselor) play a unique role. We shall now consider their role.

The importance of an able spiritual guide, be he a confessor or not, in helping a young confrere shape his spiritual life could hardly be exaggerated. He carries to a more intimate degree the formative work exercised by the other persons in charge of formation. He shares and combines the roles of evangelizer, prophet, teacher and shepherd. He is an intimate and skillful coworker with the Holy Spirit in the building up of the kingdom of God within men.

The Church entrusts him with the most delicate and difficult task, which is the training of young religious and/or future priests in direct and intimate collaboration with them, and the evaluating of their spiritual maturity and suitability for the life they intend to embrace.

## 2. THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

There are still some Salesians today who do not realize the importance of spiritual direction. The Workshops on the Studentates mentioned above brought out the fact that certain young confreres show a lack of interest in, or even a positive aversion to, it. And all this perhaps in the name of the modern surrogates

<sup>21</sup> Card. Garrone, *Discorso ai Formatori salesiani*. Delivered at the Priestly Salesian Formation Workshop at Salesianum, July 6-19, 1975. Unpublished.

of direction, such as self-guidance, group guidance, "soul-baring" sessions, revision of life, etc., which, as their proponents contend, lead the individual away from the self-absorption fostered by spiritual direction, towards self-donation and concern for others.

Such attacks on spiritual direction are, in reality, attacks rather on its abuses and distortions than on spiritual direction itself, and should serve as an indirect call to its correct use.

### *New forms of spiritual relationship*

At a time when the psychological understanding of man is making steady progress and reaching new depths, we should naturally expect and demand of ourselves improved personal relationships.

Confession and spiritual guidance are things that belong to the realm of Faith and to the field of human communications. The improved understanding of man's psychological make up should be used to improve also their techniques and the very approach to them.

The fundamental attitude in such relationships must, of course, be one of deep Faith in a joint search for the will of God. "When fraternal gatherings are used in a common effort to discover God's will", the Special General Chapter tells us, "they favour charity, make the apostolate more fruitful and bring spiritual joy to the common life".<sup>22</sup>

Where spiritual direction is missing due to human failure or limitations on the part of those who should supply it, the group could supply it in some way, if the group is spiritually fervent and evangelically-minded.

At the same time should be remembered what the Special General Chapter adds in the same context: "Psychology, experience with souls, and the constant practice of the Church all teach

<sup>22</sup> *Acts of SGC*, 678.

that they can help... spiritual direction".<sup>23</sup> But no group, no community could dispense its members from their duty to freely to freely seek spiritual direction according to their own consciences.

*Spiritual direction is, however, is irreplaceable*

More important than the considerations adduced against spiritual direction, are those which justify it on its intrinsic merits, in the eyes of the Church and of the Congregation. Viewed from any one of these three viewpoints, spiritual direction, whether it is sought from one's confessor or director or counselor, whether it is given according to one method or another, clearly is an irreplaceable factor of personal spiritual formation, especially during the years of initial training.

**a) Spiritual direction is a human need**

“Direction” in its general meaning of “guidance, assistance given by the elders to the youngsters to help them mature” is a natural, universal fact. No one is born physically adult; likewise, no one is born spiritually mature. Virtue is acquired at the school of people mature in virtue.

This is also true of a Christian and of a religious. In a Christian’s life, growth in grace should be a gradual advancement towards his fulfillment of God’s plan; it should be a response, ever more conscious and generous, to God’s call to becoming more “like his Son” in everything he does.<sup>24</sup> But in practice it does not work that way, on account of the sluggishness and weakness of man’s nature particularly in spiritual things. As

<sup>23</sup> ib.

<sup>24</sup> Rom., 8: 29.

our experience tells us, we, left to ourselves, do with great difficulty, if at all, what we ought to do. We need help.

Surely help is not lacking, both from the Church and the religious community. Actually, until a certain development has been reached, help is never quite enough. A reliable guide is needed — one with the ability, born of long experience, to lead us through tests and trials, to assist us when weighty decisions have to be taken.

Such a guide, such a friend is, in the words of Father Albera, "indispensable" to all of us.<sup>25</sup> Much more so to the young and inexperienced, we may add.

I was always struck by the words of Payot — an unbeliever, and a good friend of the young — in support of spiritual direction in the Church. "It is a human need," he wrote. "If only we would realize the importance of a word of encouragement, of a piece of advice, even of a friendly rebuke when a young man is at the difficult age of twenty! If only the state schools and universities with all their highmindedness and great knowledge would take from the Catholic Church some of the knowledge about man's heart that she has acquired through centuries of experience in the confessional! Youth would, then be benefited without a shadow of doubt. Nothing could take the place of the person-to-person contact of a sensible and sensitive guide".<sup>26</sup>

### b) Spiritual direction is a constant praxis in the Church

Spiritual direction is part of the experience of Christian life. From Ananias who approved Paul's vocation, through the Desert Fathers, the Masters of medieval episcopal schools, the Masters of Novices in Religious Institutes and Spiritual Directors in

<sup>25</sup> P. Albera, *Lettere circolari*, 456.

<sup>26</sup> Payot, *L'educazione della volontà* (*Training of the Will*), 316f.

seminaries, down to our our days, the praxis of spiritual direction has always been present in the Church. In general, it could be said that there has hardly been any Christian life, and certainly not the more committed Christian life as that lived by Religious men and priests, without spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction is today a thriving praxis in the Lay Institutes and Religious Families where spiritual renewal is operative. It occupies a noteworthy part of the pronouncements of the Popes of this century — Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI.

“Without this prudent guide of one’s conscience”, wrote Pius XII, “it is ordinarily very difficult for one to follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit”<sup>27</sup> Vatican II declared that seminarians should receive spiritual formation “especially with the help of the spiritual director”<sup>28</sup>. The same Council requires that the seminarians “receive careful instruction in the art of guiding souls, so that they can lead all sons of the Church, before everything else, to a Christian life which is fully conscious and apostolic”<sup>29</sup>. It also recommends spiritual direction to the priests: “They should... highly esteem spiritual direction”,<sup>30</sup> and to the religious.<sup>31</sup>

The “*Ratio Fundamentalis*” prepared with the cooperation he shall humbly and trustingly open his conscience, in order that point: “Let every one have his own spiritual director, to whom he shall humbly and trustingly open his conscience, in order that he may be more surely guided on the way of the Lord” (Number 55).

These texts prove a consoling fact, that is, that the Church has a motherly concern for her children and strives, through

<sup>27</sup> *Menti nostrae*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> *Optatam totius*, 8 (Abbott, p. 445).

<sup>29</sup> *ib.*, 19 (Abbott, p. 454).

<sup>30</sup> *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 18 (Abbott, p. 570).

<sup>31</sup> *Perfectae caritatis*, 4 (Abbott, p. 469-70).

her older children, to assist the younger ones in their gradual growth in Christ.

Hence also the serious danger faced by the seminarian or the young religious who refuses the guidance offered by the Church or seeks guidance from sources not approved by the Church.

**c) Spiritual Direction is a fundamental characteristic of Don Bosco**

Don Bosco's life was a constant training of the consciences of his boys to help them become good citizens for the earthly city and good Christians for the heavenly city. At the very center of his pedagogical praxis and system he placed, as we all know, the frequent use of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. Leaving the latter sacrament aside, we shall turn our consideration to Confession, which Don Bosco, as again we all know, used to link ordinarily, but not necessarily with spiritual direction.

Here a question needs to be asked: Why should a son of Don Bosco, living in a house of Don Bosco and doing the work of Don Bosco, give in his own turn so much importance to confession and spiritual direction in his own life and in his pastoral work?

The obvious reply is that Don Bosco's own spiritual life was rooted in the practice of confession and spiritual direction, the educational milieu at Valdocco was to a large extent shaped by them, and the pedagogical system of Don Bosco was, again to a large extent, founded on them.

*Don Bosco sought spiritual guidance*

"From his earliest age Don Bosco became strongly attached to confession", Fr. Ceria writes in *Don Bosco con Dio*, "and

nothing in later life could weaken his attachment to it. In fact he used to frequent it most willingly, even when his mother could not take him to Church... When he was a student in Chieri and completely on his own, he soon sought out a regular confessor... As a seminarian, he distinguished himself from the very beginning for his faithfulness to weekly confession. Later, as a priest in Turin, he used to make his confession every week".<sup>32</sup>

In his "*Memoirs of the Oratory*" Don Bosco spoke with tender gratitude of his spiritual directors, especially of St. Joseph Cafasso, as the "great friends and fathers" of his soul.

Recalling his first encounter with Fr. Calosso, he wrote: "I soon placed myself in the hands of Fr. Calosso, who only recently had come to that chaplaincy. I told him everything about myself: my conversations, my thoughts, my deeds were promptly laid bare to him. He was well pleased with that, because he thus felt able to guide me in everything. I then began to realize the value of having a faithful friend as a steady guide in my life, whereas up to that time I had had none".<sup>33</sup>

In his heartfelt tribute to his great friend and benefactor, St. Joseph Cafasso, Don Bosco wrote: "Father Cafasso, who for six years was my advisor, was also my spiritual director; and if I have done anything good, I owe it to this worthy priest, in whose hands I placed my every decision, my every pursuit, my every activity".<sup>34</sup>

Although he was endowed with uncommon talents and charisms, Don Bosco never dared to rely exclusively on his own devices: he wanted to be sure of walking on God's paths by consulting his confessor-directors. We recall that it was on the advice of an enlightened priest that he abandoned the idea

<sup>32</sup> E. Ceria, *Don Bosco con Dio*, 173.

<sup>33</sup> *Memorie dell'Oratorio*, 36.

<sup>34</sup> *ib.*, 123.

of becoming a Franciscan;<sup>35</sup> and it was on the advice of Fr. Cafasso that he pursued his priestly studies<sup>36</sup> and became the apostle of abandoned youth.<sup>37</sup>

Such an intense love for confession and direction was no doubt a sign of his humility, wisdom, and holiness.

*Don Bosco created a lively spiritual climate*

Don Bosco's personal experience concerning confession and direction was, of course, reflected in his oral and written teachings, in his entire pedagogical activity and in particular in the formation of an intensely spiritual atmosphere in Valdocco.

"Anyone visiting the Oratory and the various houses conducted by Don Bosco and his priests," wrote Monsignor De Gaudenzi, bishop of Vigevano, "can quickly sense something divine in them, something that one can not easily sense elsewhere: it seems to me that in Don Bosco's houses one can truly breathe in the sweet odor of Christ".<sup>38</sup>

There was a deep feeling of joy and happiness among Don Bosco's boys. In the Life of St. Dominic Savio we find this surprising statement: "*Il Savio godeva di se medesimo*, which could approximately be translated as: "Savio was supremely happy about himself". The saintly youth was happy for several reasons, and one of them was his reliance on confession and direction. "If I have any trouble," he used to say, "I go to talk to my confessor and he advises me in the name of God: Jesus Christ said in fact that the voice of the confessor is for us like the voice of God".<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *ib.*, 80.

<sup>36</sup> *ib.*, 113.

<sup>37</sup> *ib.*, 132 f.

<sup>38</sup> E. Ceria, *Don Bosco con Dio*, 232.

<sup>39</sup> Fr. John Bosco, *Life of St. Dominic Savio*, ch. 2.

The Oratory was a family with strong cohesion and cooperation among boys and confreres with Don Bosco at the head. "The spiritual life of the Oratory," wrote Fr. Ceria, "was alive with charming spontaneity. It was nourished by community prayer, daily Mass, frequent confession and communion, the "good-night" talk, and periodic practices, such as frequent preaching, the monthly exercise for a happy death, and the mid-year retreat. It was boosted by religious feasts and holy days celebrated with great solemnity, and by the activities of four pious associations to which many boys belonged... But the most powerful influence was from Don Bosco himself, through his example, his word, his confessional. Don Boco's kindness irradiated in all direction".<sup>40</sup>

His kindness was that of a "man of God", a "father of souls". Above and beyond his juridical primacy as of the founder and superior of an institution, his was a primacy of spiritual fatherhood: "Always call me father", he used to tell all those who lived in his houses.<sup>41</sup>

*Don Bosco was a spiritual father to his boys*

"Go therefore in the name of the Lord", Don Bosco wrote to Fr. Perrot, the young and newly appointed director of Navarre (France), "go as a friend, a brother and a father. Let your authority be charity — a charity that strives to do good to all and evil to none".<sup>42</sup>

Don Bosco's friendliness, brotherliness, fatherliness found its sublime expression in the exercise of confession and direction, where he could really communicate to his boys something of God's tender and loving kindness.

"The tradition of fatherliness in a Salesian Director", wrote

<sup>40</sup> E. Ceria, *Don Bosco con Dio*, 232.

<sup>41</sup> MB 17: 175.

<sup>42</sup> E. Ceria, *Epistolario di S. Giovanni Bosco*, 3: 360.

Fr. Rinaldi, was given to us by Don Bosco, who viewed it as something closely bound up with the spiritual regeneration achieved through the exercise of the divine power to forgive sins".<sup>43</sup>

According to Fr. Rinaldi, Don Bosco's fatherliness was a priestly fatherliness expressing itself in sacramental forgiveness and guidance and expanding in an environment of warm friendliness, and this was something so characteristic of the Salesian Director that he believed that it should be preserved at all costs. "How wonderful it would be", he wrote, "if our directors, while avoiding hearing the confessions of their immediate subjects, regularly heard the confessions of the boys in our oratories and clubs and, as far as possible, also in our neighboring houses, and would thus revive our Founder's sublimely fatherly tradition of attracting souls with exquisite kindness!".<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps when our boys and young confreres seem to be looking for something special in our communities, it could be that they are looking precisely for this "fatherly tradition".

### **Confession and direction in Don Bosco's educational system**

Let us take a closer look at confession and direction in Don Bosco's system. Using his own words, confession and direction are the "column", the "base", the "foundation" and the "support" of his educational system.

"There are people who think of Don Bosco always in terms of the funny and lovable juggler of Becchi", writes Father Braido in his book "*Don Bosco*". "The 'leader of the little rascals of Turin' was instead a profound, decisive and exacting educator, who went about his job with a sense responsibility and interiority:

<sup>43</sup> *Acts of the XII General Chapter* (1931), 939.

<sup>44</sup> *ib.*

until his boys' consciences were touched and reshaped in their depths, all the rest was wasteful choreography, noisy orchestration and an empty show of quantity without quality".<sup>45</sup>

This agrees with Fr. Caviglia's assessment of the same fact. "The efficacy of Don Bosco's educational work was right here", he wrote. "Don Bosco can never be understood as an educator or trainer of saints, unless he is seen as a confessor of his boys. In essence, his direction went straight to the boys' souls, and his educational work was done through confession".<sup>46</sup>

In Don Bosco's system confession plays an essential role in molding one's conscience both as a sacrament and a privileged instrument of spiritual direction.

### *Confession as a sacrament*

For Don Bosco confession was, obviously, first and foremost the sacrament of reconciliation of the sinner with God, with the Church, and with the brethren, who "because of sin have always suffered some harm".<sup>47</sup>

As a believer in sin and hell, Don Bosco was convinced that the more seriously man takes the commandments of God and the teachings of Christ, the more conscious does he become of his own sinfulness and the more does he long for God's forgiveness. It was precisely this conviction that turned Don Bosco into a "martyr of confession", an apostle of forgiveness, an educator with the unmatched talent for inspiring his boys with a horror for sin and a yearning for friendship with Christ.

Confession is the privileged moment in Don Bosco's educational work, when the holy fear and love of God are instilled

<sup>45</sup> P. Braido, *Don Bosco*, 87.

<sup>46</sup> Don Bosco, *Opere e scritti editi e inediti*, vol. 4, Part I, p. 83.

<sup>47</sup> *Ordo Paenitentiae*, 5.

into one's soul. "All the pedagogical system and activity of Don Bosco", wrote Father Albera, "can be summed up in two words: love and fear of Good... Meditate as long as you want on the Preventive System, which is the *Magna Carta* of our Congregation, analyze it in its minutest details, in the context of reason, religion and loving kindness ("amorevolezza"), but at the end you will have to agree with me that it is all a matter of instilling the holy fear and love of God into the boys' hearts; I say, instilling, that is, rooting them so solidly that they can stay on and on, and withstand all kinds of trials...".<sup>48</sup>

### *Confession as opportunity for spiritual direction*

The ever increasing number of people who nowadays seek professional guidance with increasing frequency goes to prove that coming to grip with one's sense of guilt or other intimate problems with the assistance of a competent and trusted person is apparently the natural thing to do. It is in this plain fact that we can find one of the strongest reasons for extending confession into, or combining it with, spiritual direction. "This union of confession, absolution and guidance", as it has been recently remarked by the Swiss Catholic Bishops, "has a deep ecclesial relevance and dimension".<sup>49</sup>

"*Don Bosco dirigeva confessando*", that is, he was giving guidance through confession. For him sacramental confession was the normal means and way of imparting his brief, pointed, practical guidance to his penitents, boys and confreres alike. We cannot think of Don Bosco as confessor without thinking of him at one and the same time as spiritual guide. His insistence on keeping a steady confessor, on complete frankness in manifesting

<sup>48</sup> P. Albera, *Lettere circolari*, 342.

<sup>49</sup> Pastoral Letter, « *Penance and Confession* », 72.

sins and also other things, like problems, intimate difficulties, not required for the integrity of the sacramental confession, but extremely useful to the confessor in order to enable him to offer an enlightened guidance was clearly in view of his stressing the spiritual direction aspect of confession.

“Some people think”, said Don Bosco in a “good-night” in August 1864, “that to start a new life it is enough to open one’s heart to a spiritual director and make a general confession. That is fine, but it is not enough... Besides remedying the past, you must also provide for the future with firm resolutions... To make steady progress you must reveal your habitual failings, the occasions which usually lead you to sin, and your dominant evil inclinations. You must attentively and faithfully carry out the advice you are given; you must keep your heart open and fully trusting; you must manifest your needs, temptations and dangers as they rise, so that your director may guide you with a steady hand”.<sup>50</sup>

Don Bosco, who was at one and the same time a great psychologist and a great saint, excelled in the exercise of all the traditional roles of a confessor, i.e., those of judge, teacher, physician, guide and father. But if there was a role in which he was supremely outstanding, that was the role of guide and father. In his Life of Mickey Magone he wrote: “The confessor is a father, who longs to do his very best to help you and tries to keep all harm away from you”.<sup>51</sup>

### *Spiritual direction outside confession*

Don Bosco, as we have said, tied up confession with spiritual direction, but not to the point of making spiritual direction

<sup>50</sup> BM 7: 430-431 (Eng. Ed.).

<sup>51</sup> *Cenno Biografico*, 22.

inseparable from confession. Also outside the confessional he used to give guidance to his children, in his own unique style.

Under the category of spiritual direction fell his “*colloqui*” — unplanned, spontaneous, encounters and chats —, his “*parolina all'orecchio*” — a cheering word or a friendly piece of advice (a charism that every Salesian should revitalize!) —, his “*sguardi penetranti*” — maningful looks that reached into the depths of the boys’ hearts — his “*gesti e strette di mano*” — pats-on-the-shoulders and handshakes, more eloquent than words — and his “*bigliettini e letterine*” — little notes and miniletters which, in spite of his tight schedule, he would hastily jot down and forward to his boys to urge them to make peace with God, or to trust in the Lord, or to do some charitable or apostolic deed.

We should also recall that trust was such a pervasive element of the atmosphere in Valdocco that for many a youth it was altogether natural to extend confession into spiritual guidance. “Confidence in the spiritual director, the almost compelling need to open themseves to him”, remarked Father Caviglia, “was, we can say in all truth, the thing that all the boys going to confession to Don Bosco were doing; for so great was the trust that his sanctity inspired into his boys from their very first contact with him that it made no difference for any of them to speak to him about their most intimate matters in or out of the confessional”.<sup>52</sup>

Other saints and/or founders made use of more analytic and soul-searching methods of spiritual direction. The one used by Don Bosco was simplicity itself; and yet, if one tried it out or at least considered it at close range, he would have to admit that it was very demanding of both the counselor and the counselee. This was acknowledged by the writers of the article “Direction Spirituelle” in the highly esteemed “*Diction-*

<sup>52</sup> Don Bosco, *Opere e scritti editi e inediti*, vol. 4, part 1, p. 85.

*naire de Spiritualité*" who said of Don Bosco: "A man of action and intuition, Don Bosco wasted no time either giving long talks or writing long letters of spiritual direction. As director, he did his work in the confessional: few words, but so apropos! Those brief and relevant pieces of advice and exhortation were a sure remedy against any evil or trouble at hand. A similar form of spiritual direction was exercised in Turin by St. Joseph Cafasso and at Ars by St. John Mary Vienney".<sup>53</sup>

*The "colloquio" with the superior*

Up to this point I have said nothing about the "talk" (or manifestation or "rendiconto") with the superior. It is not the object of this letter, though on a wider perspective it could not be considered entirely foreign. But a few remarks or considerations could be in order here.

Until 1874, in the spiritual climate of Valdocco, as we have seen, the boys who had more confidence in Don Bosco made little or no distinction between what they told him in confession and out of it. Even the encounters which were not strictly prompted by reason of confession and guidance, such as those with regard to health or working conditions, the running of the house, etc., which intimately concerned Don Bosco as the head of the family, were characterized by family spirit, cordial and loving confidence. To Don Bosco his children revealed everything.

This explains why, when in 1858 he for the first time drew up the article on the "rendiconto" with the superior, he did it in terms that would encompass a total manifestation of the confrere's both exterior and interior life: "Let everyone have full confidence in his superior", he wrote, "and harbor no secrets

<sup>53</sup> *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, III, col. 1137.

from him, fully opening his heart to him whenever he should be asked to do so or he himself felt it necessary".<sup>54</sup>

This article remained in effect in our Congregation until 1874. When the Regulations were finally approved, it was, however, radically changed in favor of liberty of conscience. The manifestation with the Superior would, thereafter, deal only with external matters. Don Bosco would have preferred that the Church would have permitted him to continue as before, since his had been a successful pastoral experience, but he humbly complied with the new rule when it came from Rome. After all, he was happy with the decision, and after that he made a clearcut distinction between confession, which was reserved to the revelation of sins and more intimate matters, and the "talk" with the superior, which was concerned with external matters.

He required from his directors to observe the distinction or separation: "*Nei rendiconti si badi a non entrare in cose di coscienza. Queste devono essere al tutto separate.* In the rendicontos let superior take heed not to enter into matters of conscience. These are to be kept entirely separate from the rest".<sup>55</sup>

In the final analysis nothing in the previous method of spiritual direction was being destroyed or lost, because the person whom the confreres made their confession and, separately, their rendicontos to, was one and the same person, i.e. the director.

This manifestation, as it was practiced in the early days of the Oratory of Valdocco, marks a unique and perhaps irreproducible experience in the spiritual history of our Congregation; but the directors of today will have to do their very best to recapture its original purpose and spirit, while making the adaptations dictated by the changed historical context.

<sup>54</sup> BM 5: 640 (Eng. Ed.).

<sup>55</sup> MB 11: 354.

*The Directors in our times*

We should not forget that it was exactly because of his overriding spiritual role that the Salesian director in the earliest days of the Congregation was highly esteemed and dearly loved. He was somehow surrounded with an aura of heartfelt respect.

Fr. Lemoyne wrote a touching and revealing page on this position of esteem enjoyed by the earliest Salesian directors. After reporting the "Confidential Memos" given by Don Bosco to Fr. Rua who had been appointed first director at Mirabello, he said: "The regulations... were to be interpreted in the spirit of the Oratory traditions, which laid the frequent reception of the sacraments as the foundation of education. To keep this principle in its primary position of honor, Don Bosco established that the superior, as spiritual director, should be first in dignity and authority. He was to preach, teach theology, and give the 'Good Night'. He was also the ordinary confessor of the community and, as such, was to be punctual in fulfilling his duty every morning during Mass, and on the eve of a feast or at the Exercise for a Happy Death. Briefly, he had to emulate don Bosco's zeal for the welfare of souls.

The director's duties were fatherly and meant to win the boys' hearts and trust. For no reason at all was he ever to perform even the least unpleasant task. Such measures were reserved to the other superiors.

The prefect attended to the administration and general discipline of the entire school, handling the mail and dismissing pupils from the school. To free the director from unpleasant confrontations with parents, the prefect's office was located near the main entrance.

The catechist was responsible for the boys' moral conduct and their behavior in church. The dormitories and infirmary were under his supervision. All scholastic matters, weekly walks, and school plays were the competence of the prefect of studies.

These three superiors met weekly with other faculty members to give conduct marks to the pupils. The director was never to take part in these meetings. All the boys knew this, because he stayed with them during such sessions.

This system seemed excellent, as proven by its remarkable results — an exceptional, undeniable trust in the director, a gratifying and frequent reception of the sacraments, and numerous religious and priestly vocations".<sup>56</sup>

In concluding his account, Fr. Lemoyne (who wrote in 1908) said: "After Don Bosco's death, however, an element which had proved necessary for a firm basis of the Salesian Society was judged no longer opportune by the Holy See. Since the Holy Father's word is Christ's word, his decree was obeyed".<sup>57</sup>

### 3. FROM THE EARLY DAYS TO THE PRESENT

Things changed, as we know, thirty years later, when the Holy See issued a decree forbidding the directors of the Salesian houses to confess their subjects. Needless to say, the decree did not scuttle the central position of either confession or spiritual direction in Don Bosco's educational system.

By defending freedom of conscience, the Church's decree was defending something extremely valuable also for the sons of Don Bosco, inasmuch as it was liberating from a certain uneasiness many confreres who had become edgy about making their confession to their Directors, and it was giving confession a new status as a religious practice on its own.

Such reasoning is selfevident today, but it was not at that time. We must admit that the decree of the Holy See took

<sup>56</sup> BM 7: 314-15 (Eng. Ed.).

<sup>57</sup> *ib.*, 315.

our confreres by surprise — totally unprepared for the change. The decree had been issued with little regard, as Card. Rampolla remarked later, "to the special situation of the Salesians, according to which the directors, and with them the Rector Major, excercised above all the office of spiritual fathers".<sup>58</sup>

*A period of disorientation follows*

The heroic compliance of Fr. Rua and of the confreres with the decree is well known.<sup>59</sup> That does not mean, however, that the new disposition by the Holy See did not bring about, then, any painful disruption nor usher in a period of disorientation on such a delicate matter. Perhaps it might be argued by some that its sad consequences are in some way still felt by us today...

The ceasing of the directors to be the ordinary confessors in their houses brought about at least three serious consequences. First, the confreres, who had had no forewarning of the coming change, floundered around, not knowing whom they should get their spiritual direction from. Secondy, the directors began to feel increasingly tempted, even under the pressure of many other factors of external nature, to become less and less priests and more administrators, less and less the educators and shapers of the spiritual life of the confreres, and more and more the organizers of scholastic, social, managerial activities. Thirdly, the confessors became rather cautious about, and at times even fearful of, venturing into spiritual direction, and were often reduced to mere dispensers of absolution.

It would not be difficult for anyone to visualize the spiritual harm that such a situation was bound to cause and was actually causing in our Congregation.

<sup>58</sup> *Annali della Società Salesiana*, 3: 181.

<sup>59</sup> *ib.*, 180-181.

### *Need of going back to Don Bosco*

Anyone who reads the history of the Congregation is aware of how much the General Chapters and the Major Superiors have done to prevent a deterioration of the ideal of the Salesian director as conceived by Don Bosco, and to bring it back to its original functions of educator, spiritual guide and father of the community.

In the General Chapter of 1910 Fr. Philip Rinaldi stated that the time had come to redefine the position of the directors in the houses after the 1901 decree on confession. "We must go back", he said, "to the spirit and the concept of Don Bosco, as expressed in the 'Confidential Memos' to the Director,<sup>60</sup> and in the Regulations. Let a director be at all times a Salesian director. Except with regard to the ministry of confession, nothing else about his office and role has changed. Fr. Bertello deplored that some directors were believing that they, along with confession, had to abandon also the spiritual care of their communities and begin to get involved in external and temporal affairs. 'We hope', he stated, 'that this was but a temporary drift. We must return to Don Bosco's ideal described in the Regulations'. It is therefore essential for the preservation of our Society", concluded Fr. Albera, "that the director's role remain faithful to Don Bosco's ideal; otherwise, we will change our education and formation method, and we will not be Salesians any longer".<sup>61</sup>

Similar thoughts recur in other writings of Fr. Rinaldi, and in those of Fathers Ricaldone and Ziggotti.

I myself have felt the grave obligation to insist on this point in many meetings of provincials and directors, and will never tire of insisting on it.

<sup>60</sup> *ib.*, 49-53.

<sup>61</sup> *ib.*, 4: 8-9.

**Let the director be once again a father to the confreres!**

The director must be a Salesian director. This means that he must always have the characteristics, the role and the functions which Don Bosco, the archetype and exemplar of all directors, wanted him to have. He must therefore put aside all other functions, such as being an organizer, or a disciplinarian or an administrator, and must delegate them to others, as Don Bosco did with Fr. Rua; on the contrary, he must recover his original and essential function, which is that of being “the centre and animator of the community”.<sup>62</sup>

Brother among brothers, member of the community to which he presides in charity he is in the ideal position to leaven, in a spiritual manner, his community. His very “service of authority”, which he exercises as a special sign and sacrament of Christ, is ordained to his task of spiritually vivifying his confreres. In other words, as article 35 of our new Constitution says, the role of the director is to guide his community in its apostolic task, to direct it spiritually, and to orient its mission.

Certainly, we are not among those who bemoan the passing away of the old director’s figure and long for its return out of sheer nostalgia for the good old days. We realize that evolution is a vital, unstoppable process, and also the figure of the director evolves with time. But we believe that if this natural evolution should lead to a loss of the essential characteristic of the director as the spiritual animator of his community, that would be a regression rather than an advance. We would deform a vital model left us by Don Bosco, and thus undermine and destroy his entire project.

<sup>62</sup> *Acts of SGC*, 502.

*No more place or time for hesitation*

After much doubting, hesitating and dilly-dallying on the matter of spiritual direction in the past years, it is now high time that we make a serious effort to carry out what the last two General Chapters set down on this topic clearly, forcefully. Together let's read a portion of paragraph 678 of the Special General Chapter on spiritual guidance.

"Recognizing the importance of spiritual direction during formation, and to facilitate its practice and make it ever more efficacious and profitable, the Special General Chapter reminds all that:

*a) it is essential to distinguish between the two sections of spiritual guidance: communal and personal (i.e. of the conscience);*

*b) in a community with the task of formation the superior is in charge of the spiritual direction of all the members of the community. He does this through conferences, 'good nights', public and private exhortations, talks, and the exercise of paternal authority.*

Over and above this — continues the Special General Chapter paragraph — the superior is also the 'magister spiritus' of the young confreres in formation; in other words, his is the ultimate responsibility for the work of formation in the community and in the individual members;

*c) on the personal level, the Salesian in formation have the right to choose their own director of conscience. In accordance with the mind of the Church and following Salesian tradition and the example of Don Bosco, the superior of the community is also the spiritual director proposed to, but not imposed on, each confrere. It is obvious that a serious preparation is indispensable for such an important mission; nevertheless the*

young confreres in formation may also make use of confessors and other capable confreres".<sup>63</sup>

As you can see, our Special General Chapter stresses the essential, i.e. the vital and continuous contact of the confrere with his spiritual director, and leaves the choice of such a guide to the individual confrere; but, at the same time, it reminds him that choosing the director of the community as his spiritual guide reflects the "lively desire" of the Church and of Don Bosco.

### A practical advice of Fr. Caviglia

Talking to a group of theology students in his typically straightforward and somewhat piquant style, Fr. Caviglia once gave this piece of advice: "We should consider confession also as a means of spiritual direction. True, there is the rendiconto, which is pretty well cared for during the years of clerical formation, but later in the houses you'll find directors with different ideas in their brains. Your only remedy then will be the confession: circumstances will, unfortunately, require so.

In such cases, in the first place, let us consider the confessor not just like any other priest hurriedly shoving an absolution on a dying man, but like a trusted friend, in whose hands we put our souls unreservedly, in order that they may guide them, lead them on, educate them. But if we look on our confessor as a laundryman, we won't get any spiritual direction. And yet, all too often isn't this what happens in practice?

Let's keep in mind that Don Bosco wanted us to have a regular confessor exactly in view of spiritual direction. Therefore when you come into a new house, look at your new confessor rightaway from this point of view: first make a general confession

<sup>63</sup> ib., 678.

to him or have a face-to-face talk with him, and so you will find a guide for yourself. Don Bosco used to insist on weekly confession and on the monthly-review type of confession exactly in view of guidance.

No less essential to direction is submission, obedience to one's confessor. It is up to you to give him authority, or else you'll get nothing out of him. I consider myself lucky that during my youth the confessor was also the director of the house. The Holy Church forbade this combination for good practical reasons, but the sad thing now is that many Salesians do not give confessor the authority he ought to have to guide them.

So it is up to you to allow him to guide you — *e non fare il testone*, and don't act like a pig-headed fool! Only if you do as he tells you, will your confession become an enlightenment, a source of correction and formation in the true spirit of Don Bosco, who made it the pivoting point of his whole educational system.

All this is said for the Salesian who for some reason or other does not feel like making a full disclosure of his conscience to the director in the rendiconto. But the one who feels like doing this, he surely is going back to the integral application of Don Bosco's system, because he has but one guide, one father, one master, even though, on account of the decision of the Church, he is no longer his judge in the tribunal of penance".<sup>6</sup>

Thus far Father Caviglia. It is the same policy followed by Fr. Albera during his tenure as Rector Major. In one of his Circular Letters he wrote: "He who has an enlightened and inspired confidence in his superior and wishes to reveal to him the most intimate things of his soul, may do so, and will derive inestimable benefit from it. He, instead, who prefers to limit his rendiconto to external things, must remember that

<sup>6</sup> *Conferenze sullo spirito salesiano* (*Conferences on Salesian Spirit*), 80-81 (duplicated).

spiritual direction is indispensable even if he is a priest, and let him seek it from one who inspires him with greater confidence. Naturally, the confessor, who is not only a judge, but also a physician and teacher, friend and father, and knows our spiritual life better than anyone else, can become our guide on the road to religious perfection in and out of the sacrament of confession".<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. RENEWED SPIRITUAL GUIDES ARE NEEDED

Dear confreres, before concluding this already so lengthy a letter, allow me to address you some words of exhortation, in the first place to the Provincials and their Provincial Councils, and then to all the confreres.

Let us all place spiritual formation at the very top of the hierarchy of our values and projects. A great deal of scientific, technical and professional know-how could end in a catastrophe, unless it is all placed at the service of an enlightened and faithful religious life. We do not know whether it is in God's plan that the Salesians should increase and multiply in his Church; but one thing is sure — he wants them all to be spiritually grownup, to reach Christian and Salesian maturity. "God", said Don Bosco, "wants us all to be saints".<sup>66</sup>

#### Selecting those directly in charge of formation

Since the outcome of a formative community "hinges, to a very large extent, on wise regulations and on suitable teachers... and on their own manner of thinking and acting",<sup>67</sup> let every Provincial consider it his grave and sacred duty, as I said on

<sup>65</sup> P. Albera, *Lettere circolari*, 456-7.

<sup>66</sup> MB 13: 230.

<sup>67</sup> *Optatam totius*, 5 (Abbott, p. 442-443).

many occasions, to choose and place in immediate charge of formation only the confreres who have given clear proof of ability, preparedness and understanding of Salesian spirit.

At the recent "European Symposium on Spiritual Retreats" I remarked that in some provinces there has been something like a stampede towards degrees in academic, scientific, technical fields, while at the same time a dearth of professionals in spirituality has been felt, which dearth I unhesitatingly labeled acute. The Provincials must see to it that there is shift in emphasis from the acquisition of degrees in non-religious fields to the acquisition of degrees in the religious formation field. We need well-trained spiritual men to satisfy the hunger for spiritual things that so many Salesians feel and suffer from today. This is an urgent matter, and it is bound to get worse, unless we take immediate steps. We should not allow ourselves to become engrossed in immediate yet secondary needs to the point of neglecting the essential and primary one, which is the spiritual formation of our confreres.

To your and my comfort I must say that at the "Continental Meeting" of the Latin-American and Far-Eastern Provincials in April 1975 in Rome important decisions were taken on this matter, as it was reported in the July-September 1975 issue of the Acts of the Superior Council.

*Let those in charge of training have the proper qualifications*

In choosing the personnel in charge of formation, as the Special General Chapter reminds us, let much value be placed on their possession of human and social qualities. If they are to help our young confreres mature, they in the first place must be humanly mature: they must possess "a balanced character, self-control, an open mind, sincerity, optimism, serenity", ap-

proachability and human warmth, without which no influence could be had on people today.<sup>68</sup>

From a director Don Bosco demanded self-control ("*nulla ti turbi*, let nothing upset you!"), suffering patience ("let charity and patience accompany you constantly in governing your confreres!"), balance and moderation ("listen to both sides of the story, try to ascertain the facts before taking a decision"), politeness ("let courtesy be a special trait of a director"), winsome affability ("let a director be very affable!"), ability to dispel mistrust, to calm contention and to soothe rancor, etc.

Let even more value be placed on the possession of spiritual qualities. Director and confessor must have not merely a bookish knowledge of spiritual life, but an experiential knowledge. To become enlightened guides, they need to have learned, like Moses, to speak to God face to face, "as a man speaks to his friend".<sup>69</sup> There are men who have little or no need to speak; their very presence conveys their message loud and clear. Don Bosco was one such man. Each of us may treasure the memory of a Salesian who had a great impact on his formation. Perhaps that Salesian lacked superior education and knew very little of modern psychology. Perhaps we were even aware of his glaring shortcomings, and yet we liked him and loved him, and told ourselves in our hearts that we wanted to become like him. Such should, indeed, be the directors and the confessors that our young confreres have a right to expect during their training period.

But these men have to be prepared, to be trained, to be formed. "*Formiamo i formatori*, let us form those who are directly in charge of formation!" is my motto, and I never get tired of repeating it. Let us form them right, let us form them right now. Let us form them through a well-rounded education and

<sup>68</sup> *Acts of SGC*, 683-84.

<sup>69</sup> Ex. 33: 11.

the actual experience of prayer, community life, and so on. Let us form them with an updated understanding of spiritual life.

*Manner and content need to be renewed*

There was a time when formation was considered like a packaged commodity to be purchased once and for all and to be passed on to others with the same wrapping, and when universally accepted ascetical models and norms were the securest possession of the spiritual man. But this no longer holds today. More than in the past, we are now aware that the Gospel is, of course, changeless, but man whose responsibility and joy it is to apply it to his life, is in a state of perennial flux.

There are not a few directors and confessors today who suffer from a deep-seated uneasiness and almost a sense of personal rejection on the part of younger confreres, because these younger confreres do not go to them for guidance and confession. Could this be because the image of sanctity they project to them, and/or their mode of projecting it, are still pre-Vatican II and pre-Special General Chapter?

My dear confreres, we must all be convinced that the *aggiornamento* or renewal we have been talking about for years is not just talk: it is a fact that all of us have to reckon with, and this reckoning with reality needs to be done first and foremost in the field of formation.

As for the content of spiritual formation to be examined in depth and to be acquired with renewed vigor, I think that it was best pointed out by Fr. Caviglia in his study on St. Dominic Savio. It is: "Liberty of spirit and of action, respect for the liberty of Grace, sanctifying performance of one's duty, concentration on God, orientation towards Jesus in the Eucharist and towards Mary, mortification and self-denial; above all, trust in God, serenity, joy, cheerfulness, without apprehension or sullenness, but with a steady and confident gaze on heaven; all done

with love and out of love, both interiorly and exteriorly. This is not everything that Savio was, but this is what he had in common with those who were fashioning the spiritual atmosphere in which he became a saint".<sup>70</sup>

### **Three present-day needs of spiritual direction**

After updating it according to the theology of Vatican II and of the Special General Chapter, the content of spiritual direction must also be presented in an updated form, in a form keyed to modern needs. Here I would like to point out three such present-day needs.

#### *Spiritual direction needs to be a school for discernment*

Spiritual discernment is fortunately receiving the attention and credit in the contemporary Church which it had in the early Church.

Taking the lead from the certain fact of our Faith that salvation is a continuing event and that God is constantly at work in the heart of man and of history, communicating and manifesting himself incessantly, we come to the all-important practical question of how we can know God's action, will and presence. Well, we can know it through spiritual discernment. A beautiful definition of discernment can be found in the new *Ordo Paenitentiae*: it is the ultimate knowledge of God's working in the hearts of men — a gift of the Spirit and a fruit of charity.

Discernment does not come easily. It requires meditation, prayer asceticism. It takes time and patience. For the voice of

<sup>70</sup> Don Bosco, *Opere e scritti editi e inediti*, vol. 4, part 1, p. 85.

the Spirit is a gentle breath that reaches us through the unwieldy grossness of our “flesh” — our God-resistant self-seeking nature. Descernment is an invitation from above, which has to counter the ill will or indifference from within. Also for this reason, the assistance of a master of spirit to guide us on the road to the discernment of the will of God and of our own interior world, is a necessity for us.

For Don Bosco, discernment was absolutely necessary when it was a matter of choosing one's own state of life. Today, thanks also to progress made in in-depth psychology, subtle conscious and unconscious motivations which influence our decisions can be apprehended and appraised — with the help of one who is more mature at the school of discernment.

### *Spiritual direction needs to be a school for liberty*

Spiritual direction is all the more efficacious the more truly free is the environment in which it grows. “You were called to be free”, says St. Paul, “but do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires rule you. Instead, let love make you serve one another”.<sup>71</sup>

Contrary to what the word may seem to suggest, directing does not mean dominating or manipulating. It rather means accompanying helping someone to help himself and to decide for himself. It means assisting someone to come to grips with his own liberty and responsibility. It means aiding someone with a delicate touch to attune his life to the action of the Spirit. And this assistance is needed both at the beginning of one's spiritual journey as well as all along its duration.

<sup>71</sup> Gal., 5: 13.

### *Spiritual direction needs to be a school for conversion*

A spiritual director who aims at helping someone to get into intimate with Christ and his Church, also helps him to live in contact with a state of continuous conversion and ascesis. Moreover, he who begins to follow Christ in a more radical way, comes soon to learn the serious demands implied in the words of Christ: "If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget himself, carry his cross, and follow me".<sup>72</sup>

In the words of the Vatican Council, "especially with the help of the spiritual director", those who are being trained should "learn to live in familiar and constant companionship with the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, in the Holy Spirit"<sup>73</sup> and "as a result, even in matters which are lawful but not expedient" they should "be accustomed to make prompt renunciation and to imitate Christ crucified".<sup>74</sup>

### **The duty of secrecy**

I cannot close this letter without reminding directors, confessors, spiritual advisors of their most serious duty of secrecy concerning confidential matters. Say nothing, to anyone, ever — not even to the superiors — about such matters. The slightest imprudence here could irreparably compromise both confidentiality and formation.

I must also add that respect for confidentiality on the part of those in charge of formation places a heavier responsibility on those in formation. By this I mean that, should, for instance, a confessor or a spiritual director manifest — as he must in

<sup>72</sup> Mt., 16: 24.

<sup>73</sup> *Optatam totius*, 8 (Abbott, p. 445).

<sup>74</sup> *ib.*, 9 (Abbott, p. 446).

conscience — to a young confrere in formation some serious shortcomings or faults that would disqualify him from admission to vows or sacred orders, then the young confrere in question must likewise in conscience accept the verdict of his confessor or spiritual director. For the young confrere to act otherwise would be a deplorable betrayal of the best interests of his own and of the Congregation.

We have had many sad experiences in this regard. So let there be full openness from both the director and the directee, full respect of confidentiality from the former and full acceptance of his advice from the latter. It goes without saying that for a confessor the duty of confidentiality is all the more serious on account of the sacramental seal.

### **Conclusion: a serious examination of conscience**

In this letter I touched upon some facts and some problems of Salesian spiritual life. The facts need no discussion — they need our full awareness and acceptance. The problems need constant study and reflection, because they usually refer to variable conditions. From the above a solid, immutable fact emerges for all of us — confession and spiritual direction remain a central and irrenounceable reality of our Salesian way of life, two fundamental factors of personal Salesian spiritual formation.

There is one disturbing thought in my mind, that keeps recurring under the guise of several questions. I often catch myself asking, for instance: Why have so many confreres taken the vows and/or become priests without having been called by God and without having had the necessary qualifications? Why have so many other confreres, whose vocation had left no doubts in the minds of their superiors, have later abandoned the narrow road of religious life? Why have so many highly gifted confreres lost their enthusiasm and become like dormant or dead volcanos, while others, attracted by other prospects have joined the local churches?

This is no doubt the mystery of God and man, and we have no right and no way to investigate it. But that does not stop other questions from coming to my mind:

Have these confreres, most of them young, spoken openly to their spiritual director about their problems? Have they spoken early enough, before it got out of hand? Why did they venture on a road where even the saints tremble to tread? Did they accept the stern discipline of self-training? Did they seek a "man of God" who would help them discern the voice of God among the other voices? Were such "men of God" available to them, and were they equal to the task?

As you can see, these are many and weighty questions — a matter for all of us for a thorough, cool, and courageous examination of conscience, to be followed, if necessary, by opportune resolutions, as Don Bosco would want us to do.

Let us, therefore, set ourselves to work, full of confidence in the help of Mary and of Don Bosco. The guidance of souls is the art of arts, that surpasses all human ingenuity; but what is impossible to man alone, is possible to man with God's help.

My dearest confreres, this has been a rather long letter, but I hope it has brought a message to each of you, and I also hope that each of you will take it to heart to the extent that it concerns him.

I pray that Mary Help of Christians may bless the work of formation in our Congregation and assist those who are directly responsible for it in carrying it on according to the teachings of Don Bosco and of the Church.

I greet you dearly and assure you of my prayerful remembrance, confident of your own brotherly remembrance as well. Thank you.

Fr. LOUIS RICCERI

*Rector Major*

### III. COMMUNICATIONS

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#### 1. The Motto of the Rector Major for 1976

Like last year's, this year's Motto is suggested by a centennial — that of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators, an apostolic organization very dear to Don Bosco's heart.

Here is the text of the Motto:

In 1976 our Family will celebrate the Centennial of the Association of the Salesian Cooperators, whose Rules were published by Don Bosco on that year.

As we thank the Lord for the effective collaboration given by the Cooperators to our mission in so many ways over the past century, I invite the Salesians, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the Past Pupils and the other groups of the Salesian Family, to renew their efforts to KNOW, to PROMOTE, to ANIMATE, and to RENDER CO-RESPONSIBLE with us the SALESIAN COOPERATORS, who are an original intuition of Don Bosco for the purpose of calling the people of the world to an apostolic activity in the Church.

*In his yearly letter to the Salesian Family, the Rector Major added this comment:*

"As you see, this year's Motto directly concerns the Cooperators and all those in our Family who have working ties with them. It is, no doubt, a service to their Association and a boost to their mission to increase their membership; but it is more important to make the present Cooperators ever more conscious of the present-day identity and mission: what Don Bosco wanted them to be and what the Church today expects from them.

The World Congress that will take place in Rome this November aims at increasing such awareness. In preparation for it, and according to the directives issued from the Generalate, let each province make efforts to increase the number of Cooperators, and to deepen the study of their mission and spirit, in the mind of Don Bosco and of the Church. The new Rules of the Cooperators, which are now being used *ad experimentum*, will be re-examined during the Congress.

I invite you to pray that the preparation for the Congress, and then the Congress itself may indeed achieve their objectives of this Association to which Don Bosco gave so much of his time and energy, and which responded enthusiastically to his care".

## **2. New Salesian Bishop in Peru**

Pope Paul chose another bishop from the ranks of the Salesians: Monsignor Emilio Vallebuona. He was promoted to the episcopal titular church of Numana, and is Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Piura, Peru.

Msgr. Vallebuona was born on January 27, 1930 in Lima. There he became acquainted with the Salesians and was won over to Don Bosco's ideals. He made the novitiate in 1906 in Magdalena del Mar, and studied theology and pedagogy at the Salesian Pontifical University in Turin, completing them with a degree in Education (he later was president of the Peruvian Association of Catholic Colleges). He was ordained priest in 1956, and was made director at Puno from 1963 to 1969, and then Provincial.

The archdiocese of Piura is steeped in Salesian tradition: its first

bishop was Msgr. Chirichigno, a Salesian, and its present bishop is a Salesian past pupil. Msgr. Vallebuona is the fourth bishop from the aspirantate of Magdalena del Mar, and the seventh Salesian bishop of Peru.

With him, the total number of Salesian bishops goes to 111, with 59 living. He is the fifth bishop created by Pope Paul during the Holy Year — the most he ever created in a single year. Msgr. Vallebuona's appointment adds a special note of joy to the celebration of the Centennial of the Salesian Missions.

### **3. The Golden Jubilee of the Rector Major**

Father Ricceri celebrated his Golden Jubilee Mass in the beautiful basilica of the Sacred Heart in Rome on September 19, 1975. Hundreds of people, representing the entire Salesian Family, filled the basilica to join him in thanking God for his 50 years of priesthood.

Fr. Ricceri was assisted by Msgr. Juan Resende Costa and Msgr. Rosalio Castillo Lara, both Salesian bishops, and surrounded by about 200 Salesian concelebrants.

Msgr. Castillo gave the homily. "United to him as he gives thanks to God for so many graces received over a 50-year period", said Msgr. Castillo, "let us be grateful to God, who has given us the generous heart and the keen mind of Fr. Ricceri. Let us give thanks because, in spite of his body looking frail and fatigued with work, his spirit remains forever youthful".

### **4. Eurobosco: European Past Pupils' Congress**

The Salesian Past Pupils of Europe held their Second European Congress at the Jesuit Heverlee University College in Louvain, Belgium, on September 11-14, 1975.

Present were Fr. Ricceri, who gave the opening address; Fr. Giovanni Raineri, General Counselor for Adult Apostolate and Social Communications, who gave the first of the three major speeches; and 250 official delegates who had come from all parts of Europe (except Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary) and several dozens of Past

Pupils observers from as faraway places as Lebanon, India, Hong Kong, Korea, Ecuador and Columbia. The Apostolic Nunzio of Belgium delivered a message from the Pope, and Card. Suenens presided at the concluding concelebration.

The theme of the Congress was "The Past Pupils of Don Bosco and European Unity", which was condensed in the acronym "EURO-BOSCO" coined by them for the occasion.

The three main speeches were entitled: "Reasons for the Salesian Past Pupils' commitment to European Unity", "History, Problems, Difficulties and Expectations of European Unity", "The Salesian Past Pupils' Contribution to European Unity".

"An active Christian", said Fr. Raineri, "cannot keep aloof and disinterested in the massive travail of constructing our continent into a unity. He will have to commit himself to the ideal of a new Europe permeated with human and Christian values, which would stand as a third alternative between materialistic consumerism and Marxist Communism, both of which threaten the liberty and dignity of the human person and the values of the spirit".

On the practical side, the delegates searched for ways and means to bring about the realization of European unity — a dream that has persisted through centuries. There are over a million Salesian Past Pupils in Europe, and not a few of them hold high political places.

## 5. A Guide to the Biographical Memoirs

We bring to your attention the work of Fr. Pietro Ciccarelli, S.D.B., "*Repertorio alfabetico delle Memorie Biografiche*" (*An Alphabetical Guide to the Biographical Memoirs*), which first appeared in 1972 and has now been published with a supplement.

The volume contains over 10,000 entries covering over 1,200 topics from the Biographical Memoirs (Italian Edition). It is an easy-and-ready reference book that will help one, for instance, to trace a saying of Don Bosco or to know what he said and did on a particular subject. Evidently, this work is a must for anyone who has to talk or write about our Founder. All Salesian libraries should have a copy. Orders are to be sent to the Generalate in Rome.

Price: Lit. 2,000 for the *Repertorio*, and Lit. 400 for the *Supplemento*. It is free with the order of the 20 volumes of the "Memorie Biografiche".

## 6. Courses on On-going Formation for Coadjutor Brothers

The fifth Course on On-Going (or Continuous or Permanent) Formation, held at the Salesianum in Rome from September 9 to December 19, 1975, was attended by 33 Coadjutor Brothers (many of whom were delegates or observers at the World Congress of the Coadjutor Brothers, which had immediately preceded it) and by 4 priests.

The group was cosmopolitan, with 18 nationalities and a dozen languages represented. This, of course, posed not a few difficulties to communication, but the good will and excellent spirit of all overcame them so well that at the end the course was unanimously hailed as a grand Salesian experience, worth every bit of initial language trouble.

The course was packed with activities, such as talks on Salesian and ecclesial topics, group discussions, personal testimonies, assigned readings, etc. The participants had the enviable opportunity to be present at the celebrations in Rome and Turin marking the Golden Jubilee of the Rector Major and the Centennial of the Salesian Missions. They also attended Holy Year services and had an audience with the Holy Father.

This was the first such Course for Coadjutor Brothers at the Generalate. Before it, one had been given exclusively to departing Missionaries, and three others to confreres of certain regions in Italy. However, similar and shorter courses for Coadjutor Brothers have already been offered in other parts of the Congregation, for instance, in Guatemala in 1974 and 1975, and one is presently being offered in Viedma, Argentina.

These courses, it must be recognized, involve some sacrifices on the part of the individual confreres who attend them, and of their provinces who have to suffer their prolonged absence. But the Provincials and the local communities are usually willing — even glad at times... — to put up with the inconvenience, because they have already begun to realize the good that can come out of them.

## IV. THE CENTENNIAL OF THE SALESIAN MISSIONS

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### 1. The Opening of the Centennial in Italy

The beginning of the Centennial of the Salesian Missions in Italy was marked by many religious and civic, national and local celebrations, that have aroused wide interest also in the Italian news media.

We here present a brief chronological review of these commemorative activities.

#### a) *The letter of Pope Paul VI to the Rector Major*

The Latin text appeared in the *Osservatore Romano*, October 20, 1975, and in the Oct.-Dec. '75 issue of the Acts of the Superior Council, pp. 34-37. An English translation can be found in the same issue pp. 15-19. It was later quoted extensively by Salesian Bulletins and other publications.

#### b) *The Missionary Course for the Members of the Centennial Missionary Expedition*

The Course, organized by the General Councilor for the Missions, Fr. Bernard Tohill, S.D.B. and directed by Fr. Antonio Altarejos, S.D.B., was given at the Generalate from October 20 to November 19, 1975. It was attended by 34 confreres, who were part of the Centennial Missionary Expedition — the 105th since the one made by Don Bosco one hundred years ago.

The participants in the Course attended the Centennial celebrations in Turin and Rome, and were received in a special audience by Pope Paul.

#### c) *Young Salesian Cooperators' Meeting*

Thirty-four young Salesian Cooperators from all parts of Italy with six Salesian priests, who are the advisors of their associations,

met at the Mission Lay Volunteers' Center at Terra Nova, Rome, November 1-4, 1975, to study a practical program of missionary activity. Some of them are going to promote missionary spirit in their own environment, others are thinking seriously about going to the missions after completing their studies, and still others are getting ready to leave for the missions in the near future.

Other meetings with young Cooperators are scheduled for the coming months. It is quite possible that some young Cooperator joins the SDB's and the FMA's in the 1976 Missionary Expedition.

d) *Day of Prayer*

November 11, the centennial day, was to be, as the Rector Major had requested, a Day of Prayer in all the Salesian communities. The reports received at the Generalate indicate that it was indeed a day of fervent prayer for our missionaries and missions.

At Valdocco in Turin, the various groups of the Salesian family took turns in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians to make November 11 a full day of continuous prayer.

e) *The official Commemoration in Turin*

This took place in the Valdocco Auditorium on November 13, 1975, in the presence of the Rector Major, the Mother General of the Salesian Sisters, members of both Superior Councils, ecclesiastical and civic authorities, and numerous representatives of the Salesian Family.

Card. Sergio Pignedoli delivered the commemorative address, which was enthusiastically applauded. He then inaugurated the new Salesian Exhibition, set up in the basement of the Basilica.

f) *The Giving of the Crucifixes*

This ceremony took place on Sunday, November 16, during the solemn concelebrated Mass presided over by Card. Agnolo Rossi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of People, in the presence of Major Superiors, eight bishops, and many venerable veteran missionaries, each with 40-to-50 years of field work. Thirty-six Salesians and 17 FMA's received the crucifixes.

In the evening the Salesian Family of Turin celebrated Fr. Ricceri's

Golden Jubilee with a Mass in the Basilica. The concelebrants were 140.

The morning service was broadcast live by the Italian RAI-TV network. A few days later, a prime-time TV newscast featured the Salesian Missions Centennial in a 10-minute interview with Fr. Louis Fiora, the Regional Councilor for Italy and the Mid-East.

g) *The Papal Audience*

On November 22, 1975 Pope Paul received the missionaries of the Centennial Expedition in a special audience in the large Consistory. They were joined by the Major Superiors of both congregations, the veteran missionaries, and a group of other missionaries taking special courses at the Salesianum — all in all, 185 people.

First, the Rector Major offered the homage of the Salesian Family; then, Pope Paul spoke from a prepared text, injecting many off-the-cuff remarks. The official text appeared on the *Osservatore Romano* the following day. The full text — surreptitiously recorded on a cassette by a somewhat unscrupulous but well-intentioned priest — appears in this issue (page 81-86).

h) *Press Conference and interview held by Fr. Ricceri*

On December 9, 1975 the Rector Major held a press conference for Italian newsmen to report to the Italian people on the Centennial activities. With him were Fr. Bernard Tohill, General Councilor for the Missions, and handful of Missionaries.

On the same date an interview with Fr. Ricceri was broadcast by the Vatican Radio in several languages.

i) *Official Commemoration in Rome*

This was held on November 22, 1975 in the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) Auditorium. The commemorative speech, made more interesting by personal recollections, was given by Card. Sebastiano Baggio, in the presence of 7 other Cardinals, 17 Bishops, and a large representation of outstanding civic, political and cultural leaders in Italy, including the President of the Republic Leone. And it was the latter who spoke at the end of the celebration, and received an

ovation for his glowing expressions of admiration for the work done by the Salesians in Italy, in the missions and all over the world.

1) *Other Initiatives*

There have been many provincial and local commemorations of the Centennial, and they are being reported in Provincial Newsletters. At present it is impossible to make a full report.

However, two of them deserve special mention at this time: the Visit to the Missions of India (especially to Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Assam) by 37 Cooperators from November 16 to December 13, 1975, for the purpose of creating "a bridge of understanding" between the Cooperators and the Missions; and a "Contest on the Salesian Missions" sponsored by the Cooperators' Association and given by the Association's public and private Teachers to their own students in Italy, for the purpose of exposing Italian boys and girls to the missionary world.

m) *Over-all Assessment by the Rector Major*

Upon his return to Rome from the Centennial celebrations in Turin, Fr. Ricceri gave the Generalate Community a Good-Night in which he expressed his personal impressions and feelings. His first remark was about the solid participation of the entire Salesian Family. The Basilica of Mary Help of Christians was filled to capacity at every service, and the people showed a very active and enthusiastic participation. The evening of November 13 Card. Pignedoli remarked to Fr. Ricceri: "This is indeed a marvelous crowd. It has been invited, of course, but it comes with clear signs of willingness and devotion. It's a large crowd, and most surprising of all, it's a young crowd".

Fr. Ricceri then remarked on the spirit of collaboration among the confreres of the Valdocco and neighboring communities in preparing the liturgy, the singing, the Missionary Exhibition, the meals and all the other necessary services — cooperation which produced a faultless performance in the week-long program.

The third element of success was, according to Fr. Ricceri, general enthusiasm. "Certain people are allergic to solemn celebrations. They easily get bored while these take place. I saw no one who did not like and thoroughly enjoy this celebration. A veteran missionary

told me: 'After a week like this I feel twenty years younger...' This proves once again that the Missions can generate enthusiasm and spirit of self-renewal".

## 2. The Opening of the Centennial in other countries

From the reports received so far at the Generalate it appears that the commemoration of the Centennial has been prepared with great care and celebrated with both prayer and solemnity. Here we present a brief summary of the reports from the Americas.

### a) Argentina

Obviously, the Centennial had to take on a very special significance in Argentina. On August 8, 1975, the Argentinian Senate expressed its participation with the following resolution: "On the occasion of the Centennial of the Missions of the Salesian Congregation, the National Senate has resolved to declare the work of Don Bosco in Argentina as deserving of national gratitude for its manifold and superior contributions to the welfare of the Republic, and in particular for the people of the entire Patagonian Region".

The resolution passed unanimously, and the eulogies of many Senators filled ten small-print pages of the Minutes of that day's session.

The official opening of the Centennial was set for December 14, 1975, the day on which the first Missionaries landed in Buenos Aires. On that day a concelebrated Mass was offered in the Mater Misericordiae Church, the "launching pad", we might say, of all subsequent expeditions into other regions of Argentina.

In the meantime, books, pamphlets, leaflets and posters were spread far and wide; special commemorative radio programs were broadcast, and the first phase of a National Youth Song Festival was held. This year's spiritual retreats will be missions-oriented.

### b) United States of America

The Mission Office of the New Rochelle (New York) Province released a communiqué, accompanied by a photo service, reporting on

the celebration held in St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, on October 19, 1975. Thus the "World Mission Sunday", which was falling on that day, became in some way Salesian Mission Sunday. Card. Terence Cooke, Archbishop of New York, presided over the con-celebration, at which participated two archbishesps, 6 bishops and 85 priests. The Very Rev. Salvatore Isgro, S.D.B., Provincial of the Eastern Province, was the homilist. The singing was done by the girls' choir of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. The cathedral was filled to capacity with friends of the Salesians and representatives from most houses in the province.

c) *Brazil*

The Official Commemoration of the Centennial was held in Campo Grande on October 14-15, 1975. Its main feature was the inauguration of the new building of the Don Bosco Museum, where the memorabilia of the Bororo and Xavante tribes are now being kept. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was performed by a representative of both tribes — once fierce enemies.

d) *Peru*

The Salesians of Peru dedicated an entire week (November 9-16, 1975) to the Centennial's celebration. Each day was marked by a special theme, v.g. Centennial Day, Youth Day, Salesian Family Day, Thanksgiving Day, etc... Simultaneously, a "Vocation Congress" was held in the Salesian Aspirantate, Santa Magdalena del Mar, which this year is keeping its 50th anniversary.

e) *Mexico*

Varied and practical were the Centennial's celebrations in the Guadalajara Province: lectures on the Missions in all houses of formation, two more women volunteers for the Missions from the Cooperators' Association, several visits to the Mixes missions by

various groups, a new 45-minute documentary on the Mixes Indians, and the opening of a new parish among the Chinantecos Indians.

f) *Other Nations*

In many parts of the Salesian world, especially in missionary countries, the Centennial is celebrated with special issues of the Salesian Bulletin, special Provincial Newsletters, press releases, radio and TV programs, etc...

Commendations by civil and ecclesiastical authorities have been and are being received: they are a glowing eulogy for the work we have done, and should be an encouragement for us to do more and better. To quote one such commendation — the one given by a representative of the Brazilian government to the Salesians in Campo Grande: "We thank you for the Boys' Clubs, for the academic and vocational schools, for the missions among the Indians, for the parishes. May God reward you, because by your hard work, your heart-warming goodness, your total dedication and your shining example you have changed backward people into progressive people of God".

### **3. Commemorative Program in Argentina for 1976**

The confreres in Argentina have organized a special program of commemorative activities which deserves a separate mention. They have 16 different activities on the agenda, all on a national level. Here we mention but a few of them.

At the level of study and research, four "Workshops on Salesian Spirituality" will be held in July, each in a different city. In addition, the Salesian Institute for Pastoral Work with its headquarters in Buenos Aires has scheduled several workshops on the theme: "Evangelization according to the Bishops' Synod" and, for April, "A Course of Study on the Religious Situation in Argentina Today".

Among the many activities scheduled for the Salesian Family there are: a national meeting of the Cooperators, the yearly pilgrimage of the Past Pupils to the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians on the 24th of May, a national meeting of the Lay Teachers of Salesian

Schools in May, meetings of the Fathers' and Mothers' Associations in Salesian parishes, and also meetings of all the employees in Salesian houses.

Many are the activities scheduled for youth. Besides the National Youth Song Festival already mentioned, which will be concluded in July in a large stadium, there will be the National Salesian Olympics in September in Buenos Aires, a special summer camp for the Don Bosco's Explorers and a meeting of their leaders, and another meeting of the leaders of all the Salesian Youth movements in October, in Bernal.

The Centennial celebration will take place on November 17, 1976 at San Nicolás de los Arroyos, the second Salesian house in Argentina, opened by Monsignor Fagnano.

The solemn closing of the Centennial will be held on December 14, 1976 in Buenos Aires, in the first Salesian house in America, with the Rector Major present.

Needless to say, over and above these activities on a national scale there will be those on a provincial and local level.

#### **4. Other Activities in Italy**

During the month of January two important meetings will take place at the Salesianum in Rome: from the 12th to the 24th, a Meeting of Salesian Missionary Bishops; from the 25th to the 31st, a Study Week on Missionary Spirituality. The latter will be attended by Salesian Bishops, missionaries, confreres from several parts of Italy and in particular by the Superiors of five Religious Women Congregations that have grown out of the Salesian stock, that is, The Sisters of Charity of Miyazaki (Japan), the Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Krishnagar (India), the Missionaries of Mary Help of Christians of Shillong (Assam), the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Bangkok (Thailand), and the Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Columbia.

Two other meetings previously scheduled for January at the Salesianum, one for Missionary Catechists, and the other for Workers in the Slum-area Apostolate, have been rescheduled to a later date.

The Center of Studies on the History of the Salesian Missions, located at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome will hold, in the early months of this years, a series of lectures on our missions in the same University and elsewhere in Italy. Moreover, the same Center has already published two new works in Italian: Fr. Eugenio Valentini, S.D.B., "*Profili di Missionari*", and anthology of the biographical sketches of over 200 Salesians and Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; and Fr. Louis Cocco, S.D.B., "*Parima*", an updated Italian translation from the original ethnologic study in Spanish on the Yanomami Indians, which received a most favorable review a few years ago by the world-famous ethnologist Lévi-Strauss. Both are highly recommend for our libraries. Cost: Lit. 8,500 (approx. USA \$12), Lit. 15,000 (approx. USA \$20), respectively.

On March 19-20, 1976 Valdocco will be playing host to the ladies in charge of the "*Laboratori Mamma Margherita*" (Mama Margaret Sewing Circles) from Italy and other European countries. These good ladies will study ways and means of improving their already outstanding services to the Salesian Missions.

## 5. Gifts from the Missions for the Centennial

With a letter of May 24, 1975 the Missions Department at the Generalate had expressed the desire that some gifts be sent to the Rector Major from the missions fields to be presented at the Offertory of the Centennial Mass at Valdocco. The response was substantial. Gifts were received from Alto Orinoco, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Chaco and Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Mozambique, Peru, Philippines and several other countries.

It is unpractical, if not impossible, to describe here the objects donated — they are too varied and numerous. Just to mention a few of the 150 item categories appearing in the catalog: fetishes, amulets, necklaces and pendants, hats, foot wear, suits and dresses, purses, bags, woven baskets; spears, bows, arrows and quivers; birds' nests, embalmed and stuffed animals; ceramics, house utensils, machetes, mats, musical instruments, paintings and sculptures, publications in various languages — and also a jar of edible ants!

Some gifts were presented at the Offertory of the Centennial Mass; all of them are now in display at the Don Bosco Exhibition in the basement of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

To all the donors the Rector Major and the Missions Department wish to express their gratefulness at this time through the Acts.

## 6. Statistics on the Centennial Missionary Expedition

The Centennial Expedition — the 105th in the history of the Salesian Congregation — is made up of 83 confreres, two-thirds of which have already reached their destinations while the others are still waiting for their visas or other papers.

The new missionaries come from the following countries: 21 from Italy, 20 from Spain, 12 from Poland, 9 from Ireland, 5 from Portugal, 3 from Belgium, 2 from the Philippines and 2 from the United States. Austria, Australia, Brazil, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Holland, India and Mexico contributed one each.

The Provinces represented are: Madrid, with 12 missionaries; Lodz (Poland), with 11; Ireland, with 7; Portugal, with 5; Barcelona, North Belgium, Novarese, Roman, Subalpine, St. Mark-Venetian, with 3 each; Adriatic, Bilbao, Central, England, Lombard-Aemilian, Philippines and Vietnamese, with 2 each; Australian, Austrian, Cordoba (Spain), Chinese, Ecuador, Krakow (Poland), Leòn (Spain), Ligurian-Tuscan, Madras (India), Mexican of Mexico City, Middle East, New Rochelle and San Francisco (USA), São Paulo, Southern Italian, and Valencia (Spain), with one each.

As for the countries of their destination, 11 are bound for Brazil, 9 for Bolivia, 7 for Chile, 7 for South Africa, 6 for Equatorial Guinea, 5 for Thailand; 3 each for Ethiopia, Capo Verde, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela; 2 each for Argentina, Guatemala, Macao, Paraguay, Peru and Zaire; one each for Colombia, Ecuador, Gabon, India, Japan, Middle East, Mozambique, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and Uruguay.

**7. Solidarity Fund Nears Lit. 400 million (18th Report)**

a) CONTRIBUTING PROVINCES (September 12-December 15, 1975):

**AMERICA**

Antilles	Lit.	832,500
Argentina, Cordoba		370,000
Brazil, Campo Grande		500,000
Colombia, Bogotà		1,000,000
Ecuador		4,780,000
Peru		876,000
U.S.A., San Francisco		3,475,000

**ASIA**

China		1,700,000
Japan		121,910

**EUROPE**

Italy, Adriatic		100,000
Italy, Central		1,000,000
Italy, Southern		1,230,000
Italy, Sicilian		500,000
Italy, St. Mark-Venetian		450,000
Spain, Madrid		287,500

Total		20,697,910
Cash on hand		3,425
<i>Total amt. for distribution</i>		20,701,335

b) DISBURSEMENT DURING THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME:

**AFRICA**

Swaziland: to translate and print a Life of Don Bosco	Lit.	1,000,000
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AMERICA

Brazil, Manaus: for repair works in the Aspirantate of Ananindeua	1,000,000
Brazil, Recife: to equip a clinic in Jaboatão	1,000,000
Brazil, Recife: to help the slum dwellers in Teimoso-Carpina	1,000,000
Brazil, Rio Negro: to replace sunk motorboat of Taracuà Mission	500,000
Brazil, Rio Negro: to supply motorboat and fuel for apostolate along the rivers	1,000,000
Chile, Santiago: to the Provincial for the "Food for the Poor" Program	1,000,000
Chile, Punta Arenas: to the Bishop, for the same program	1,000,000
Columbia, Ariari: for social assistance near San Juan de Arama	1,000,000
Colombia, Bogotá: for the Leper Colony in Contratación	1,000,000
Colombia, Medellín-Rio Negro: for the "Feed the Children" Program	600,000
Ecuador, Guayaquil: for St. Dominic Savio Youth Center	700,000
Ecuador, Mendez: to purchase a rice-hulling machine and for scholarships in Miazal	1,000,000
Ecuador, Mendez: to finance the air transport of the sick from villages	500,000

ASIA

India, Bombay: for the slumdwellers in Wadala	1,000,000
India, Gauhati: to purchase a printing press for Don Bosco School in Shillong	1,000,000
India, Gauhati: for the Anthropology section of the Provincial Library	800,000
India, Madras: for the Library and Science Lab of the Aspirantate in Mannuthi	700,000

India, Madras: for the apostolate among the poor in Poonamallee	500,000
India, Tura: to build homes for Catechists in Selsella	1,000,000
India, Tura: to buy equipment and materials for youth apostolate in the Dara villages	500,000
India, Tezpur: for catechetical aids in Doornni	300,000
Korea, Seoul: to the Delegate in charge of lepers	1,000,000
Korea, Seoul: to the Youth Center from Salta, Argentina	370,000
Macao: for the Coloane leper colony	200,000

EUROPE

Yugoslavia, Zagreb: for the Aspirantate and the Catechetical Center	1,000,000
<i>Total disbursed</i>	20,670,000
<i>Cash on hand</i>	31,335
<i>Grand Total</i>	20,701,335

c) FINANCIAL PROSPECTUS OF THE SOLIDARITY FUND AS OF DECEMBER 15, 1975

<i>Income</i>	399,807,059
<i>Disbursement</i>	399,775,724
<i>Cash on hand</i>	31,335

## V. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST

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During Autumn the Regional Councillors continued the visitations to their Provinces, and the Superiors who remained at the Generalate, besides carrying on the unrelenting tasks of ordinary administration, were taken up with the various activities of the Centennial of the Salesian Missions. More than any one else, Fr. Bernard Tohill, Councillor for the Missions was deeply involved, along with the members of his Department, with the organization of the Centennial celebrations.

Other activities that engaged the special attention of the Major Superiors were the Continental Meeting of the Far-East Provincials and Delegates, the Fifth Course on On-going Formation for Coadjutor Brothers, both in Rome; and several other workshops and meetings in various places. The reading of the preceding section of this issue should give an idea of their busy life during the last lap of 1975.

The Regional Councillors are due back to the Generalate in mid January 1976 to start once again the regular meetings of the Superior Council. Until the end of March such meetings will have the objective of evaluating the Regional Councillors' visitations and the three Intercontinental Meetings, and of programming the next visitations and meetings.

Meanwhile, some initial attention is being given to the 21st General Chapter, which is looming on the horizon.

## VI. DOCUMENTS

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### **Final Report on the Far-East Continental Meeting**

*The Meeting was held at the Salesianum October 10-18, 1975 for the purpose of examining how the deliberations of the Special General Chapter had been implemented in the Far-Eastern Provinces. Present were the Rector Major, several members of the Superior Council and the Provincials and delegates of that part of the world. Here we reproduce the final document with the Resolutions and Proposals.*

#### **PRELIMINARIES**

In order to achieve the objectives set forth for Continental Meetings, we in assembly at the Salesianum in Rome dedicated ourselves for a week to a frank verification and objective evaluation of how the renewal called for by the Special General Chapter has been implemented in our region.

The reference points used in our self-evaluation were the resolutions and norms of our 1975 Provincial Chapters, the Report of the Regional Councillor, containing a thoroughly documented picture of the situation in our provinces, the Introductory Report of the Rector Major, presenting issues, needs, evaluations and norms on a worldwide view of our Congregation.

Taking the lead from these reference points, we carried on a frank and fraternal dialogue between the periphery and the center, a joint review and a reciprocal exchange of experiences between provinces of disparate cultural and social conditions.

All this provided us with the necessary basis from which to draw practical guidelines and to pinpoint the priority areas on which we are to focus our efforts in the two years preceding the next General Chapter.

“Evangelization and Education to Faith”, “The Province as a Formative Community”, “Unity and Decentralization” — these clearly emerged as the central points for a working plan on which to converge our combined efforts. On these same points the Constitutions, the Regulations, the Chapter documents, the responsible Magisterium of our Rector Major shed a clear and comprehensive light. To their fuller realization we wish to commit ourselves and our communities.

## I. OUR COMMITMENT TO EVANGELIZATION AND EDUCATION TO FAITH

In reflecting on our true pastoral mission, we clearly realize that the Provinces in our group are missionary Provinces, directly involved in evangelization. Consequently, all the confreres, whatever their field of apostolate may be, must regard themselves as real missionaries.

Furthermore, as Salesian Missionaries, while we dedicate ourselves with generosity and self-sacrifice to the task of promoting the welfare and salvation of the people entrusted to us, we shall always have preference for the young, especially the poorest and the most abandoned, who are the primary beneficiaries of our Salesian mission.

### a) *A fundamental commitment*

Considering the catechization of the young as the first activity of the Salesian apostolate, we commit ourselves to the rethinking of all our activities in relation to it (SGC, 279, 398, 377a).

Since we work in a prevalently non-Christian environment, we must, as a rule, engage in the slow, lengthy task of human education, which is necessary to prepare men's hearts to their acceptance of the Gospel.

We therefore pledge ourselves:

1. to make, with a sense of priority and urgency, a vigorous effort to arouse in our confreres the awareness of being always and everywhere “educators to Faith”;
2. to promote in our Provinces a true missionary spirit, offering without hesitation the opportunity to work in missionary fields to willing and able confreres.

b) *Areas of our pastoral mission*

Considering next the various areas of our pastoral action, we find it necessary and urgent for the next two years to insist on certain commitments for our Provinces:

1. to render truly efficient on provincial level the services for the animation of evangelization in the provincial community as well as in the local communities (SGC, 338) and to train adequately the necessary personnel (SGC, 337b).

2. Each Province will strive to be more open to a new "presence", both by creating a mentality that will instill new vitality into the already existing works, and by meeting the most urgent needs of the young people of an area, in order to make its presence felt among them in ways more in keeping with their true needs.

3. We believe that the apostolic value of schools is to be reaffirmed, even where the students are prevalently non-Christian, because they provide them with a great and at times the only opportunity to get in touch with the Gospel values, and are fundamental factors in their human development.

This implies for us some particularly urgent tasks:

a) enabling a school to train and educate students, both as regards the content and the method of teaching, while providing at the same time that the size of its enrollment is not to the detriment of quality education;

b) preparation of confreres on the professional, human, Christian, Salesian level, through personal contacts with the young, supervision, guidance, counselling, etc...;

c) organization of complementary training activities, such as clubs, associations, etc...;

d) capacity for cooperation with the lay people who help us. This requires that they be chosen carefully and formed according to our educational method (SGC, 428).

4. To see to it that we do not allow excessive concentration on schools in our Provinces to the disadvantage of other forms of youth apostolate, such as Oratories, Youth Centers, Catechists' groups, etc.

5. To intensify the work of forming and guiding our pupils, past pupils and co-workers, so as to make it possible for those among them who are called by the Lord to become genuine Salesian Cooperators, dedicated to apostolic and catechetical work and to the service of the local church (Const., 12; SGC, 333).

Consequently, we fully realize how necessary it is to prepare the Salesians in general and some confreres in particular in an adequate manner for this type of work.

## II) THE PROVINCE AS A FORMATIVE COMMUNITY

The postcapitular renewal requires that we conceive and organize a Province as the primary community to which the responsibility for the initial and on-going formation of its members is entrusted (cf. Const., 34, 57, 106).

We therefore wish to intensify our effort for a prompt improvement of its many organizational elements: the Provincial and his Council, the formation team, the Formation Directory, the formation centers, courses and other initiatives which concretely affect the Province's formative efficiency.

In preparing its formation program every Province shall concentrate on the following:

### 1. *Two vital priorities*

In the planning of the initial and on-going formation we wish to give a privileged position to the development of the essential values in our religious life, i.e. a living experience of God and the Salesian identity.

a) With regard to a living experience of God, we shall try to bring about personal and community renewal through the Liturgy, to enhance our capacity to hear the Word of God communicating with

us through our daily actions, and to cultivate the supernatural sense of our work.

*b)* With regard to Salesian Identity, in our formative work we must do our very best to incarnate, so to say, the genuine Salesian charism in the various local cultures in which we live. To succeed in this delicate task, every Province will commit itself to an ever more thorough assimilation of the spirit of Don Bosco by reading his life and writings and the official documents of the Congregation, and especially by studying and observing the guidelines of the Special General Chapter. Finally, to be more finely attuned to the culture of poor people, we shall concentrate our efforts on understanding more clearly, loving more dearly and practicing more faithfully the Rules and Regulations of our Society.

### *2. The "asceticism of our presence"*

To avoid the dangers of the widespread “bourgeois mentality”, every Province shall strive to reactivate the norms of the Preventive System, particularly by insisting that the confreres commit themselves to be actively present in the midst of their charges on the example of Don Bosco and by reflecting on his memorable letter written from Rome on May 1884.

### *3. Initial Formation*

The Provincials and their Councils shall follow with special attention the local formative communities both of clerics and of Coadjutor Brothers through their successive stages. They shall take care that the Formation team functions properly and that the Formation Directory is observed.

Aware that the Practical Training (or *Tirocinium*) period is a rather neglected stage of formation and mindful that it should be for the young confreres their best period for intensifying their experience in their Salesian vocation, the Provincial and the Directors with their respective Councils shall take special care that these confreres truly profit by this period of formation which ought to be most incisive on their religious life.

#### 4. *On-going Formation*

Considering that every local community must be a true center of on-going formation, we propose:

*a)* to give the opportunity to the Rectors to develop their specific function of service to their communities (Const., 54 182); and to look after the preparation of other community leaders ("animatori"). To achieve this objective we consider it indispensable to have inter-provincial cooperation within the region;

*b)* to initiate a course of on-going formation for this group of Provinces as soon as possible. It will last three months (March through May, 1976) and it will be given in Bangalore. Each Province in the group shall send at least two confreres, who have been properly chosen, and it will cooperate with the staff in charge of the course.

#### 5. *The Preparation of "formatori" (i.e. the personnel directly in charge of, and immediately responsible for, the formation of the confreres)*

The preparation of personnel specialized in the various fields of the Salesian mission is the first goal to which we must direct all our efforts.

Every Province must draw up a plan for the qualification of its personnel in view of its future needs, and make every sacrifice to carry it out. Where it is feasible, let a sensible interprovincial cooperation plan be studied, particularly with regard to the "formatori".

### III) FOCUS ON UNITY AND DECENTRALIZATION IN OUR CONGREGATION

During these days we became more convinced that the very diversity of social and cultural conditions in our provinces that makes the task of decentralization willed by our Special General Chapter (Const., 125f; SGC, 720f.) very important for us, makes it just as important to strengthen unity and Salesian communion, according to the guidelines in the letter of the Rector Major in the Acts of the SGC, number 272.

### 1. Decentralized responsibilities

While we are aware of the necessity of assuming decentralized responsibilities at all levels in the normal performance of the activities relating to provincial services, we propose to promote opportune initiatives in our communities for a deeper knowledge and a better observance of our Constitutions and Regulations, for it is in observing them that the special "covenant" with God which is our Salesian vocation, is maintained. To this end the circulation of writings on Salesian spirituality which was recommended by the Special General Chapter, should be promoted for the benefit of all the confreres.

In particular, we commit ourselves to see to it that:

a) the Rectors take opportune decisions and practical steps to bring to the knowledge of their communities and of individual confreres the official Salesian documents — Acts of the Superior Council, Circular Letters, and so on —, by which the Major Superiors guide and animate our Congregation as a whole;

b) the Provincials and their Councils function according to the norms of the Special General Chapter, and study and apply their provisions for promoting unity of spirit and efficiency in our mission to the local Church;

c) the Superiors exercise, each at his own level, authority as service of communion, and do their utmost that consultations, councils, and community assemblies function in such a way that every confrere feels his responsibility for the wellbeing of his community and of the Salesian Family (Const., 5, 54, 125, 127);

d) every community, overcoming even the eventual psychological resistance from certain confreres, does its programming and revision of religious life and of the pastoral activity collegially, in accordance with the Constitutions, the Regulations and the decisions of the provincial chapters.

### 2. Value and Necessity of Communication

In order to promote a better communication among the worldwide, provincial and local Salesian communities, we commit ourselves to see to it that the Superiors:

a) act as animators of community life and Salesian observance by making it easier for their confreres, especially for those in training, to have access to the sources of Salesian spirituality — life and writings of Don Bosco, Salesians' biographies, books, special studies, etc... — both through the study of the Founder's tongue and through appropriate translations, but particularly the constant influence of spiritual direction in confreres, good-nights, retreats, meeting, dialog, etc.;

b) continue to improve communication between Superiors and confreres at local and provincial levels, in such a manner that all confreres, especially those in training, are informed about the life and activities of the Salesian Family; and this can be obtained by promoting the circulation and the reading of the Salesian Bulletin, the ANS monthly newsletter, provincial newsletters, and the publication of appropriate documentaries and audiovisual aids (SGC, 516, 722);

c) develop fraternal solidarity and exchange of services.

### *3. The Community: the First Beneficiary of our Mission*

Since the Community is the subject of our Mission in the Church (SGC, 29), we shall strive to ensure:

a) that every confrere lives and works in communion of spirit with the other members of his community and avoids individualism (Const., 17, 24), and that the Superiors take care to develop in their communities a spirit of solidarity and co-responsibility in such a manner that every member feels accepted and helped to give his contribution to common life and activity (SGC, 509);

b) that, with dialog and charity and at the same time with firmness, a solution is found for the situation of those confreres who, from a juridical and Salesian point of view, find themselves in a position of life and activity not in conformity with the requirements of our vocation.

### *4. Special Proposal*

Realizing that the actual composition of the so-called "English-speaking Region", to which our Provinces belong, on account of its

geographical size, and linguistic, social, and cultural differences, causes difficulties as regards unity and cooperation among the Provinces themselves and between these and the Center of the Congregation for which purpose they were established in the first place (Const., 159 f.), and this notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of the Regional Councillor, we propose that in the next General Chapter a study be made of its restructuring according to the indications that have emerged from experience. Meanwhile, in agreement with the Regional Councillor, we shall try to resolve difficulties and meet various needs with a spirit of understanding and cooperation.

## VII. FROM THE PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTERS

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*Following the recommendation of the Special General Chapter that "a digest of the principal initiatives undertaken in the field of Salesian renewal" be circulated by the Superior Council (SGC, 763b), we here report on three missionary activities that seem to be particularly representative of the spirit of the Centennial.*

### **1. Bogotá, Colombia: Boys and Salesians working together in Ariari Prefecture**

*The following is taken from the Bogotá Provincial Newsletter of August 1975, pp. 8-10:*

Eight students and three Salesians of our School in Duitama spent their last mid-year vacations in Puerto Rico, a tiny village (population: 400) tucked away in the jungles of the Ariari Apostolic Prefecture, which is in the hands of the Salesians.

Puerto Rico has a port on the Ariari River, two schools (one is run by a protestant minister), no doctor, and a police station. It can be reached by land (a dirt road, on which there is a bus service during the good season) and by river (an eight-hour boat ride from the nearest town).

While the protestant minister lives permanently in Puerto Rico, our missionaries can only pay occasional visits. Signs of "divisions in two camps" can already be noticed among the people.

Our team from Duitama wanted to bring them a message of faith, understanding and cooperation. The highpoint of the mission was the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, for whom the Puerto Ricans have a special devotion.

The team had been well prepared in advance. A Salesian had gathered important data about the region and the people from the Prefecture's Office, and on the basis of them he had planned a program of activities.

Once on the spot, the team first met with the more prominent persons of the village, then visited individual families to get a clearer picture of the situation, and finally called several general meetings to continue the dialog on a broader basis, to get things organized and to solicit the cooperation of the people. Many volunteers came forward — men and women, especially women. Someone started preparing those who wanted to receive baptism. Another took care of the preparation for First Communions. And another held meetings for the couple who wanted to straighten out their marriages. A crew of volunteers tidied up the cemetery, while another prepared an airplane landing strip.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel there was a solemn Mass with many First Communions, and the statue of the Blessed Mother was carried in procession on the men's shoulders, by truck, and also by boat. The response of the people was most consoling.

The success is far from being complete, however. But the missionary team is constantly reviewing and improving its program, and keeping in touch with the people, to get to know their real problems and needs. The young students, who have had the first taste of missionary experience, are enthused, and have asked to be allowed to return during the next vacations. Most of all, the people of Puerto Rico want the Salesians back.

## **2. Madrid, Spain: "Tierra Nueva", a missionary experience for Past Pupils**

*From the Madrid Provincial Newsletter of June 1975:*

"*Tierra Nueva*" (New Earth) is a project recently organized by the Past Pupils of the Madrid Province for the whole country in response to the request of many young men for an opportunity to work at evangelization and cultural advancement among the people of the Third World.

More specifically, as stated by the Regional Secretariat for the Past Pupils in Madrid, *Tierra Nueva* has the following objectives:

a) to provide young Past Pupils and other young people with the opportunity to engage in the apostolate and evangelization;

b) to help them acquire vocational skills in the service of others;

c) to train them to help Third World people to free themselves from ignorance and unjust social structures;

d) to foster lay missionary vocations, on either temporary or permanent basis. This makes *Tierra Nueva* an ecclesial and Salesian work: ecclesial, because evangelization is its main purpose, and even human promotion is placed at the service of evangelization, as the Church intends it; Salesian, because it is to be carried out in the openhearted, joyful, serene style of total dedication which is typical of Don Bosco's sons.

In particular *Tierra Nueva* is aimed at youth from 18 to 30 years, who have either completed their academic or professional education, or who have had some kind of experience in the labor field; and it intends to give them additional training in their jobs or professions, if needed, before they take their places in the missions.

With regard to the regions where they are to exercise their apostolate, the *Tierra Nueva* volunteers will give priority to the Third World countries who request their services, but will also consider working for needy people in their own country.

The fact that these young men have chosen to keep close working ties with the Salesians, to seek their spiritual direction, and to cooperate closely with the Salesian Mission Office in Madrid, leaves no doubt that they want to be true and active part of the Salesian Family.

### **3. Venetian-St. Mark Province "adopts" a Bolivian parish**

*Since September 1974, the Venetian-St. Mark Province has taken under its special tutelage San Carlos de Iapacani, an abandoned parish in the heart of Bolivia. It has sent men and money to it. It has shared and alleviated its problems. It has, in practice, "adopted" it. The October 1975 issue of the Provincial Newsletter Supplement carried a 15-page report of this unusual missionary experience. Here is a brief summary:*

*The workers:* four Salesians (three priests and one Coadjutor Brother) and two volunteer young men (with diplomas in machine-shop work). All living together in a community.

*Size of the parish:* 12,000 sq. kilometers (approx. 4600 sq. miles). Exact population unknown. Probably between 40 and 60 thousand. A mixture of tribes and languages. There are, for instance, the Cambas, who speak Spanish with Castillian propriety; the Collas on the highlands, who speak "Quechua", a very difficult native language; the Guaraios, who live in a state of appalling poverty and are on the brink of extinction on account of tuberculosis; and the "barbarians" or "savages" — spoken of by many but seen by few — who live in impenetrable jungles.

*History of the parish:* From 1959 to 1970 the parish was administered by a dedicated missionary priest from Santiago (Chile), who built three churches, a rectory, a dispensary and a youth center. After eleven years of hard work, he had to leave because of difficulties with the Bolivian government. The parish then remained without a regular priest for four years.

*After one year of Salesian work:* The Salesians took over San Carlos Parish at the request of the bishop of the area and of the Bolivian Provincial, with the support of the Confreres of the Technical-Agricultural School "Muyurina" in Santa Cruz. Immediately they set out to visit the Christian communities and families spread over the immense area, to prepare children and adults for baptism and First Communion, and to help the poor and the sick, especially the children. They made door-to-door calls and gave personal invitations to the evening meetings to be held in the nearest schools — and at the meetings they gave religious instruction, heard confessions, and celebrated Mass. Thirty-five young catechists are now taking a training course to assist the priests in evangelization work.

*The Salesian Community.* Salesians and young volunteers share community life, pastoral work and services to the poor, the sick, the needy. They feel bound together by faith and prayer, by the common mission, by friendship and free exchange of ideas. The community feels the support of their distant confreres in Italy as well as that of the Bolivian confreres, with whom they hold days of re-

collection, retreats, special meetings, etc. Prayer life is very intensive. In the midst of a very busy life and in the face of enormous problems, time has been put aside for a communal recitation of the breviary. The Sunday liturgy is prepared at Saturday evening prayer meetings with the youth of the parish helping out.

*Twin Parishes.* The "adoption" of San Carlos Parish is not limited to the Salesian confreres. It extends also to the Don Bosco's Parish in Pordenone (near Venice). Don Bosco's parishioners have pledged 10% of their Sunday collections to San Carlos'. There is a lively exchange of letters between families of both parishes. A special collection is taken up each month for the Guaraios children affected by TB. Young volunteers are presently being prepared in Pordenone for work in San Carlos.

*Living with the poor.* The Salesians and the lay volunteers do their best to share their lives with the poor. All contributions from Italy, Bolivia and abroad are channeled to the poor; the community supports itself by its own work and the small parish fees. The last Lent (1975) was meatless...

The adoption of San Carlos' has brought about a deepened sense of commitment and renewal also among the confreres of the Venetian-St. Mark Province who have remained at home.

## VIII. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

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### 1. "You are the adventurous heralds of the Gospel"

*In the audience granted to the Salesian missionaries on November 22, 1975, Pope Paul VI spoke from a prepared text (which appeared on the "L'Osservatore Romano" the following day and is here printed in italics) and extemporized extensively. The entire talk was clandestinely taped and is candidly printed — with a warning: being a "family talk", it is to be kept for "home consumption"...*

This audience with you, Beloved Sons and Daughters of Don Bosco, comes to lighten the burden of our day. Your visit to us comes to give us much pleasure and joy amidst our many sorrows...

We see here before us many missionaries, veterans of numerous campaigns; we know from what missions fields they have returned. And we also see young men who want to become missionaries. This is an uplifting sight indeed — a sign of God's favor, a sign of hope and heavenly joy.

You have been chosen, you have been called to carry God's word and work to distant and perhaps little known people — but God has you and them in his plan — one that He has foreseen from eternity and that He will accomplish in due time in his mercy and goodness. You are part of his grand design, which is full of wonder and also suffering. This is something you should never forget.

*We give our most cordial welcome to all of you, but especially to you, young missionaries, who are about to leave for your respective fields of apostolate on the centennial year of the departure of the first Salesian missionaries. Before leaving for Argentina, they came here, sent by Don Bosco, to seek a blessing from our Predecessor Pius IX. We are happy about this circumstance. They were only ten then, and among them there was the great Fr. Cagliero — later Cardinal Cagliero. But today you are one hundred, and you raise to over three thousand the number of your confreres engaged in mis-*

*sionary work everywhere in the world, together with the 1,522 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.*

*You have made a total gift*

We would like you to know that there are today before our eyes many sights which are far from being as pleasing and cheering as this. Every day, every moment of the day we have to face difficulties, oppositions and weaknesses that cause us much sadness. Any one holding a high place of responsibility would surely understand what sufferings we are talking about. But to offset all this, we have now the joy of seeing sons and daughters giving themselves to Christ and to the Church — giving not just a temporary thing or only a part of themselves, but their entire lives, their talents, their everything. This is a great thing, a wonderful thing! We do not see this happening every day, though we should... And so your presence increases our joy, our enthusiasm, and our gratitude to God who made this happen. And you, beloved sons and daughters, are the reason and source of our happy feelings.

*What is there that we could tell you on this occasion? You already know our constant appeals for the Missions. You know our documents and our allocutions on this central issue, this endless source of preoccupation and concern for us and the Church.*

The Lord placed this anxiety in the hearts of the Apostles when he told them: "Go, preach, conquer the world for God." After them, this responsibility has been passed on to the Church down to this very day. And so it is that we can even now witness the fact that apostolic zeal and ardent charity still urge generous Christians to push the frontiers of Faith towards new lands, new conquests, new adventures. We rejoice immensely at the adventure that you are about to launch out upon, and we second it with our fervent prayers and hopeful expectations.

You are truly the adventurous heralds of the Gospel! You are the shock troops of the message of Christ! You are those brave people who have given everything they possess. Over and above what many other good priests have done, you have also made a full sacrifice of staying near your families, working in your countries, speaking your native languages, following your customs. You have

decided to go to unknown places, to meet unfamiliar people — people who, humanly speaking, could never claim a favor, a service from you... And you are going to give them, not just money or any material gift, but your own very selves. "*Questo è Vangelo vissuto!*". This is Gospel down to earth!

We thank your Superiors, whose responsibility it was to rouse and channel your apostolic energies. We thank the Saints in heaven, who have initiated and carried on this prodigious undertaking. We feel grateful also because this is for us, who are involved in it and in a certain sense co-responsible, a source of great comfort and hope.

*We call on you in the name of Christ*

*We see in you a living response to our solicitudes for the entire world. We listen to the "Yes" you have spoken with your self-donation. Called upon to work in the missions, you have responded as if the call came from St. Peter or Christ himself.*

We call on you to serve the Church in Christ's name. We are but the echo — a weak one indeed, but nevertheless a true one — of that voice that once resounded through the world: "Come! I will make you fishers of men!".

*Yes, we see in you, fully realized and turned into a vibrant testimony of true love, the call of Christ and of the Church — of the missionary Church. The Church is, in fact, missionary by the will of her Divine Founder: "Euntes, docete, Go and teach" (Mt. 28:19), and by the very kind of work done by the first Apostles and the vast number of followers who over the centuries spread far and wide to carry God's word and saving message to all nations.*

*"How wonderful is the coming of those who bring good news!" (Rom. 10:15). You are now joining the throngs of those men and women who have dedicated themselves to the most sublime ideal — that of winning souls for Christ. You are certainly inspired and supported by the examples of those who have preceded you, in particular of those veteran missionaries — some with forty or fifty years of uninterrupted apostolate in far-off lands — whom we see well represented before us.*

My beloved missionaries of many years' work, we would like

to give you honor and praise, but you shall receive that from the Lord. You deserve a rich reward. No human being could pay you back. Only Christ the Lord can — and He will on the day of reckoning. But we are happy to have you here and to tell you that, even when you were faraway, you were as close to our hearts as you are now. We are proud of you, and look at you as examples of total dedication for all of us to imitate. Well done, and thank you.

*The Lord says: "Have confidence! Speak out!"*

*And you, my beloved young missionaries, trust in the Lord who called you, trust in Jesus Christ who is sending you, trust in the Holy Spirit who will support you in your labors and give wings to your words.*

It is quite natural for you to feel some hesitation in the face of the unknown, especially of the difficulties that await you. "Will I be able to learn their language, to communicate with them?" is perhaps the question in the mind of some of you. Tell us, Mons. Carretto: How can one learn to communicate in those incomprehensible languages that it takes a lifetime to learn? This brings back to our mind the case of Jeremiah, when he was called by the Lord to be a prophet. What did he answer? "Ah... ah... ah... I can't speak!" Perhaps you will feel like saying the same thing... But the Lord says: "You shall speak!" You will be enabled to bring forth from your hearts the treasures of faith in a language which is still unwieldy or altogether mysterious. Have confidence! Yes, you shall become able to communicate the truth which saves, the Good Tidings of the Lord.

*Entrust yourselves to the motherly protection of Mary Help of Christians. Be at all times the faithful sons and daughters of the Church, who is counting on your assistance to make the People of God increase and multiply.*

Be faithful to your traditions... Oh yes, your beautiful Salesian traditions! You are on the right road — the road of the Gospel. In spite of the criticism that you may at times hear from outsiders — human things and people have their limitations and shortcomings, and these are likely to be heavily underscored by some —, stand sure of yourselves! This is the Pope's parting word: feel certain that you have chosen the right road! And never, never

let a doubt sneak into your hearts: "Perhaps I should have stayed home, and got involved in something else..."

Have no regrets. Give without claiming anything back, and you will find joy even among the most seemingly senseless and actually thankless tasks.

*Interior life: the secret of your strength.*

*We exhort you above all to cultivate your interior life.*

You are called to a very active life in an agitated and anxious world — in a world that often struggles with the most basic needs: food, employment, transportation... You could find yourselves swept into the vortex of material concerns to the point of forgetting the life of the spirit. But you must maintain a sound interior life, because this is the secret of your strength, the basis of your success.

Help each other, whenever and wherever you can. You are going to spread out to the four corners of the world, yes, but you are not going off to live in confinement, in solitude. You will live within a community, and possibly with some experienced colleague or veteran missionary. Assist each other, comfort each other, encourage each other, sympathize with each other.

*Remember that it is only by prayer and sacrifice that souls can be saved. Never forget it. Vatican II was very explicit on this point. Let me read its words for you: "Imbued with a living faith and a hope that never fails, the missionary should be a man of prayer. He should glow with a spirit of strength and of love and self-discipline... Let him in the spirit of sacrifice always bear about in himself the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may work in those to whom he is sent" (Ad Gentes, 25 [Abbott, Documents of Vatican II, p. 615]).*

*This Holy Year of interior renewal will remind you of the beginning of your missionary apostolate. May it also mark the beginning of a limitless dedication to it. This is our wish and our prayer. May God pour a full measure of his strength on you and of his consolation on your dear ones, who have offered you to Him as "an acceptable sacrifice".*

*Goodbyes without regrets.*

You will say goodbye to your fathers and mothers, your brothers and sisters, your parishioners and friends, as affection prompts you to do. To all of them we send our greetings and blessings, so that they will not feel abandoned at your departure. You certainly feel the sacrifice that you are making for the Kingdom of God. But do not allow this to become an occasion or a reason for doubting or regretting the choice that you have made.

The Gospel tells us that the man who puts his hand to the plough should not look back. Let it be so for you, too. Continue to remember, love and cherish your dear ones, who have given you life, example, education and everything. But keep your eyes looking forward at what has become very important to you: spreading the Gospel, loving Christ, serving the Church.

*“It is fashionable today...”*

*My beloved missionaries, with all our affection we embrace you, your dear ones, your missionary confreres, and impart to all of you our Apostolic Blessing. We will call on Bishop Carretto to join us in a collegial blessing. As you know, after the Council, this became fashionable — and a good fashion it is!*

*We will extend our blessing to Fr. Ricceri and the members of the Superior Council and to all who assist him in the work for the missions, and to all the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians as well as to all the religious houses of the Sons of St. John Bosco and the Daughters of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello.*

## **2. Mystery of the Cross in Christian Life**

*During the General Audience on November 26, 1975 Paul VI spoke on the usefulness of our sufferings when they are joined to those of Christ and borne out of love for Him. The Pope's address offers excellent material for our meditation during the coming penitential season of Lent. We reproduce the text his address as it appeared on the English Edition of the “Osservatore Romano” of December 4, 1975:*

As we know, St Paul gravely urges even the first Christians, recruited with the proclamation of the Gospel, the Good Tidings, and summoned to membership of the society of love, the Church: "let not the Cross of Christ be emptied of its power, *non evanescatur Crux Christi*" (1 Cor 1, 17). And he observes how this subject defined his preaching as folly. "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and folly to Gentiles" (*ib.* 23, ff.). And it is a recurrent phenomenon, both in the history of the Church and in the psychology of human life: to evade the presence of the Cross, to remove pain and sacrifice from the laws of life.

An observation seems to us essential at this point: we know very well that Christ redeemed us by his Cross, by his passion and death; and we are ready, pious and moved, to make the *Way of the Cross*, his way of the Cross. But we are not so ready to allow the Cross of Christ to be reflected in our life, which is marked by it not only because of the salvation that flows from the Cross of Christ, but also because of the effect it has by its example on our conception of life, and what is more, the participation it demands from each of us, as St Paul also teaches us: "I rejoice", he writes to the Colossians (1, 24), "in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church".

#### *Understanding its mystery.*

Yes, the Christian must bear the Lord's Cross in some way and to some extent. In the first place with understanding of the "mystery of the Cross". Understanding? Let us rather say: meditation, adoration, love. We will never be able to explore thoroughly this mystery by means of which Christ, the lamb, the victim for our salvation, sacrificed himself and carried out the sensational metamorphosis, making his death the principle of his and our future resurrection (Cf. Phil 2, 5 ff.). But in this extraordinary mediation, we will make another incomparable discovery, that of the philosophy of sorrow; the value that human suffering can assume, the "usefulness" of our pain if it is ideally and whole-heartedly united with Christ's suffering.

It is useful for ourselves: as discipline of the disorders due to ideologies and passions that everyone experiences in himself (cf. Col 3,

5; Rom 8, 13). It is the pedagogy of mortification and penance that must give to our art of living the energy of interior freedom and self-control, the manly fortitude that makes us fit to exercise every virtue (cf. *S. Th.* I II, 61-3-4; II-II, 123).

It is useful for others: the cross becomes love, service, patience, sacrifice for the good of others. It is the example, and the sacrifice, that can give even to the humblest life the nobility and value of charity and holiness.

We are reminded that today there is need of this "sympathy" of ours for Christ's Cross by what is perhaps the most aggressive temptation of our time, hedonism, that is, comfort, entertainment, leisure, licentiousness, vice, wrongly raised to the honour of the primary aims of human existence. Today too may people wish to be happy, not with the happiness provided by a clear conscience and hard work, but happy to enjoy things and time. They seek the easy, the tangible, the pleasing, the instinctive as the ideal expression on life; and with what degrading consequences everyone, unfortunately, can see.

May Christ instil in us, on the contrary, the wisdom, the joy and the strength to bear His cross within us.

### 3. Paul VI to young sportsmen

*In the framework of the Holy Year pilgrimage of Italian sportsmen organized by the Archdiocese of Milan (Italy), the Holy Father received over five thousand sportsmen. To point out that sport can be a means to develop a fuller personality, he delivered the following address, which appeared on the English Edition of the "Osservatore Romano" of November 27, 1975:*

Let it not seem to you a matter outside our apostolic office, which opens before us the panorama of the whole Church and with it also that of the contemporary world, if our interest dwells for some time on your activities. We do so consciously, and with our spirit full of benevolence, as we have always done with the groups of sportsmen that have preceded you.

There are, in fact, many opportunities that put us in touch with

the representatives of sport; and we are very happy to take advantage of them in order to testify with what maternal satisfaction the Church looks at these sons of hers, who by their example give their contemporaries an exalting spectacle of strong, disciplined and courageous youth. Self-control, the cult of honour and loyalty, training to physical and moral courage by means of a rule of life accepted voluntarily: these are human values that Christianity has always recognized as hers. The Church, therefore, which has the mission of accepting and elevating everything that is beautiful, harmonious, well-balanced and strong in human nature, cannot but approve of sport, all the more so if the use of physical forces is accompanied by the use of moral energies, which can make it a magnificent school of spiritual strength and severe training for social contacts based on loyalty, on respect for the person of others, and on the spirit of friendship and brotherly solidarity.

So we encourage you to give the best of yourselves in your peaceful competitions, with that gaiety and enthusiasm that characterize your youth; but not without remembering, owing to the high spiritual mission that has been entrusted to us by God, that sport, though so noble and beautiful, must not be considered an end in itself, but only a means and an aid to give your personality, both human and professional, that fullness derived from the harmonious blending of physical and spiritual gifts. Sport is subordinate to the requirements of the spirit, which are certainly far higher and pre-eminent. Nothing must prevent you from carrying out your duties to God and to family life.

So be good sportsmen, dear sons, but be better citizens, with that equipment of virtues and qualities that make your existence fruitful and worthy. Still more, be excellent Christians who understand the value of life as the generous response to God the Creator and Saviour.

## IX. OBITUARY NOTICES

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### *Brother Alfred Astr*

\* Kromeriz, Czechoslovakia: 8.6.1903. † Gottwaldov: 18.6.1975. 72 years old; 46 prof.

### *Fr. Marcellus Azzoni*

\* Cingia de' Botti, Cremona, Italy: 1.1.1897. † Paterson, N.J., U.S.A.: 28.7.1975. 78 years old; 51 prof.; 45 priest.

He came to religion as a late vocation, and, after some years in parish work, he spent thirty-five years as chaplain to the Sisters at North Haledon, N.J. He worked hard at his ministry. The diocesan clergy held him in high esteem as a confessor. His characteristics were kindness, simplicity, friendliness, good humour and piety.

He was always ready to go, and he could say with Pope John: "Any day is a good day to die".

### *Brother Daniel Barrientos*

\* Cerecinos del Carrizal, Zamora, Spain: 13.5.1926. † Astudillo, Palencia, Spain: 27.10.1975. 49 years old; 11 prof.

He was a mortified religious, always ready to serve those who needed him. He did not lose his nerve in the face of the steady advance of death, but bore up bravely. His funeral was the triumph of the humble man.

### *Brother Franz Baumer*

\* Haag, Oberpfalz, Germany: 6.9.1909. † Helenenberg, Germany: 8.10.1975. 66 years old; 47 years prof.

His vocation was born in a good Christian home. After working at Buxheim, Ensdorf and Benediktbeuern, he qualified as a market-gardener and spent twenty-five years practising his métier and passing it on to the boys. He was held in high esteem by all.

*Fr. Guillermo Béguérisse*

\* Puebla, Mexico: 16.8.1894. † Guadalupe, Colombia: 13.11.1975. 81 years old; 48 prof.; 43 priest; 15 Rector.

Ironically enough, it was whilst the Missionary Centenary celebrations were being held in the Province that this generous missionary died. After years of hard grind in Cuba and Mexico, he put in twentyeight years in Colombia, at Agua de Dios and Contratación, working for the lepers. He died in harness in the village much beloved by Mexicans: Guadalupe.

*Fr. Wim van Bergen*

\* Breda, Netherlands: 22.4.1913. † Heinsberg, Germany: 1.1.1975. 61 years old; 43 prof.; 34 priest.

He taught French at the aspirantate. He combined a love of culture with a taste for games, and all this came in very useful when he became an army chaplain and later a parish priest. He died on the first day of the year, on the feast of Our Lady, to whom he had dedicated his life on the day of his ordination.

*Fr. Fiorino Bertoletti*

\* Fonteno, Bergamo, Italy: 12.7.1905. † Bergamo: 16.11.1975. 70 years old; 43 prof.; 35 priest.

He came to us as a late vocation and he already knew his way around; so he was well qualified to take on the hard life of the Alpine Regiment. He spent twenty-five years with the troops as chaplain with various units of the *Alpini*. At the end of his service, he lived out his remaining days with his family, and supplied for the Parish Priest, who was laid low with sickness. He finally took off with an infarction.

*Fr. Ventura Bonaventura*

\* Randazzo, Catania, Italy: 18.6.1912. † Catania: 20.10.1975. 63 years old; 46 prof.; 35 priest.

As a boy, he was in contact with us at Randazzo, our first house in Sicily. After a spell in state technical schools, he joined the Sons of Don Bosco and, after ordination, became an expert teacher. Always calm and understanding, he won the affection of all. He will be sorely missed.

*Brother Luigi Campo*

\* Pinerolo, Turin, Italy: 30.11.1895. † Mendoza, Argentina: 26.10.1975. 79 years old; 56 prof.

He worked with great enthusiasm at teaching, always with an eye to

the moral and religious training of his pupils. He was humble and cheerful, and a great worker. He has left us an inspiring example of faith, spirituality and generous dedication to the apostolate.

*Fr. Joseph Castagnotto*

\* La Morra, Cuneo, Italy: 13.2.1890. † Watsonville, California (U.S.A.): 6.1.1975. 84 years old; 62 prof.; 55 priest.

Fr. Joseph, commonly called, was a man zealous for souls. He spent many hours in the confessional giving advice and help to both young people and confreres. He loved to work the soil, since he believed in Paul's words: "If a man will not work, then let him not eat". He had a personal knowledge of Don Rua and found him to be a joyful and orderly person. He died suddenly after talking with a group of young people from the *Penny Club*. He went to his room and gave his soul peacefully to God.

*Fr. Rafal Chroboczek*

\* Wellendorf, Siedliska, Poland: 7.4.1906. † Campinas, S. Paulo, Brazil: 5.11.1975. 69 years old; 49 prof.; 41 priest; 17 Rector.

His was a generous soul, always faithful to Don Bosco's ideals. He consecrated himself to the service of his brothers through his Salesian priesthood. He held various responsible posts in a number of houses. He was immensely edifying in his charity, spirit of work and strong faith.

*Fr. William Cole*

\* Blackrock, Dublin, Ireland: 11.9.1915. † Dublin: 10.9.1975. 60 years old; 41 prof.; 31 priest; 13 Rector.

He did very valuable missionary work first in India and then in Australia, where he went for his health. He filled some responsible posts there. A years ago he returned home, and soon after there apeared the first signs of the illness that was to prove fatal. In spite of it all, he worked tirelessly for the Irish immigrants in London.

*Fr. José Cordeiro*

\* Texugueira, Milagres, Leiria, Portugal: 26.10.1925. † Manique Estoril. 49 years old; 25 prof.; 15 priest.

He worked in the houses at Mogofores and Manique as teacher, choir-master, spiritual director and bursar, and he was in charge of the Youth Centre and of the day-and-evening school. He preached and lived poverty with the fervour of the early Congregation, although he was always

very considerate with those who did not share his views. He worked with apostolic zeal in evangelizing the poor people whom he loved.

*Brother Martin Czajkowski*

\* Corpus, Misiones, Argentina: 4.9.1930. † Rosario: 17.8.1975. 44 years old; 23 prof.

Although he was hard on himself, he was always understanding with others. He played an important part in putting on the liturgical services, for which he used his rich voice to full effect. In this way he did much to foster the devotion of the boys and of the people.

*Fr. Eusebio De Angeli*

\* Riva Vercelli, Italy: 10.9.1889. † Turin: 13.11.1975. 86 years old; 65 prof.; 51 priest; 6 Rector.

He was a late vocation, and was possessed by the thought of the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Returning from the missions with his health in very bad condition, he spent the rest of his days in the service of the sick and as chaplain to the Salesian Sisters. Always ready for preaching and hearing confessions, hee nurtured his ministry with constant reading and prayer.

*Brother Giuseppe De Chastonay*

\* Milan, Italy: 7.4.1900. † Rovereto, Trent: 21.3.1975. 74 years old; 56 prof.

His spent most of his Salesian life in the houses of Trent, Gorizia and Rovereto. He was a simple and humble man, happy in his vocation, capable of withstanding great physical and moral suffering. His piety passed well beyond the bounds of the mandatory practices, and he enriched the community with his prayers and fortitude during years of infirmity.

*Fr. Franc Dündek*

\* Tišina, Slovenia, Jugoslavia: 2.6.1899. † Trstenik: 26.7.1965. 76 years of age; 58 prof.; 49 priest; 3 Rector.

His strong point was obedience to the Pope and the superiors, even in day-to-day affairs. He taught Maths and Philosophy before World War II, and then he entered parish life, where he finished up.

*Fr. José Fernández*

\* Las Razas, Madrid, Spain: 9.7.1885. † Sanlúcar la Mayor, Seville: 5.4.1975.  
89 years of age; 65 prof.; 63 priest; 9 master of novices.

He found his vocation with the first Salesians sent by Don Bosco to Utrera. Teacher, educator, confessor, he spent all his time in training-houses at all levels. He lived in constant union with God and had a tender devotion to Our Lady. He was responsible for translating the *Memorie Biografiche* into Spanish. He never wasted time, faithful to the dictum of Don Bosco: "Work, work, work".

*Fr. Luiz Fras*

\* Balovci-Beltinci, Slovenia, Jugoslavia: 8.5.1904. † Niteroi, Brazil: 8.9.1975.  
71 years old; 42 prof.; 34 priest.

He worked in the parishes of Niteroi and Pendotiba. At Niteroi he founded the "Heart of Jesus Welfare Association", which he ran with great zeal, trusting in Providence, for thirty years, finishing up with an educational complex: free elementary school, trade school for women, youth club and evening classes for adult literacy. And all in the spirit of Don Bosco.

*Fr. Roberto Germano*

\* Rincón de Francia, Paisandú, Uruguay: 8.5.1880. † Bagé, Rio Grande do Sul,  
Brazil: 29.1.1973. 92 years old; 76 prof.; 70 priest.

All his life long he was faithful to his religious and priestly duties. He as a great worker and a first-class teacher. He was well known at Bagé — where he worked for 70 years — for his optimism and friendliness. accepted change as it took place, if not for himself at least in others. His death as an easy transfer to fuller life.

*Fr. Ferdinand van Hoof*

\* Lommel, Belgium: 12.10.1932. † Mariakerke: 18.2.1975. 51 years old; 31 prof.;  
22 priest; 12 Rector.

He died suddenly during a study-group session of the Christian Technical Schools. He died as he had lived, a hard worker, enthused with Don Bosco and his methods, always open to progress. Excellent Salesian, always available for anyone or for any kind of work. He was a source of strength and comfort to all who knew him.

*Fr. Robert Hoornaert*

\* Rollegem, Belgium: 22.2.1906. † Louvain, Belgium: 18.2.1975. 69 years old; 47 prof.; 39 priest.

He was a simple priest of profound integrity, open to human misery in all its forms, a man of prayer and joyful service. Immediately after ordination, he was sent as a missionary to the Belgian Congo, where he stayed for ten years. On his return to Belgium he was co-ordinator of the apostolate at Liège, and then at Woluwe. His last responsibility was Delegate for the Cooperators. He was much sought out for his advice in the confessional.

*Fr. Edward Jackson*

\* London, England: 6.11.1904. † There: 21.11.1975. 71 years old; 48 prof.; 39 priest; 4 Rector.

He was a late vocation, but he was not slow to pick up Don Bosco's wave-length. He did theology at Turin and was ordained there, and then went off to South Africa, where he worked for almost twenty years, first as teacher and then also as bursar and rector. On his return to London, he was Provincial Economer for 14 years. Besides being an outstanding administrator, he was always a faithful priest.

*Fr. Josef Janus*

\* Klokočov, Příbor, Czechoslovakia: 24.8.1909. † Brno: 26.10.1975. 66 years of age; 47 prof.; 38 priest; 3 Rector.

*Fr. František Jurečka*

\* Lipník n. Beč., Czechoslovakia: 20.7.1914. † There: 8.8.1975. 61 years old; 43 prof.; 34 priest.

*Fr. Josef Kelm*

\* Berlin, Germany: 2.9.1934. † Haag, Upper Bavaria, Germany: 11.10.1975. 41 years old; 17 prof.; 7 priest.

He had to overcome a host of difficulties before he could enter the Congregation. When he had finished his studies, he was ordained priest in his parish in East Berlin. Like the good Salesian he was, he set about his work of educating the young. His strong point was working with the difficult boys and the handicapped.

*Stefan Kohaut, Deacon.*

\* Malacky, Slovakia: 17.8.1900. † Santa Isabel, Brazil: 3.11.1971. 71 years old; 39 prof.

*Fr. Donald Leaver*

\* London, England: 21.5.1886. † There: 27.10.1975. 89 years old; 71 prof.; 63 priest.

He had a keen mind and took his degree in theology in Turin in 1912. During his time there, he became acquainted with Don Rua, whom he always loved and respected. He was the doyen of the Province. He was a fine musician, a man of wide culture and of exemplary piety. His apostolate was among the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians. The large numbers of our Sisters at the requiem spoke volumes for their gratitude to this good Salesian.

*Brother Herminio Martínez*

\* Acahay, Paraguari, Paraguay: 25.4.1946. † Rosario, Argentina: 11.8.1972. 26 years old; 4 prof.

*Brother Angel Morales*

\* Arévalo de la Sierra, Soria, Spain: 1.3.1896 † Cádiz: 4.11.1975. 79 years old; 54 prof.

After 24 years of missionary work in India, he returned to his original Province, Seville, to continue his work. He had a great spirit of self-sacrifice and a great love for the young.

*Fr. Egidio Paoletto*

\* Mozzecane, Verona, Italy: 11.7.1907. † Turin, Italy: 8.10.1975. 68 years old; 46 prof.; 38 priest.

He gave the best years of his life to the Indian missions, for which he always retained a strong hankering. Sent home for the sake of his health, he worked hard for vocations and brought a number of men into the Congregation. He spent his last years looking after the sick. He was gradually overtaken by his fatal ailment, but he was never heard to complain: he asked only for prayers. He offered his life for his parish.

*Fr. Frédéric Petry*

\* Millen, Belgium: 24.4.1922. † Tongeren, Belgium: 23.12.1974. 52 years old; 31 prof.; 22 priest.

He had been parish priest of Tongeren for only a few years, but he

had already won the firm affection of his parishioners. He was strong, lively, and full of Salesian optimism. Two days before his death, he reaffirmed his love for Don Bosco and his joy in the priesthood.

*Fr. József Pintér*

\* Bogyoszló, Sopron, Hungary: 6.1.1904. † Esztergom, Hungary: 1.10.1975. 71 years old; 51 prof.; 43 priest.

For over forty years his work lay with the Shrine of the Holy Cross, attached to the Salesian mother house in Hungary. He was spiritual director, teacher of liturgy, parish priest and rector of the Shrine. He looked after the pilgrims who flocked there from distant parts. He suffered greatly from physical maladies, but overcame all difficulties; indeed, he regularly scaled precipitous tracks to minister to the needs of people living in remote places. He never complained, least of all of others' shortcomings.

*Fr. Francisco Portero*

\* Montilla, Córdoba, Spain: 10.3.1943. † near Antequera, Málaga, Spain, in a motor accident: 15.7.1975. 32 years old; 15 prof.; 4 priest.

He was full of the Christian life: he believed, he hoped and he was interested in everyone. He loved unadulterated truth, without subterfuge or camouflage: it was the "Yea, yea or no, no" of the Gospels. He devoted himself by preference to the most needy, and his unstinting work of education was sustained by a deep interior life.

*Brother Thomas Pulingathil*

\* Kottayam, Kerala, India: 27.5.1931. † Irinjalakuda, Kerala: 15.8.1975. 44 years old; 16 prof.

He was an exemplary Salesian Brother and distinguished himself in the exact performance of his duty. He was a tireless worker and always sought to do all he could for the young. He spent most of his life teaching, and his pupils responded with real affection. He was a man of deep piety and great patience, qualities that stood him in good stead in his last illness, which he suffered with an edifying serenity. He died on 5th August, to celebrate the feast of his heavenly Mother in paradise.

*Brother Maximilian Rasp*

\* Groppenheim, Oberpfalz, Germany: 29.7.1897. † Würzburg, Bavaria, Germany: 15.11.1975. 78 years old; 45 prof.

At the age of thirty-two he left his home, where he had received a thorough-going Christian training with his seven brothers and sisters. His

competence in the little schooling he had received and his practical bent enabled him to do a fine job at Benediktbeuern, Helenenberg, Sannerz and Würzburg. Following a serious illness, he could not continue his normal duties during his last years. He suffered in silence and exemplary resignation as a good and faithful religious.

*Brother Urbano Revilla*

\* Arévalo, Avila, Spain: 3.8.1895. † Barcelona: 6.8.1975. 80 years old; 61 prof.

Instructed in the school of life, he excelled in book-binding, electrical maintenance and photography. He put everything into making the Salesian youth theatre an instrument of the apostolate. A life so abundant in generosity would have been impossible without a strong spiritual foundation, and this he claimed to have received from Don Rinaldi. He felt himself strongly loved by God and Our Lady. Altogether a model for anyone desirous of dedicating himself to the young.

*Fr. Patrick Riordan*

\* Dungarvan, Waterford, Eire: 14.4.1917. † Pontypool, Wales: 25.12.1969. 52 years old; 32 prof.; 23 priest.

*Brother Bortolo Rizzato*

\* Fara Vicentino, Vicenza, Italy: 25.9.1905. † Cuneo, Italy: 9.9.1975. Nearly 70 years old; 43 prof.

He left us somewhat unexpectedly, and we remember him as a simple, cheerful and hard-working man. He was an excellent Salesian, with a great devotion to Our Lady and a strong attachment to Don Bosco.

*Fr. Paolo Rizzo*

\* Trapani, Italy: 25.5.1913. † Catania: 10.10.1975. 62 years old; 41 prof.; 32 priest.

His uncertain health did not prevent him from working constantly and generously. His was a simple, kind soul, and he worked in the school, teaching, assisting and ministering spiritually. His chief effort was directed towards the young, whom he loved and who reciprocated that love.

*Brother Ramón Ruiz*

\* Sutatenza, Tunja, Colombia: 4.10.1897. † Bogotá: 17.9.1975. 77 years old; 53 prof.

This man was one of the outstanding personalities that occasionally bestride the Salesian scene. He was giant of work and piety, a man after

the heart of Don Bosco. Big though he was, he was basically a simple type, radiating love and interior calm. To the world, he was a friend and an exemplar; to the poor and needy, a brother; to the Congregation, a faithful son.

*Brother Ludwig Schmid*

\* Dürnkonreuth, Oberpfalz, Germany: 2.6.1893. † Schwandorf, Oberpfalz, Germany: 13.11.1975. 82 years of age; 48 prof.

He came from a large family, and, after a long spell as a prisoner of war, he joined the Society at the age of 33. He worked hard, served God and said his prayers. Perhaps that is why he received only two obediences in his whole life: 1927 Marienhausen, farm-work, and 1939, Ensdorf, same work. Towards the end, time and toil took their toll, affecting his legs and his heart. He bore all with great serenity. He was the doyen of the lay-brothers of the Province.

*Fr. Pedro Vicente da Silva Morais*

\* Lisbon, Portugal: 26.11.1884. † There: 24.10.1975. 90 years of age; 72 prof.; 52 priest; 3 Rector.

The last survivor of the original Province, he had to go into exile in Spain and Italy during the political troubles. He finished his theological studies and was attached to the Portuguese Bulletin. At Evora he spent thirty-two years doing a wide range of jobs, one of which was somewhat unusual — building harmoniums. He was versatile and knowledgeable; but he paid the price of having to suffer bitter misunderstandings with others. Much of his time was devoted to promoting the Past Pupils' Association in Portugal.

*Fr. Rudolf Slezák*

\* Špačince, Slovakia: 26.9.1909. † Šaštínske Stráže: 5.6.1974. 64 years old; 43 prof.; 35 priest; 14 Rector.

*Fr. Frederick Stublings*

\* Fulham, London, England: 4.10.1907. † Daleside, South Africa: 24.11.1975. 68 years old; 50 prof.; 44 priest; 15 Rector.

He spent almost his whole Salesian life in South Africa, that is, from 1926, when he arrived at Cape Town to continue the course of philosophy that he had started in England. The confreres, pupils and past pupils will always remember him as a hard worker. Of an upright and exemplary

character, he laboured generously in school and parish. Death took him suddenly, but not unprepared.

*Fr. Aldo Talin*

\* Alano di Piave, Belluno, Italy: 4.11.1915. † Udine: 24.8.1975. 59 years old; 39 prof.; 31 priest.

Kind and friendly, he was loved by all and he radiated a tranquillity of spirit. He spent all his Salesian life in teaching with a great spirit of self-sacrifice. He climbed his final Calvary without losing his smile.

*Fr. Román Torrabella*

\* Estach, Lérida, Spain: 22.2.1914. † Barcelona, Spain: 28.9.1975. 61 years old; 42 prof.; 31 priest.

Born in a little mountain village, he loved nature and solitude. He did not rate himself highly academically, but he was nevertheless a valuable teacher of Latin and he worked unstintingly in school. His was a life of suffering: fleeing from the Communists in the Civil War, apprehensive of the changes in the Church and the Congregation, and finally afflicted with a disease that gradually rendered him incommunicado. He extended himself in helping the humble, the old, the infirm.

*Fr. Fiorentino Valle*

\* Livorno Ferraris, Vercelli, Italy: 8.3.1904. † Fossano, Cuneo, Italy: 27.8.1975. 71 years old; 53 prof.; 44 priest.

He was a skilled teacher of literature. He worked with the boys, past pupils and Co-operators. Returning from his third talk to Co-operators in the one day in different places, he was taken short by an attack of diabetes, collapsed by his scooter, and passed away. "Whenever a Salesian dies on active service, the Congregation has gained a great triumph" (Don Bosco).

*Fr. Ernesto Vece*

\* Tucumán, Argentina: 12.1.1907. † There: 28.9.1975. 69 years of age; 50 prof.; 43 priest.

He was a mortified man, and spent long hours in the confessional, especially with the confreres. This he did at high personal cost, because he had to cover great distances to pay his regular visits to the houses around Cuyo. He was always calm and cheerful.

*Fr. Alessandro Verde*

\* S. Antimo, Naples, Italy: 13.7.1906. † There: 4.8.1975. 69 years old; 50 prof.; 43 priest.

He had an attractive, expansive personality, with his good humour and pleasant voice. He was above all a priest, and this came through in whatever task he was engaged. He had the gift of inspiring others with his own enthusiasm for the apostolate.

*Brother Severino Vieira*

\* Lagoa Nova, Paraíba, Brazil: 6.10.1891. † Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro: 24.9.1975. 83 years old; 60 prof.

He was a great teacher, specializing in preparing boys for entry into the secondary school. He worked hard for the Boys' Club. For many years he ran the band, and was himself an accomplished clarinettist. In 1971 he became quite blind, and this was the heavy cross he had to bear in his last days.

*Fr. Francis Walland*

\* Lesce, Slovenia, Jugoslavia: 9.8.1887. † Varazze, Italy: 14.2.1975. 87 years old; 71 prof.; 63 priest; 8 Rector; 7 Provincial.

His twin loves were the Gospels and culture. He taught in a number of theologates, including the PAS. As Provincial, he organized the religious, Salesian and cultural life of the Jugoslav Province. He was writer and preacher of progressive views, which earned him the opposition of the conservatives. He was an exemplary Salesian, kind with others, hard on himself. He went through a torrid time with trials and misunderstandings, but he stuck to his guns and finished faithful to Christ, Don Bosco and the Congregation.

*Fr. Hugo Weber*

\* Ettlingenweier, Germany: 2.2.1890. † Ensdorf, Germany: 13.10.1975. 87 years old; 54 prof.; 60 priest.

He lived in the country with his fifteen brothers and sisters and at first he could not follow his vocation because of his health. He became a priest in the diocese of Fribourg, and five years later became a Salesian. He was first a secondary-school teacher, then passed on to theology, until a long illness confined him to his room. This did not prevent him from writing copiously for magazines in defence of the rights of the Church.

**4th Elenco 1975**

- 126 Coad. ASTR Alfredo † a Gottwaldov (Cecoslovacchia) 1975 a 72 a.  
127 Sac. AZZONI Marcello † a Paterson, N.J. (USA) 1975 a 78 a.  
128 Coad. BARRIENTOS Daniele † Astudillo (Palencia - Spagna) 1975 a 49 a.  
129 Coad. BAUMER Francesco † Hellenenberg (Germania) 1975 a 66 a.  
130 Sac. BEGUERISSE Guglielmo † Guadalupe (Colombia) 1975 a 81 a.  
131 Sac. BERGEN Guglielmo van † Heinsberg (Germania) 1975 a 61 a.  
132 Sac. BERTOLETTI Fiorino † Bergamo (Italia) 1975 a 70 a.  
133 Sac. BONAVENTURA Ventura † Catania (Italia) 1975 a 63 a.  
134 Coad. CAMPO Luigi † Mendoza (Argentina) 1975 a 79 a.  
135 Sac. CASTAGNOTTO Giuseppe † Watsonville (USA) 1975 a 84 a.  
136 Sac. CHROBOCZEK Raffaele † Campinas, São Paulo (Brasile) 1975 a 69 a.  
137 Sac. COLE Guglielmo † Dublin (Irlanda) 1975 a 60 a.  
138 Sac. CORDEIRO Giuseppe † Manique (Estoril - Portogallo) 1975 a 49 a.  
139 Coad. CZAJKOWSKI Martino † Rosario (Argentina) 1975 a 44 a.  
140 Sac. DE ANGELI Eusebio † Torino (Italia) 1975 a 86 a.  
141 Coad. DE CHASTONAY Giuseppe † Rovereto (Trento - Italia) 1975 a 74 a.  
142 Sac. DÜNDEK Francesco † Trstenik (Slovenia - Jugoslavia) 1965 a 76 a.  
143 Sac. FERNANDEZ Giuseppe † Sanlucar La Mayor (Sevilla - Spagna) 1975  
a 89 a.  
144 Sac. FRAS Luigi † Niteroi (Brasile) 1975 a 71 a.  
145 Sac. GERMANO Roberto † Bage (Rio Grande do Sul - Brasile) 1973 a 92 a.  
146 Sac. HOOF Ferdinando van † Mariakerke (Belgio) 1975 a 51 a.  
147 Sac. HOORNAERT Roberto † Leuven (Belgio) 1975 a 69 a.  
148 Sac. JACKSON Edoardo † Londra (Gran Bretagna) 1975 a 71 a.  
149 Sac. JANUS Giuseppe † Brno (Cecoslovacchia) 1975 a 66 a.  
150 Sac. JURECKA Francesco † Lipnik (Cecoslovacchia) 1975 a 61 a.  
151 Sac. KELM Giuseppe † Haag (Oberbayern - Germania) 1975 a 41 a.  
152 Diac. KOHAUT Stefano † Santa Isabel (Brasil) 1971 a 71 a.  
153 Sac. LEAVER Donald † Londra (Gran Bretagna) 1975 a 89 9a.  
154 Coad. MARTINEZ Erminio † Rosario (Argentina) 1972 a 26 a.  
155 Coad. MORALES Angelo † Cadiz (Spagna) 1975 a 79 a.  
156 Sac. PAOLETTO Egidio † Torino (Italia) 1975 a 68 a.  
157 Sac. PETRY Federico † Tongeren (Belgio) 1974 a 52 a.  
158 Sac. PINTER Giuseppe † Esztergom (Ungheria) 1975 a 71 a.  
159 Sac. PORTERO Francesco † Antequera (Malaga - Spagna) 1975 a 32 a.  
160 Coad. PULIGATHIL Tomaso † Irinjalakuda, Kerala (India) 1975 a 44 a.  
161 Coad. RASP Massimiliano † Würzburg (Bayern - Germania) 1975 a 78 a.  
162 Coad. REVILLA Urbano † Barcelona (Spagna) 1975 a 80 a.  
163 Sac. RIORDAN Patrizio † Cowley (Gran Bretagna) 1969 a 52 a.  
164 Coad. RIZZATO Bortolo † Cuneo (Italia) 1975 a 70 a.  
165 Sac. RIZZO Paolo † Catania (Italia) 1975 a 62 a.  
166 Coad. RUIZ Raimondo (Ramòn) † Bogotà (Colombia) 1975 a 77 a.

- 167 Coad. SCHMID Luigi † Schwandorf (Oberpfalz - Germania) 1975 a 82 a.
- 168 Sac. SILVA MORAIS Pietro Vincenzo † Lisboa (Portogallo) 1975 a 90 a.
- 169 Sac. SLEZÁK Rodolfo † Šaštínske Stráže (Slovacchia) 1974 a 64 a.
- 170 Sac. STUBBINGS Federico † Daleside (Africa del Sud) 1975 a 68 a.
- 171 Sac. TALIN Aldo † Udine (Italia) 1975 a 59 a.
- 172 Sac. TORRABELLA Romà † Barcelona (Spagna) 1975 a 61 a.
- 173 Sac. VALLE Fiorentino † Fossano (Cuneo - Italia) 1975 a 71 a.
- 174 Sac. VECE Ernesto † Tucumàn (Argentina) 1975 a 68 a.
- 175 Sac. VERDE Alessandro † S. Antimo (Napoli - Italia) 1975 a 69 a.
- 176 Coad. VIEIRA Severino † Niteroi (Rio de Janeiro - Brasile) 1975 a 83 a.
- 177 Sac. WALLAND Francesco - Varazze (Italia) 1975 a 87 a.
- 178 Sac. WEBER Ugo † Ensdorf (Germania) 1975 a 85 a.

