



ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

SUMMARY

I. Letter of the Rector Major (page 3)

The highway of post-capitular renewal.

DECENTRALIZATION AND UNITY IN THE CONGREGATION TODAY

1. **Unity in the Congregation** — Our Society is an ecclesial reality — Our Society has its own proper and special charism — The Salesian Society is a genuine Religious Congregation — The Salesian Society operates at world level — 2. **How decentralization works** — The provincial community in the world community — Tensions and dangers — The need for constant striving for balance — Taking on new responsibilities — 3. **Towards a campaign of fidelity** — Tension and charity — As the SGC gauges the situation — Fostering unity.

II. Instructions and norms (none in this issue)

III. Communications (page 44)

1. Province modifications — 2. Provincial appointments — 3. World Congress of Salesian Brothers — 4. The PAS becomes UPS — 5. European Convention on the Preventive System — 6. Preparation Course for Future Missionaries — 7. Brotherly Solidarity reaches L 200,000,000.

IV. Activities of the Superior Council and matters of general interest (page 51)

V. Documents (page 56)

1. Appointment of new Councillor for Apostolate of Youth — 2. Unification of the Provinces of Quito and Cuenca — 3. Erection of Delegation of Méndez y Gualaquiza — 4. World Congress of Salesian Brothers — 5. Erection of the PAS to a Pontifical University.

VI. From the Provincial Newsletters (page 74)

1. Provincials to confrères — 2. Centenary of Mgr. Versiglia — 3. Questionnaire on boys' retreats — 4. Vacation Week — 5. Salesian Family Convention — 6. Travelling Missionary Exhibition — 7. "My vacation on the mission-field".

VII. Pontifical Magisterium (page 83)

1. Ten ways to help modern man pray better — 2. Rebuilding unity within the Church — 3. Mission Sunday in the light of the Holy Year.

VIII. Necrology (page 95)

Third list for 1973.

I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Rome, October 1973

My dear confrères and sons,

I greet you with two items of family news that I know will bring you much pleasure. You will recall that the Councillor for Youth Apostolate, Father Castillo, was appointed coadjutor bishop of Trujillo, Venezuela, some time ago. In accord with the Superior Council I have now appointed his successor. I believe it was no surprise to the Provincials that Father Juvenal Dho, vice-Rector Magnificus of the PAS (Rome) was the one to be elected to the Superior Council. His accomplishments in this field of activity are indeed considerable; and with Salesian simplicity he has accepted the position and will place his excellent scientific preparation and practical experience at the service of the Congregation. I ask the prayers and collaboration of all confrères for Father Dho in his new responsibilities.

And now to the Special Provincial Chapters. The Superior Council has put in three very busy months and at the time of writing has almost finished studying the SPC's for approval. With the many deficiencies inherent in human nature, the task has nevertheless been carried out seriously and diligently.

The highway of post-capitular renewal

We must first of all express our deep gratitude to the Regional Concillors and the members of the various Commissions, who have worked without stint and made a fine contribution to the analysis of each document received.

Speaking personally, the contact I made with the Provincial Chapters gave me much food for thought. I saw these Provincial communities (so vastly different) all engaged in a common task, surmounting peculiar local problems and applying to their regions the impressive renewal programme of the SGC.

I felt that God was in our midst: there was such an abundance of goodwill, practical proposals, brave decisions for renewal and fidelity to Don Bosco coupled with the acceptance of today's difficulties. Naturally, other problems were inevitably manifest, and there were cases of uncertainty, misunderstanding and puzzlement.

But every document gave clear indications of fundamental loyalty to the SGC and an indisputable love for Don Bosco and the Congregation. This makes us confident that, if we unite our efforts, we shall succeed in carrying out the behests of the SGC, despite the difficulties and obstacles that come with modern times and circumstances.

The approval of the SPC deliberations has indeed marked out in a practical and detailed way the highway we have to follow in translating the SGC into reality; and I am confident that every Province will accept this as a deeply responsible duty and will also bear in mind any adjustments made by the Superior Council.

These are our preliminary steps, and, together with the experiences of other Religious Institutes and of the Church itself in these post-conciliar times, they make us aware that we are treading a delicate path indeed.

The process of decentralization

When I reflect on my task as Rector Major at this point in our history, I am conscious of the grave responsibility I have of carrying our article 129 of the new Constitutions. I always read it with a sense of fear: « The Rector Major is the successor

of Don Bosco and the father and centre of unity for the whole Salesian Family ».

I reflect deeply and often on these words; I discuss them with other superiors and people who can shed light on them so that I may realise all the vast implications, the responsibilities and the problems they entail.

For this purpose, while setting the wheels of renewal rolling in all the Provinces of the Congregation, I want you to ponder with me on the responsibility that weighs so heavily on me and the Superior Council.

We are on the point of beginning our process of decentralization as directed by the SGC. On the other hand the same SGC was well aware of the grave dangers that would accompany a decentralization that was not well understood and not in harmony with the life-giving energies contained in those things that unite the Congregation; and so it stated, « Government at world level ensures the overall unity of the Society in its work and action ».(1)

My dear confrères, you see plainly how important, nay fundamental, it is to give full and adequate treatment to this delicate and urgent matter; we are all involved in it: indeed the very life and existence of our Congregation depend on it. So my subject is: —

DECENTRALIZATION AND UNITY IN THE CONGREGATION TODAY

I have said that we are all involved; and so I beg every Salesian to peruse these pages carefully. Especially do I appeal to those who are directly and immediately responsible for translating the directives into practice. What follows now will clarify in a concrete way how far the renewal required by the SGC is inti-

(1) Const. 124.

mately bound up with (indeed subordinated to) the balance and harmony of the two components: decentralization and unity.

To really get to grips with the subject it would be well to re-read the Acts of SGC nos. 138, 636, and especially 713-725; and also the new Constitutions, articles 123-127.

I want to make it clear that it is not a matter of treating unity and decentralization separately, as though they were mutually opposed. This is certainly not the case! We need to be convinced that one implies the other: lively unity in the Congregation finds its fulfilment these days in decentralization; just as genuine decentralization implies a unifying effort that is explicit and practical.

The will of the SGC is that the Congregation be vitally one in its decentralization. It directs that the decentralization be a pluralistic realization of its mission: « The Province is responsible for structures to maintain unity with the centre and within its own confines, and also those structures which will make it possible to fulfil our Salesian mission in a way which meets local needs ».(2)

It is plain that this matter requires serious treatment and doctrinal reflection; and some confrères may find this rather difficult. Nevertheless I believe the problem demands this sort of approach, and it will throw light on the difficulties the times impose on the Congregation.

1. UNITY IN THE CONGREGATION

To clarify this matter it would be well to examine into the nature of our Congregation.

To consider unity and decentralization as simply sociological and juridical is just not good enough. Our assessment must be based on faith: we have to consider the Salesian vocation-identity in the Church.

(2) ASGC 139.

A propos of this we need to ponder a number of basic principles as set down by the SGC. They will constitute the platform for our reflections. These fundamental principles contain a wealth of doctrine. My letter is hardly the place for dwelling on and dilating in depth—which is a task for experts; but I feel I ought to touch briefly on a number of points, not only because they are basic, but also because they will be of considerable help in viewing the problem of our unity and decentralization in proper perspective.

Our Society is an ecclesial reality

This is a most important principle. The Society of St. Francis of Sales is not just an « institutional organization » at the sociological level; it is a living part of the Church and shares its nature.

Now the Church, as described by the Council, (3) is a reality with a « sacramental » character. It is a living « organism » made up of two elements that cannot be separated: a divine element, animating and unifying, and a human element with a social dimension. The human element is naturally dependent on changing times; but it is inseparably linked with the divine element and cannot be reduced to any of the purely human institutional forms.

This sacramental reality needs to be stressed these days because the intense process of secularization that is taking place is imperilling the realization of what constitutes the peculiar « nature » of the Church. Present day cultural changes make certain revisions in the human elements of the Church inevitable, and this is especially so in the sociological field. We have to accept that the anthropological sciences have progressed and require criticism that is truly objective. But it would be naive to overlook the main characteristic of the « nature » of the Church, its « vital

(3) Cf. Lumen Gentium n. 8.

principle » and the specifically « sacramental » manner whereby it is involved in the social plans.

Our overall vision becomes falsified and obscured and lifeless if we are not convinced of the operating presence of Jesus Christ and the enlivening influence of his Holy Spirit who make the Church the Mystical Body of the Lord.

Now our humble Society is a small living part of the Church's sacramental reality. Hence it is correct to state that it has a charismatic nature whereby its institutional and social aspect is organically linked to the presence of Jesus and the influence of his Spirit. This is well put by the first article of our new Constitutions: « With humble gratitude we believe that the Salesian Society came into being not only by human agency but by the providence of God. It is this active presence of the Spirit which is the firm basis of our hope and it urges us to fidelity ».

At the base of our common vocation there is the very real gift of God, the lively presence of the Spirit; and this is the origin and explanation of the unity of the Congregation. The bonds of our communion go far deeper than simple human friendship; they certainly do not exclude it—indeed they favour it and are benefited by its presence. But one must delve deeper still: communion is a gift that comes from the Holy Spirit. To quote an eminent theologian in support of this asseveration: « From the Christian angle we can go in search of « communion » only because it has already been bestowed beforehand by God in Christ and in the Holy Spirit who imbues us. Every desire for union demands a permanent state of being-already-united; and this does not depend on us; it is not due to our natural capacity to open up to others; it is because God has made us his children and co-heirs of his Son. The gift of unity is beyond our powers of disposal: it derives from God, is perfected in God, and one cannot dispose of God ».(4)

(4) Von Balthasar: *Communio: un programma su « Communio »*, n. 1, 1972, p. 6.

This basic aspect of our « communion of unity » is duly emphasised by our SGC.

In the Constitutions Salesians are defined as « a community of the baptized », (5) « united by the bond of charity and simple vows », hence with « one heart and one soul in supporting one another and in loving and serving God ». Our whole consecrated life is viewed in this light; it is a means to « greatly favour such communion ». (6) In the profession formula the Salesian engages to live in the Salesian Society, one in spirit and in action with his brothers. (7)

So to our first basic principle: we have to consider unity and decentralization in the light of the true nature of the Congregation as an institution of Religious Life in the Church—to treat it as a gift of God and so avoid the deviations that result from « horizontalism ». As changes come about we must strive to show forth this presence of the Spirit in us and « in our own Salesian way try to become signs of and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are the poorest and most in need ». (8)

Our Society has its own proper and special charism

Why is our humble Society to be considered a living part of the Church? A thoughtful and practical answer to this is to be found in the first document of the SGC.

When we speak of our proper charism we are not saying that Don Bosco was a thinking genius discovering new theological and anthropological dimensions; we do not claim he was an Augustine of Hippo or a modern anthropologist; but we do see

(5) Const. 2.

(6) Const. 51.

(7) Const. 74.

(8) Const. 2.

in him the original qualities of a Founder—the amazingly fruitful collaboration whereby he used the gifts bestowed on him by the Holy Spirit, multiplying his talents and spreading them throughout the world for the salvation of the young.

These gifts exhibit a great variety. Taken together as a whole they constitute our vocation-identity—they are the components of the vital unity in our Society. The SGC lists them and defines them clearly and thoroughly. Here are the main ones.

— The Lord and his Spirit are actively present among us urging us to apply to today's needs the permanent gift bestowed on Don Bosco.(9)

— The « mission » given us by the Church.(10)

— What constitutes the « Salesian Spirit ».(11)

— Our own special way of living the Gospel.(12)

— Our way of providing an apostolic presence: the Preventive System.(13)

— Our particular community life and its family spirit.(14)

When we refer to the Congregation's proper charism we are touching on an aspect that is closely linked with its « divine element »; it constitutes its identity and is indispensable for its existence. This set-up means that if the Congregation is not united it ceases to exist.

It is to the book of our Constitutions we must turn for our authentic and proper charism—its definition, its component parts and the way we put it into practice.

« Outlining for us the essential features of our vocation it offers us a way of life, ready to reach the fullness of love: "I

(9) ASGC 1-22.

(10) ASGC 23-57.

(11) ASGC 85-105.

(12) ASGC 106-127.

(13) ASGC 58-84, 93, 360, 365; Const. 25.

(14) Cfr. ASGC 84, 481-503.

will run the way of your commands; you will give freedom to my heart.” » (15)

The Constitutions are the official key to our particular vocation; the principles they contain have received the Church's authoritative confirmation. We find in them « the spiritual riches of our Salesian traditions and the basic norms for the life of our Society ». They thus « give direction to our profession and shed a radiance on our fidelity », and they assure us « that the way of life we have chosen is true to the Gospel ».(16)

It follows that the Constitutions are our point of reference par excellence when dealing with our religious life and its characteristic aims; they are the greatest criterion of unity the Congregation possesses.

Another basic principle: Decentralization cannot ignore or tamper with the component parts of our particular charism as defined in the Constitutions. Rather it must translate them into concrete situations. The reason is of course that decentralization implies greater participation and responsibility, caring for and furthering the spiritual riches that make up our vocation. Hence unity and decentralization necessarily and basically mean that every Province must improve its understanding of the characteristic properties of our spirit and know, study and practise the Constitutions. If this is lacking, the very fabric that constitutes the life and unity of the Congregation will fall apart.

The Salesian Society is a genuine Religious Congregation

A further step in our argument: The Society of St. Francis of Sales (as an institution) is not simply a mighty apostolic workforce; it is not at all a mere spiritual brotherhood. Before the SGC maybe some thought along these lines, perhaps even suggesting that our Congregation should have evolved into a

(15) Const.: Foreword.

(16) Const. 200.

Secular Institute. But the SGC has clarified also this facet of our vocation-identity. It formally declared that the Society of St. Francis of Sales is a « Religious Congregation », specifically distinct from a « Secular Institute ». Hence to consider such a change seriously (even hypothetically) would make one guilty of an arbitrary and inadmissible tampering with our identity.

There is not the slightest doubt that today the signs of the times urgently require us to evolve and adapt ourselves, with the many social and cultural changes this entails; but we have always to respect the requirements of our identity in the « form » of our life as set out explicitly by the Constitutions. The early history of our Society makes it abundantly clear that Don Bosco wanted his closest collaborators to live in a Religious Congregation, albeit with maximum flexibility.(17)

Don Bosco wrote to the Vicar Capitular of Turin, « I aim to set up a Society in which the members retain all their civil rights as far as the governing authorities are concerned, yet at the same time constitute a genuine moral body in the eyes of the Church ».(18)

His first collaborators were not at all attracted by the idea of being « Religious » (« *frati* » (19) was the popular expression); but they understood very clearly that that was what Don Bosco wanted of them; and John Cagliero was quoted as saying, « "Frate" or not, I shall not leave Don Bosco ».(20)

With a canonical clarity that is no accident the new Constitutions affirm, « Our Society is made up of clerical and lay religious who live in community and make public profession of the evangelical counsels. Within the Church it is a Pontifical Institute of exempt religious living an active life embracing different rites ».(21)

(17) ASGC 128-180.

(18) MB VII 563.

(19) MB III 547; Annali I pp. 12 & 31.

(20) MB VI 334-335.

(21) Const. 3.

The Secular Institutes (such as the Volunteers of Don Bosco) carry out their vocation in another form of life: « without a life in common but immersed in the world's structures ».(22)

« Life in common », in the best meaning of the phrase, is what distinguishes Religious Congregations from Secular Institutes. The Conciliar Decree on Religious Life speaks of the foundation of « common life », drawing its inspiration from the early Christian communities as described in the Acts of the Apostles: « Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they all had everything in common ».(23)

In « Perfectae Caritatis » a number of practical consequences are listed, such as: community life of authentic brotherliness; prayer in common; the unity of members in the same spirit as a source of energy for the apostolate.(24)

Our SGC spoke clearly of the local Salesian community as a group of « members who are attached to the same canonically erected house; they live a common life in unity of spirit with the superior, and carry out with common responsibility their apostolic activity ».(25)

It is worth repeating that any member who wants to direct the redimensioning and decentralization towards a Secular Institute would be harming the Congregation's identity, and with it the common vocation of the whole Salesian Family. Certainly the Congregation may be flanked by one or more male or female Institutes; but this does not take from the Congregation the very identity by which it carries out a particular mission towards other groups of the Family.

And here we arrive at another important basic principle:

(22) ASGC 168.

(23) ASGC 4, 32.

(24) cf. Perfectae Caritatis 15.

(25) Const. 181.

Loyalty to his vocation requires that each confrère sincerely choose to *belong* to the Congregation as such, according to the kind of Gospel-life it envisages. To forage round for novel norms of religious life, to reject the « choice of belonging » would be a facile path to deviations; the consequences can easily be imagined.

The Salesian Society operates at world level

The SGC reminds us that our Congregation is not a federation of independent communities; it is one single Society « made up of provincial communities, and these in turn of local communities ».(26)

The Constitutions say, « The Rector Major, as superior of the Salesian Society, exercises full authority over it. He has ordinary jurisdiction over all the provinces, houses and members in spiritual matters... and is the official representative of the Society ».(27)

These words are not quoted in a foolish anxiety to emphasise a constitutional right which no one disputes, and which today is to be exercised in a new sense of service and collegiality. I quote them to recall one of the aspects of our Congregation's identity: we are not a federation of independent communities, but a single Society, a genuine world-community!

Assuredly in this single Society we have to renew and strengthen the lively sense of « communion » and also show respect for proper autonomy; but « communion » and « autonomy » are not in opposition to unity—they are part of it. In fact, communion presupposes diversity and this autonomy (which does not mean independence) assures respect for « diversity in the harmony of communion ».

(26) Const. 124.

(27) Const. 130.

This consideration has no small bearing on the way we think out and actuate our decentralization—it must be effected without severing our important world unity, for this gives a special characteristic world witness to our Salesian vocation and an organizational efficiency in service and availability for the Church.(28)

Don Bosco spoke of this matter in the First General Chapter, stating clearly: « We are still taking our first steps; our numbers are not yet very great; and up to now all have looked to the Oratory as their centre. And as we forge ahead we must study all ways of keeping these ties firm; otherwise before long we shall be pursuing divergent paths and losing our close bonds of union. We must do our utmost to remain united in one spirit ».(29)

Authority at the service of others

These critical times prompt me to make mention of the Rector Major, the Superior Council and the Provincials with their respective Councils; these constitute an important and sensitive means of preserving world unity. The service they render (or better, their ministry of authority) must be exercised in the Congregation « at every level... in Christ's name, in imitation of him, and in the spirit of Don Bosco »; it is « a service rendered to brothers », it « aims at fostering charity among the members, co-ordinating common efforts, animating, orientating, making right decisions and correcting wrong ones, to realiste our mission ».(30) « At the different levels (local, provincial and worldwide) the centre which in Don Bosco's mind guarantees unity is the respective superior ».(31) The central government must « ensure the overall unity of the Society in its work and action ».(32)

(28) ASGC: various pages, esp. 713-722 (very important).

(29) MB XIII 286.

(30) Const. 125.

(31) ASGC 720.

(32) Const. 124.

The Rector Major's main preoccupation is « to promote in the members a constant and renewed fidelity to their Salesian vocation ».(33) This is why the Regulations state clearly that the Rector Major should « keep in active contact with provinces, houses and members », and on their part the members are reminded of their duty of « keeping united with the Rector Major and accepting his directives ».(34)

It is in this robustly unifying sense that the ministry of authority is considered in its source(35) and in its practice: « Superiors at all levels share in one and the same authority and exercise it in communion with the Rector Major for the good of the whole Society. Thus, while promoting the good of their own communities, they are concerned with the unity, growth, and the development of the entire Society ».(36)

One of the main tasks of the Superior Council is to « promote fraternal union between the different Provinces ».(37) « It is the task of the Regional Councillors to further in a special way an active and positive sense of brotherhood and family spirit in the relationships between confrères, between the provinces and the Rector Major and his Council, and between the Provincials themselves ».(38)

The Provincial « exercises a service of charity and pastoral zeal in the building up of the provincial community in brotherly love ».(39) and « he fulfils his office in union with the Rector Major ».(40)

It is plain that the world-unity of the Society is not just a matter of tactics or organization, a means of getting the best

(33) Const. 129.

(34) Reg. 95.

(35) ASGC 721.

(36) Const. 131.

(37) Const. 134.

(38) Reg. 128 (1).

(39) Const. 167.

(40) Const. 169.

out of our labours, a strengthening of the framework of the Congregation to ensure its solidity: it has a far deeper value. When we say, for instance, that the Rector Major is the « centre of unity » for the whole Congregation, we do not refer to mere organization, but to our charismatic communion. Indeed insofar as the Superior represents Christ, he is the fosterer of unity and the principle of communion. This is an inescapable point of reference.

An obvious earnest of the world dimension of the Congregation in the General Chapter. Its *raison d'être* and its internal dynamic and juridical form convincingly express such a dimension. It has no similarity to a political parliament. Its level is charismatic, it deals with the unity of the Congregation—a unity that already exists but which is diligently pursued by means of dialogue, community reflection, and in the wealth of diversity found in each provincial community.

Our world unity is a reality, but it is not like a castle built once and for all in which we are permanently established. It is something active, a reality that grows and evolves; but unfortunately it can drag its feet, it can wither, and it is subject to rifts and crises. It is the goal towards which we labour with difficulty. Sometimes it seems merely an ideal; but we must keep seeking it untiringly and with purity of intention, with humility and courage; fidelity to Don Bosco and his spirit must be our driving force.

Our next basic principle: We are a world community. This implies real bonds of communion that transcend the confines of the Province. In this communion we should bear in mind the privileged service enjoyed by the General Chapter and the Rector Major. « The General Chapter is the principal sign in the Society of unity and diversity ». « All members shall readily accept its

(41) *Perfectae Caritatis* 14.

deliberations, which become of obligation as soon as they are promulgated by the Rector Major ».(42)

And the Rector Major is « the successor of Don Bosco », the « father and centre of unity », the focal point of the whole Congregation, the source whence flow genuine incitements to unity. To pursue this train of thought further: the Congregation draws its sustenance from him, and in union with him and the Superior Council it finds evident expression, the effective communion of the Provinces in the concrete unity of a single reality that operates on a world-wide scale.

2. HOW DECENTRALIZATION WORKS

So far we have tried to establish a number of basic principles on the grounds that the future changes and the evolving of the Congregation must be in keeping with its vocation-identity. Any transformation that damages the real essence of the Society of St. Francis of Sales (as Don Bosco wanted it and as the Church approved it) would not be a process of growth—it would be a suicidal deviation.

Now let us strive to understand in depth just how we must set about our decentralization and unification.

The provincial community in the world community

The SGC views the provincial community in a new light; and if we are to understand properly what is involved in the present process of the Congregation's decentralization, we must grasp this well.(43)

(42) Const. 151, 152.

(43) ASGC 139, 185, 506, 512.

Normally and technically a Province is a projection of the Congregation that, in some area of the world, translates into practice the concept of the « Particular Salesian Community », decentralized and autonomous. « The Province unites the various local communities into a larger community. It is canonically erected when the necessary and sufficient conditions exist for the effective carrying out of the life and mission of the Congregation in a specific juridical area with the autonomy that belongs to a Province according to the Constitutions ».(44) It is the main job of decentralization to perfect the structure of the Provincial community and the relations between its houses.

A practical example would be a Province in a region that has its own peculiar social and cultural characteristics. Straight away the dynamics of the Salesian vocation would be influenced by two preoccupations: spiritually—how to remain faithful to the identity of the Congregation founded by Don Bosco; and socially—how to become truly involved in the culture and needs of the locality.

It is in this double action of union that is centripetal, and diversification that is centrifugal, that we illustrate clearly our post-capitular striving for decentralization in unity.

There is only one Salesian Congregation in the Church, but the cultures and human situations within which it is called to work vary according to times and places. This calls for an active diversification; the Congregation's unity must eschew uniformity and be both cohesive and differentiated, as becomes a world-wide organization.

However, to attain an harmonious diversity it is necessary that differences of pluralism be drawn together concordantly by the centripetal force of unity. In essence every Province must be the Congregation insofar as it practises the one Salesian vocation.

The world community and the provincial community must be mutually integrated, for the former incorporates the latter.

(44) Const. 162.

This is not just some conventional inclusion—it derives from the very nature of things. The communion of a federation of independent communities is attained through a juridical act, external and subsequent. It is quite a different case with provincial communities and the world community: their relationships are those of living members in a single living body.

To arrive at this kind of integration, this close incorporation, it is not enough to indulge in wishful thinking, or occasional official reports, whether on grounds of expediency, bureaucracy or even diplomacy. We need to be continually engrossed in the communion that belongs to our vocation, a permanently purposeful attitude prompted by our fidelity to Don Bosco.

A Province cannot be a genuine « Particular Salesian Community » if it does not achieve the vocation-identity of the whole Congregation. Indeed no Province is loyal to its members if it does not lead them beyond the Province into the unity of the World Congregation.

Tensions and dangers

We are all aware that if the centripetal and centrifugal forces clash there will be tensions; and every tension can degenerate into a conflict if one of the opposing forces prevails over the other to the detriment of the latter.

Unfortunately we have all come up against rather serious problems on both sides. What follows will help clarify our line of argument.

On the side of unity there is the danger of falling into uniformity, a « centralism » that ignores topographical differences and disregards the various cultural and social needs and the principle of subsidiarity; it fails to give the necessary emphasis to the new dimensions of co-responsibility and dialogue.

On the other hand we are witnessing in these years a veritable chain reaction against every kind of uniformity. And the

impetus of this reaction is such that not only does it aim to destroy the serious fault of « centralism », but even the very centre itself.

Action that is prompted solely by reaction is fraught with dangers. The consequences of such an attitude are evident and hardly need to be instanced. The Rector Major, with his Council, has a real need of frank and regular dialogue with all, to continue and increase his effort to be the « centre of unity », whilst making every effort to eschew the defects that may arise from centralism.

Please help us all to increase our constant service, our important and indispensable « central » duty of guarding the vital identity of the Congregation while avoiding the pitfalls of uniformity.

Decentralization, too, can be short-sighted and shut itself up in painfully narrow confines, giving undue emphasis to the local scene.

These days the following dangers in the Congregation are not imaginary: religious and ecclesiastical nationalism, cultural « superiority complexes », exaggerated social democracy, ignoring of the central authority, and weakening of the bonds of world co-responsibility.

The SGC wants us to be involved in the local apostolate; (45) it has pointed out the possibility of Salesian service outside the Congregation; (46) it has formulated new norms for formation,(47) All this is good and vitalizing only if put into practice in the light of what our identity requires; otherwise it sunders the bonds with the Centre, and attacks the vital value of our unity.

It is not out of the question to speak of the danger of schism for certain groups because of sociological and cultural reasons. Father Congar says, « The place where schism enters the Church, the equivocal danger-point, is reached when the bonds

(45) ASGC 185.

(46) ASGC 392.

(47) Const. 106.

are drawn too tightly between Christianity and a culture, a national interest, an enterprise that is human, personal, and above all social ».(48)

The need for constant striving for balance

The tension between the two goals is not resolved by one prevailing over the other: there is need of a constant effort to strike a balance.

In a living organism this balance is not achieved once and for all; nor is it a situation that can be solved by a formula. It is the free and responsible gathering together of living forces; hence it requires patient attention and constant effort to stimulate, modify, correct and initiate. Indeed this balance needs daily construction and maintenance. Thus the various governing levels, especially the Rector Major and the Superior Council, must do all they can to achieve this balance, encouraging, urging, foreseeing situations, respecting limits, filling the gaps.

Taking stock of the Congregation in its post-capitular travail, we have to acknowledge that various decentralized structures of co-responsibility are not yet running smoothly, and divergence and change are the cases most in evidence.

We all see that pluralism is a reality throughout the Congregation: it hardly needs further encouragement. What it does need is guidance and balance in the light of fidelity to our vocation-identity. (Pluralism does not mean that in the Congregation these days « any old thing goes »!) The structures of co-responsibility have urgent need to be set up and functioning at the local level. (Formation is an example.)

In achieving a proper balance the Rector Major and the Superior Council have the duty of emphasising the components

(48) Congar: Santa Iglesia, Barcelona 1965, p. 113.

of unity: indeed this is precisely the specific ministry of the central government (the SGC calls this a « structure of unity »).(49)

The « Practical Directives » of the first capitular document stress the importance of renewal in greater availability for Salesian pastoral activity on behalf of the local Church (and all the world-wide variety this entails). It then goes on to state clearly, « But this legitimate pluralism requires more effort on our part to preserve unity, e.g., in fostering a sense of mission and common spirit, and in frequent and fraternal exchanges with other provincial communities and with the Rector Major who is the visible sign of unity ».(50)

Taking on new responsibilities

My dear confrères, let us take a good hard look at the fact that we have not yet got down to the practicalities of organization in our process of decentralization.

I referred above to the structures of decentralized co-responsibility; and indeed the new Constitutions have this to say about the principle of subsidiarity: « Authority of any kind and at every level must leave to lower levels and to individuals whatever can be done and decided by them. All this presupposes a just distribution of power between the different organs of government ».(51)

Every provincial community should examine itself in this area; for if « leaving to the lower organs what can be done by them » (52) means that they, through indolence or lack of initiative or false interpretations, do not get round to doing what they should, then the Congregation runs a real risk of sailing

(49) ASGC 720.

(50) ASGC 185.

(51) Const. 127.

(52) ASGC 720.

without a rudder. This specious decentralization would open the door in more than one place to a situation of disorder and decay.

Here are a few items for self-examination on our organizational responsibilities, especially at the provincial level:

— The Provincial and his Council have greater powers regarding the appointment of Rectors and Novicemasters.(53)

— The Provincial Chapter is more important and possesses a new function.(54)

— The method of formation and the programme of studies are established by the Provinces.(55)

— Consultations are held for the appointment of Provincials, Provincial Councillors and Rectors.(56)

— Structures of government in the Houses may be altered.(57)

— Assemblies of members have important functions.(58)

Following this letter is an appendix with a list of decentralization items decided on by the SGC. Even if it be incomplete, it presents much matter for self-examination. It shows how important it is for all concerned to face up to these responsibilities seriously and efficiently.

Take for instance the consultations all confrères are asked to participate in. If every member answered with serenity, with only the welfare of the community in mind, he would make a valuable contribution to the choice of suitable confrères for the various « services » to the community. There should be no taking the easy way out by abstention; no personal feelings that are purely human or factious.

(53) Const. 112, 183, 187.

(54) Const. 117, 180, 193.

(55) Const. 106.

(56) Const. 169, 174, 183.

(57) Const. 187, 189.

(58) Const. 194.

Then there is the vital matter of our personnel in formation. A lack of confrères capable of giving them genuine training; a set-up that takes no account of the special needs of our men-in-training, neglecting the very fundamentals of Salesian formation—these are real and fatal vacuums, and the result will be a lamentable decline in our mission and a distortion of our image and identity.

The same tragedy would result if the novitiate (through place, personnel or programme) were deprived of its important function. And one could add other instances.

The SGC has passed on many tasks to the intermediate structures. You will naturally appreciate how hard we must strive, at the various levels, to make sure that they are carried out according to the spirit and the reasons for which they were requested. This is the way to make decentralization efficient and give a real fillip to that unity which is our quickening element.

Turning intermediate structures to best account

Another important matter to be organized as part of our decentralization has to do with certain intermediate structures such as Provincial Conferences and Groups of Provinces. These are not just nominal get-togethers; they must form a genuine nexus in decentralization and should be fostered, encouraged and exploited with enthusiasm, sacrifice and capable personnel.(59)

Similarities, affinities and cultural conditions do not necessarily coincide with the confines of a Salesian Province; indeed sometimes the opposite is the case. Hence every Province should study local human needs and consult other Provinces with similar problems. It is for this purpose that the last few years have seen the setting up of these Provincial Conferences and Groups of Provinces. They are still in their early stages but they have a

(59) ASGC 723-725.

great potential. For instance they could do much regarding the confrères' initial and ongoing formation.

We could well ask ourselves if we are giving them the importance they deserve.

3. TOWARDS A CAMPAIGN OF FIDELITY

Let us get down to practicalities and work out a campaign for all — each according to his own particular function in the Congregation.

We have to tune in to one another and combine our forces, and make our plans in fidelity to our common vocation in the Church. The work we do and our mental outlook will draw each individual to one pole rather than the other; but we must all join forces and achieve a balance between the two.

I repeat what I said at the beginning of this theme: we must not approach this matter with the idea that decentralization and unity are mutually opposed. As we weigh the requirements of each, our attitude should be favourable and positive, without bias or polemics. When faced with either of the errors (even if only potential) of schism or stifling centralism, we must not ignore the dangers I have mentioned—but neither should we assume an attitude of attack. Our duty lies rather in working together in harmony so as to foster the values inherent in both unity and decentralization.

Indeed a campaign of fidelity implies an energetic initiative and a keen sense of evaluation that will balance out the « forces in tension », promptly close any breaches and get to the heart of the problem. This means hard work: observing, thinking, gathering information, making contacts, engaging in dialogue and achieving a long-sighted view of wide horizons that will make our organizing enlightened and efficient. This is a grand work, especially for those invested with the ministry of authority, no matter at what level.

Tension and charity

It will help to remember that the « unity-decentralization tension » is part of the « sacramental » nature of the Church—and also, by analogy, of our Congregation. This is where docility to the Holy Spirit comes in; for this tension is basically a « spiritual fact », and not a sort of fashionable concession. For this reason it must live in the aura of charity, which means putting the spiritual perspective before any technique or human vision. Therefore: the Eucharist must be the centre of our lives; (60) we must pray fervently for God's action in the Congregation; (61) we must foster and defend the love of God in our Houses and Provinces as the source and manner of our Salesian brotherliness.

My dear confrères, once again I repeat: there is only one way to build a fruitful unity with efficiency—it is a spiritual way that corresponds to the nature of our vocation, which is a « spiritual fact ». Any other way means sterility, emptiness, decay.

In this regard Blessed Michael Rua cited article 7 of the then Constitutions: « All the members shall live together in common, bound only by the chain of brotherly love and the simple vows, a chain which unites them in such a manner as to make them one in heart and soul in order to love and serve God ».(62) Then he added, « These words come from the heart of Don Bosco burning with charity. They show us that while charity is the essence of Christian life, even more is it the soul of the Religious life ».

« These few lines sound the characteristic note of our Society. Without mutual affection, without being united in the same spirit, Salesians would eke out a wretched and unhappy existence. Living together in such numbers they would still be isolated and their work would bear no fruit.

« All the efforts of our Superiors are brought to bear to avert

(60) Const. 61

(61) Const. 58.

(62) Const. (new) 51.

so great an evil. Visits, conferences and rendicontos have as their purpose to unite us in one heart and soul. This is the reason why I write circular letters to you several times each year ».(63)

As the SGC gauges the situation

The SGC documents may have their human shortcomings; but it is essential to consider them as the focal point for all confrères if we wish to attain this harmony and unity in our decentralization during these days of divergent thought and opinions.

The Constitutions define the General Chapter as a fraternal assembly of Salesians and « the principal sign in the Society of unity and diversity ».(64) The deliberations of the SGC were the fruit of much preparation, study and hardship; they involved the worldwide participation of our confrères; they must be for every one of us the point of convergence par excellence. They form the common ground we stand on—love for Don Bosco. Here is our common meeting-place for young and old, no matter how varied ideological differences may be, for « under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the entire Society, through its General Chapter, seeks to ascertain at a given moment of history, the will of the heavenly Father so as to serve the Church better ».(65)

It is the important duty of every Province and local Community to see that all changes are constantly verified and checked against the components of our Salesian identity as set out by the Chapter, viz., the sense of the presence of God among us, our mission, our Salesian spirit, our own style of religious life, the family spirit in our common life, our preventive system, and so on.

When communities measure their activities against the norms of the Chapter, they should not leave the task entirely in the

(63) Don Rua: Circular Letters, p. 446 et seq.

(64) Const. 151.

(65) Const. 151.

hands of a particular or private group, for this would run the risk of being subjective; the process should be put on an official and community level so as to ensure that the findings are reliable and objective. The studies and opinions of experts are certainly useful; but they always require (especially in certain cases and situations) the judgement of the Rector Major and his Council. This is the only way to be definitely sure of the authentic validity of any change; it is the criterion of identity for certain pluralistic situations.

The SGC has put in the spade work; but our checking and comparing is not therefore a cut and dried affair, for it is a case of constant measuring against vital realities in rapid evolution, against local and personal situations that bring to light our « two poles » in a new dimension. Detailed and careful examination must be carried out in a positive manner and with spiritual vision. This will prevent us from adopting a legalistic and « go-by-the-book » attitude, and our work will be thoughtful and stimulating, leading to the rediscovery of the magnificent values of Salesianity, its attractive and enthusing aspects, its elements so full of promise. It will ensure that the process of change will acquire the quickening realization and development of the special identity given us by God and manifested in Don Bosco.

Fostering unity

Our campaign of fidelity requires a new dedication that is more aware and energetic so as to quicken and activate our Salesian identity. Here are a few pointers that should be of practical help. They will strengthen the unity that is born of the harmonious development of the two poles and so it is essential that they function well. Their importance is emphasised by the number of times the SGC returned to them.

— There should be « frequent and fraternal exchanges with other provincial communities and with the Rector Major ».(66)

— « This unity should be maintained and advanced by means of suitable and efficient structures of co-responsibility, formation, communication, government and exchange ».(67)

— « This communion is increased by our spirit of solidarity with one another, participation in the apostolic interests of the Society, communication and the exchange of information regarding the work of the confrères, and our union with the Rector Major and his Council ».(68)

— « The Rector Major will keep in active contact with provinces, houses and members. He shall seek the collaboration of all, promote meetings, spread knowledge of the apostolic work of the Congregation ».(69)

We find the documents of the SGC constantly concerned with the need to foster and strengthen the contacts and exchanges between the periphery and the centre—in all sorts of suitable ways. No matter where we are, we must feel *and really be* a Congregation, a community of men who live and work in vastly different lands but who are conscious of being an integral part of the one body, sharing, giving, receiving its life-giving Salesian values.

Meetings and gatherings

Regarding the many different kinds of meetings to be arranged by the Rector Major and his Council, we are working out a general plan, integrated and gradual. This will be discussed in good time with the people concerned so that the gatherings will meet the needs of all parties concerned.

We know from experience just how useful a meeting can be when well prepared, with good practical agenda and in which specified problems are proposed for examination, discussion and solution. And there are other advantages too. Much good comes

(67) ASGC 137.

(68) Const. 56.

(69) Reg. 95.

from personal contacts, living in community, praying together, exchanging experiences; and dialogue is always fruitful when carried out in a spirit of communion that tries to fathom and respect those values that sustain and enliven our vocation and enrich our mission.

Similarly in the case of Provincial Conferences and Groups of Provinces, meetings arranged between different sections are very helpful.

As is the case with all our activities, these initiatives require discretion and a sense of proportion. We do not want to develop « meeting-itis », holding meeting after meeting on every conceivable theme. This only wastes time and money, and the meagre results are not worth the trouble.

But it would be wrong and harmful to neglect those properly organized meetings which experience tells us are fruitful and irreplaceable.

Circulation of Salesian news

The SGC more than once insisted on the need for communication and information as efficacious and necessary means for unity in the Congregation—after all, to share such knowledge is elementary and basic. We are scattered over five continents and our family tradition clamours for family news: the joys, sorrows, initiatives, trials, problems, achievements. We want to know what is going on in that great and complex family which is the Congregation.

The Salesian, like any other person these days, is continually bombarded with all sorts of information from the varied and complicated instruments of the mass media—news that is put over with technical finesse and that demands his attention, often disturbing and distracting.

The consequences for the religious life are often more serious than would appear. It has been said that the TV permits us to know what is happening on the other side of the world and

prevents us from knowing what is going on under our very noses. The mass media inundate us with a flood of news from everywhere, so that we run the risk of finding our interests outside the house and becoming indifferent to our own community; we are ignorant of the very things that should be nearest our hearts—what is happening among our own confrères.

If this became our sad lot, then the image of the Congregation would blur, we should lose our esteem for the Salesian mission, and our bonds with Don Bosco and the Church would weaken.

On the other hand, a regular and stimulating flow of news about our Congregation will enliven our Salesian ideals, help us « to belong », and strengthen the communion and unity of our Society.

Hence local Superiors must take to heart the matter of Salesian news. It is their task to see that the news channels are open and efficient; they should widen and multiply them. And especially should they see that there is a place for « Salesian news sessions ». Not very long ago, when the mass media were not so well developed and all-pervading as today, these « Salesian news sessions » had their proper place in the personal and common lives of Salesians. I wonder if we can say the same today!

There are many causes why a Salesian might fall away or even leave the Society: it would be a pity if one of them were the lack of a binding fraternal spirit and its resultant loss of the sense of belonging to the Congregation.

Let us then see that Salesian news is duly circulated. (It is obvious that charity or prudence may counsel some exceptions, of course.) This circulation demands communion among the confrères, i.e., a give and take in brotherly trust and family spirit, bearing in mind that all must be for the building up of the Body of Christ and the good of the Congregation. Even the inevitable unpleasant things that happen can be turned to good account as warnings and hence a spur to charity.

The Acts of the Superior Council

There is another important facet to our communications. Our Congregation has its own spirit, its own style and mission, and it is plain that those who carry the primary responsibility for not wasting these riches and keeping them vital and active always and everywhere, should use the most fitting means in their duty to reach everybody.

One of the main means of informing the confrères and passing on directives that circumstances dictate for the fostering of community spirit and unity is the Acts of the Superior Council.

Admittedly the Acts are still a long way from being the perfect article; but they are a valuable and irreplaceable service which we have tried hard to improve. The translation into the principal languages of the Congregation is a step forward, and progress has been made in their timing and punctuality. While there is room for improvement in the content there is surely matter in every issue that is of interest to a Salesian. We shall welcome any useful suggestions that would make the Acts more interesting and vital.

However it must be added that all efforts to improve the Acts are useless if they are not read. Unfortunately one hears from time to time that they do not reach the confrères or the community. This means Salesians are being deprived of a very important source of family information, with all the negative consequences I have spoken of.

My dear confrères, I am sure you must agree that any Salesian news is worth our special attention—indeed our preference. Basically it is a matter of love for our own spiritual family, our mother the Congregation. The more we know about it the greater the love we have for it. But we cannot love what is unknown to us.

It is only to be expected that to care nothing about what goes on in the Society must weaken our attachment and esteem for the Congregation and its interests, our sense of communion

(which is the source of our vital energy), and finally our sense of vocation-identity.

While inviting every confrère to read the Acts, I must also insist with Provincials and Rectors to take practical steps that they be read in our communities, and certain parts of particular interest or importance commented upon. The Spiritual Reading period prescribed by the Regulations would be an excellent time for this.

Provincial newsletters

At this point it seems natural to put in a plea that information be sent to the Generalate fairly frequently. We heed these contacts, letters, etc. News is thus passed round, ideas penetrate; and these things make an organization like ours (working in all continents in such diverse ways) feel and work as one single body in its spirit and its methods. And here I must congratulate and thank the many Provinces who send us their news letters. It is pleasing to see the constant effort to improve them.

You will have noticed that the Acts have added a new section for the news letters, inserting excerpts that seem especially interesting for other Provinces.

Some have tried out the idea of enlarging the horizons of their news letters to include Salesian matters of general interest—an excellent idea.

Brotherly Solidarity

A most efficacious and practical expression of our family's universal communion is Brotherly Solidarity—brothers helping less fortunate brothers, materially or otherwise.

This kind of giving is particularly valuable when it is regularly the fruit of renunciation and sacrifice, zealous enterprise, services, etc., on the part of confrères who wish to realise and share the needs of others.

Our well-known Solidarity Campaign has been running for some years, and many Provinces have given more than material help to those in need. Unfortunately not every request can be met adequately, and this is all the more distressing when the need is great.

A striking fact about the Solidarity Fund is that quite a few of the poorer Provincial communities have made considerable personal sacrifices to help others. It is quite moving to receive their contributions and to read of the sacrifices entailed. These confrères live in extreme poverty; and in gratitude for what help they have received from the Solidarity Campaign, they are humbly desirous in their turn to do something for their more needy brothers. Truly, the greater the poverty, the greater the sympathy for others in need.

The fund is always open, and I do not need to insist that all Provinces take part in contributing. These pages record my thanks to those many Provinces who have already planned their spiritual (especially Lenten) and charitable help; and I hope no Province will fail to participate. It is not a request for alms: it is a conscious act of giving and receiving whereby we create and strengthen a practical bond of charity throughout the Congregation—all of us are the richer for it. It would be worth while reading what Don Rua wrote about the « fraternal charity drive » he organized in 1898 to help the house in Concepcion, Chile.(70) Its ideas and sentiments are valid even today.

Knowing Don Bosco better

Returning to our beginnings will re-engender our enthusiasm; (71) and this will be greatly aided by the « Institute of Salesian Spirituality » and the « Don Bosco Study Centre » which

(70) Don Rua: Circular Letters, p. 305.

(71) ASGC. 186-187.

will normally function at the PAS beginning this present academic year. There is a lot of ground to cover before Don Bosco is really and completely known: it is an activity to be organized gradually and methodically, stirring up the interest of the younger generations especially, and setting up the most efficient means.

The person of Don Bosco, his work and his words, when studied devotedly, have the power to attract and unite. Unfortunately many Salesians, especially the younger confrères, have a lot of headway to make up—possibly due to a reaction (understandable in its way, but by now quite anachronistic) and maybe also to lack of adequate and suitable opportunities. Meantime those concerned should ask themselves what is being planned to make sure our novices and young men really get to know Don Bosco—not a mere superficial knowledge, not just his biography, but his thinking, his spirit, his methods, etc. I realise the many problems in actuating such a programme; but it is a fundamental matter for the life of the Congregation, so difficulties must not deter us: practical solutions just must be found. From the Generalate we shall try to help in every way we can. We must move promptly to restore this knowledge and enthuse the confrères, for one cannot value the unknown. Knowing Don Bosco is a key to unity, one of its basic elements.

Love for the Congregation

The expansion and cohesion of the Congregation in its golden era were mainly due to the esteem, dedication and filial love the members had for it. Basically, true love of Don Bosco cannot be separated from love of the Congregation—for taken all in all, the Congregation is the projection and continuance of Don Bosco in the world.

This two-fold love for Don Bosco and the Congregation was clearly manifest, and it encouraged many vocations, helped overcome difficult problems, welded the family into a solid unity, and

was the driving force for great undertakings. Despite a kind of superficial aspect which was understandable in those days (today it is called « triumphalism »), we are dealing with something of no small value, and it still exists. In the last analysis it boils down to love for the Spirit of the Lord who unites us, gives us our mission and helps us achieve it.

However this attitude is not an inborn sentiment; it does not come to us automatically with our religious profession; in some places nowadays it is not even fashionable. So it needs to be patiently inculcated and increased right from the beginning of our Salesian formation.

To this end it will greatly help to cultivate with serenity and fidelity what could be called the « magisterium » of the Congregation. Members should be invited and urged to integrate their acceptance of this magisterium by a personal study that prepares the ground for the official teaching to be carried out and assimilated.

Today when there is question of any kind of teaching that stems from authority, we are faced with resistance or reluctance. We must waste no time in discovering ways and means to render it acceptable — for it contains the principle of a greater guarantee of truth, a kind of ordinary hierarchical magisterium.

In Religion we school ourselves in the service of God: so contact with the Master, both ecclesial and religious, is necessary for life, for progress, for perfection. Those appointed for the purpose have the right and duty to clarify, expound and spread the magnificent ideas and essential principles that make for unity and imbue us with the Salesian spirit. If Superiors are « sanctifiers » first and foremost, they must logically also be « masters ».

Unity in our Superiors

We have from Don Bosco's own lips how concerned he was for unity when he thought of superiors in the future who would not have lived by his side and would not have enjoyed his

close personal friendship and the fidelity that went naturally with it.(72) In the history of the Society, this bond of affection between the Superiors and the Rector Major has always been a potent vehicle of unity and a means of battling through many difficult situations.(73) Today we need to renew these ties, especially on the part of the Provincials, their Councils, and Provincial Conferences. This will make for a strong and effective union of hearts, minds and wills ready to tackle our serious post-capitular problems and the risks involved in decentralization, so that the solid framework of the Congregation will not be damaged.

My dear confrères, this has been a long letter; but the theme is vast and involves the vital interests of the Congregation. For this reason I renew my request that you give your attention to these pages, re-reading, if need be, those parts that will be of practical help. We are faced with a problem that is far greater than mere « reorganization »; it is a case of ecclesial fidelity and spiritual docility to the Lord. The Congregation, the provincial community, unity and decentralization, centre and periphery, centripetal and centrifugal energies—these are all facets of a single reality which is at the heart of our very vocation.

Our belief involves all these things. Fidelity to Don Bosco these times is a daily challenge of initiative and deep faith. The future of the Congregation truly depends on the « sweat of our brow » and our loyal and irrevocable « choice to belong ».

May Mary Help of Christians attain for us the grace necessary to achieve this goal.

Let us be united in the Breaking of Bread.

Affectionately yours in Don Bosco,

Father LOUIS RICCERI,

Rector Major

(72) MB XIII, 885.

(73) Don Rua: Circular Letters, pp. 95, 182; and Don Ricaldone: Fidelity to St. John Bosco, p. 79 et seq.

APPENDIX
DECENTRALIZATION OF POWERS ACCORDING
TO THE SPECIAL GENERAL CHAPTER

What follows refers to the decentralization of powers relative to the Generalate and Provinces, not relative to the Provinces and local communities.

Listed are:

- 1) *Governing bodies* which have received new powers from the SGC.
- 2) *The decentralized powers* according to subject matter.

1. Governing bodies

The SGC has granted new powers, or extended existing ones, for the following bodies (documentation is given in brackets):

Provincial Conference (new powers: Reg. 130; cf. ASGC 724).

Provincial Chapter (extended powers: Const. 177, 193; Reg. 149, 175; ASGC 178, 183, 185, 512, 555d, 619).

Provincial with his Council (extended powers: Const. 112, 183, 187; Reg. 12, 16, etc.).

2. Decentralized powers

The SGS has decentralized from the Centre to the Province the following faculties.

a) ORGANIZATION OF THE APOSTOLATE

Reg. 4: Study of the practical details of the organization of the « educative community ».

Reg. 5: It is for the Provinces to decide what names to use (oratory, youth centre, club, etc.) and what type of organization they refer to.

Reg. 7: Provincial ruling about admitting girls to certain activities of the youth centre.

Reg. 16: In agreement with the Councillor for the Missions, the Provincial and his Council may set up local mission offices and organize so-called mission « twinning ».

Reg. 72: Let each Province organize within its own limits the promotion and care of vocations. It should establish the criteria, methods and the structures for the training of vocations.

ASGC 185: Every Province should examine its special pastoral presence in the context of the local Church.

b) ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY LIFE

Life in common

Reg. 35: Let each community decide on opportune periods of silence.

Reg. 36: Let the superior and the community be very conscious of their bounden duty to keep their critical sense keenly alive and their conscience alert to their obligations in the choice of reading matter, film shows, radio and TV programmes.

ASGC 512: It is the duty of the Provincial Chapter and Council to define the common aims of the Province as a whole and then to study how these can best be carried out and to make the necessary decisions, beginning with the most urgent cases.

ASGC 515e: The feasibility of setting up small communities, and their actual nature, is left to the study and decision of each Province, including also the question of the exercise of authority in them.

Prayer

Reg. 46: The Provincial Chapter will fix the way of carrying out the Spiritual Reading.

Reg. 49: The Provincial Chapter will establish the manner of carrying out the Exercise for a Happy Death and the tri-monthly and yearly retreats.

Reg. 41: Each Province will establish an opportune time for the daily reading of the Necrology as a community practice.

Reg. 54: In the compilation of a manual of prayers the Provinces will furnish pointers and directives.

ASGC 555d: Other practices of piety in accordance with tradition are left to each Provincial Chapter to decide: First Friday, monthly commemorations of Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco, the Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent, Remembrance of the Dead, Salesian and patronal feasts.

Poverty

Reg. 63: The Province will lay down the norms for the confrères' cession of copyright according to the legal requirements of each country.

Reg. 65: It belongs to the Provincial Chapters to lay down specific and practical norms with a view to establishing throughout the Province a uniform and modest level of community life. In particular they will control the use of personal equipment, the holidays permitted to members, the practical exercise of solidarity between the different houses, and the contributions to be made by the individual communities to the general needs of the Province.

ASGC 619: The General Chapter encourages opportune experiments in new forms of witness and service among the very poor. These experiments, on both the provincial and local level, must have the approval of the Provincial and his Council.

ASGC 620: The Provincial Chapters should study the possibility of:

— separation of the administration of the work itself from that of the community; and if possible separating the living from the working quarters of the community.

— seeking lay help in administration, possibly electing lay representatives to the board of administration.

— giving those who are in any way associated with our work a periodic account of its economic situation.

Obedience

Reg. 137: The Provincial may suspend the execution of a superior order in special cases.

c) FORMATION

Const. 106: It is the task of the various Provinces to establish the method of formation and the programme of study according to the needs of each area and in conformity with the directives of the Church and the Society. Their decisions shall be submitted to the Superior Council for approval.

Reg. 89: The Provincial and his Council have the responsibility for the selection, training and ongoing preparation of those who must form others. They are helped in this work by the Provincial Conference and by the Superior Council.

d) FORM OF THE SOCIETY

ASGC 183: Provincial Chapters and the respective Councils should study the method to be followed for the possible institution of the Permanent Deacon and the adequate preparation of candidates; they should follow the experiment attentively with the local Church with a view to its future definitive realization.

e) STRUCTURES

Const. 193: The distinctive duties and features of those responsible for the principal sectors of the educational and pastoral activities of the community shall be established by the Provincial Chapter.

Const. 187: It belongs to the Provincial with the consent of his Council, after hearing the opinion of the local community, to decide which departments of the educational and pastoral activity of the house shall be represented in the Council, and how many Council members are to be elected by the Assembly of the members.

Reg.: 149: The manner of determining substitution to the General Chapter will be decided by the Provincial Chapter.

f) ADMINISTRATION

Reg. 187: The Provincial Chapter will decide on the frequency of the local Economers' financial reports to the Provincial and Provincial Economist.

Const. 197: The Provincial and his Council have power to authorize the operations cited in art. 196 within the limits determined by the Rector Major and his Council.

Reg. 175: To the Provincial Chapter is left the formulation of detailed norms for administration at provincial and local levels regarding those things cited in Reg. 175.

g) APPOINTMENTS

Const. 112: The Provincial with his Council's consent and the approval of the Rector Major appoints the Master of Novices.

Const. 183: The Rector of every local community is appointed by the Provincial with the consent of his Council and with the approval of the Rector Major, due regard having been paid to the results of an opportune consultation carried out among all the members of the Province. The manner of making this consultation will be decided by the Provincial with the consent of his Council.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Province modifications

In July last the Superior Council decided to unite the Provinces of Quito and Cuenca so as to form one Province with headquarters at Quito. It will be called the Sacred Heart Province of Ecuador.

At the same time the Superior Council decided to constitute the Vicariate Apostolic of Méndez y Gualaquiza « ad experimentum ». In accordance with art. 166 of the Constitutions the new Delegation will be dependent on the Province of Quito.

These decisions were taken by the Rector Major and his Council after a careful examination of the consultation conducted among the interested confrères, and the proposals of the local SPC's.

The decrees relative to these changes are printed in the Documents section (page 56).

2. Provincial appointments

The following confrères have been appointed Provincials:

Father SALVADOR BASTARRICA: Province of Bilbao (Spain).

Father SALVATORE DE BONIS: Roman Province (Italy).

Father SALVATORE ISGRO: Province of New Rochelle (United States East).

Father ANTHONY MARTINELLI: Province of Veneta Ovest (Verona - Italy).

Father HARRY RASMUSSEN: Province of San Francisco (United States West).

Father FELIX RIZZINI: Central Province (Italy).

Father TULLY SARTOR: Province of Veneta Est (Venice - Italy).

Father CHARLES VALVERDE: (unified) Province of Quito (Ecuador).

3. World Congress of Salesian Brothers

Further progress has been made in the preparation of the World Congress of Salesian Brothers to be held at the Generalate, Rome, in 1975.

On 5 August the Rector Major wrote to all Provincials (and « for the information of confrères »). His letter set out the reasons why be called the Congress, its aims, details of the preparatory Provincial and Regional Congresses, and the deadlines for the various steps leading up to the Congress. This notable venture will involve the confrères for two years. (The Rector Major's letter is printed in the Documents section, page 58).

The Rector Major also appointed by personal letter a « Central Commission » (six Brothers and four priests) whose task is to organize the Congress. These confrères are:

Father Mario Bassi (UPS - Rome).

Brother John Borchardt (Walwinkel - South Germany).

Father James Collett (Chertsey - England)

Father Anthony Ferreira (representing Latin America; residing at Rome).

Brother Sean Harkin (Warrenstown - Ireland).

Brother Joseph Pellitteri (Mother House - Turin).

Father Alfred Roca (Barcelona - Spain).

Brother Renato Romaldi (Formation Commission - Rome).

Brother Henry Ruiz (Barcelona - Spain).

Brother Charles Tomasello (Central Province - Turin).

The Central Commission will help the Provinces and Regions through the different stages and at the various levels. It will direct, co-ordinate and stimulate their planning, studies and practical application. The actual duties of the Commission are detailed in no. 3 of the Appendix to the Rector Major's letter (printed in the Documents section of these Acts, page 61).

The Central Commission held its first meeting at Rome (at the Generalate) 7-10 September with all members present. It appointed Brother Renato Romaldi as co-ordinator, with Father Mario Bassi and

Brother Charles Tomasello as his assistants (in order to ensure efficient continuity in the Commission). The meetings worked to a tight schedule under Brother Romaldi's direction.

The first task of the Commission was to examine the present situation of the Salesian Brother in the Society, and how far the Congress preparations were under way. A meeting with the six Regional Councillors brought to light the problem of multi-lingual Regions and the enormous distances entailed. So it was decided in those cases to hold two or more inter-Provincial Congresses instead of one Regional Congress. Suitable agreements were reached to co-ordinate the work of the Central Commission and the Regional Councillors.

Next, the Commission studied how to tackle the programme outlined in the Rector Major's letter.

— The various phases of the work procedure leading up to the World Congress were worked out in further detail.

— The Commission produced a blueprint of possible study themes for the various Regional and Provincial Congresses for their consideration and remarks.

— It also drew up a suggested list of how many Brothers and priests should represent each Region.

— Finally it compiled an « essential bibliography » dealing with the Salesian Brother and the consecrated layman in the Church.

The Rector Major opened and addressed the Commission's first session, and closed the week with a careful examination of its work. In the homily preached during the concluding concelebration he used the expression, « the undiscovered vocation of the Brother », desiring to call attention to the actual sad fact, and the need to remedy it with study, common research, and of course the World Congress of Salesian Brothers.

4. The PAS becomes UPS

With his « Motu Proprio » *Magisterium vitae*, dated May 1973, Pope Paul VI made the Rome PAS a Pontifical University. (The « Motu Proprio », in Latin and English, is printed in the Documents section, page 67).

5. The European Convention on the Preventive System

The European Convention on the Preventive System will be held at the Rome Salesianum from 31 December to 5 January. It is being organized by the Commission for Youth Apostolate in close collaboration with the Higher Institute of Pedagogy of the UPS (which is responsible for the scientific and thematic aspect).

The Convention is not just for students and theoreticians but is directed towards « the men in the field » whose task in the Salesian Family is education, and who will be able to take back with them, practice and pass on to others the findings of the Convention.

This cultural venture will try to pinpoint the « educative style » of Don Bosco in its historical roots (Christian tradition), in its actual practice in Don Bosco's day, in the universal practice of the Congregation, and in its relation to present and future situations.

Speakers will include lecturers from the Higher Institute of Pedagogy and well-known academics from other nations. Lectures will deal with four themes: the context in which Don Bosco developed his educational system and the historical significance thereof; the Preventive System in the face of modern educational science; the conditions and requirements of today's young people; and the present situation of those responsible for the young and their institutions.

The Convention is dubbed « European » because of its location. There is no reason why similar follow-up ventures should not take place in other continents.

The treatment in depth of the educational system of Don Bosco is worthy of our closest attention, for it aims at reinforcing the ideals and the concern the Salesian Family has in facing up to youth problems in a Salesian way

Provincials will soon be apprised of further details.

6. Preparation Course for future Missionaries

The annual « Preparation Course for Future Missionaries » was held at the Generalate, Rome, from 2 to 26 September. It was attend-

ed by a group of Salesians belonging to the 1973 Missionary Expedition.

The course was organized by Father Tohill, Councillor for the Missions, with Father Altarejos in charge. Eleven confrères were able to participate and they were all destined for Latin America. (Altogether the 103rd. Missionary Expedition totals forty confrères). Each morning the future missionaries attended lectures given by faculty members of various universities in Rome at the Spanish Pontifical College; and the afternoons were spent in practical discussions on Salesian missionary life. These latter were led by various superiors and experts belonging to the Generalate.

On 12 September the missionaries were received by the Holy Father, and on 28 September left for the farewell ceremony which, from the times of Don Bosco, has been kept annually in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

7. Brotherly Solidarity reaches L. 200,000,000

a) PROVINCES WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED

ITALY

Adriatic	Lire	200,000
Generalate (Rome)		70,000
Ligure-Toscana		393,100
Subalpine		60,000
Veneta San Marco		365,000

BELGIUM

South Belgium		28,870
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ASIA

Bombay		400,000
Calcutta		2000,000
Madras		300,000

THE AMERICAS

Bolivia	480,000
Central America	732,000
Ecuador: Cuenca	1218,400
Mexico: Guadalajara	144,000
United States East	18,300
	<hr/>
<i>Total received from 12 June to 10 September</i>	6409,670
	<hr/>
<i>Plus cash in hand</i>	10129,024
<i>Monies available as at 10 September 1973</i>	16538,694

b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES

EUROPE

Jugoslavia: for a means of transport for pastoral activities of the Province of Lubiana	1000,000
Jugoslavia: for formation of personnel of Zagreb Province	1000,000
Jugoslavia: for the needs of the house of formation of Rijek	1000,000

ASIA

India: for the works run by our students of theology, Bangalore	1000,000
India: for the disaster victims, Krishnagar	1000,000

AFRICA

Cape Verde: for missionary and catechetical apostolate	600,000
Egypt: for aspirants, Alexandria	300,000
Egypt: for the Oratory, Cairo	300,000
Rwanda: for equipment for literacy centre, Musha	300,000
South Africa: for native parish of Grasmere	500,000

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: for boarding school for native children, Junin de los Andes	500,000
Argentina: for the « Zephyrinus Namuncurà Cen- tre », Salta	500,000
Bolivia: for social work, Muyurina	600,000
Brazil: for audiovisual aids, Humaità	200,000
Brazil: for the needs of Ponta Grossa parish, Porto Alegre	500,000
Brazil: for parish social centre, Porto Velho	1000,000
Chile: for the poor of Santiago social enterprise, San Ramon	600,000
Colombia: for the leprosarium, Contratacion	1000,000
Mexico: for mission jeep	992,000
Mexico: for the Retreat House	3000,000
Peru: for the Salesian « People's Catechetical Centre », Lima	500,000
<i>Total monies disbursed from 12 June to 10 Septem- ber 1973</i>	16392,000
<i>Cash in hand</i>	146,694
<i>Grand total</i>	16538,694

c) GENERAL SUMMARY

<i>Monies received up to 10 September 1973</i>	200018,637
<i>Monies disbursed up to 10 September 1973</i>	199871,943
<i>Cash in hand</i>	146,694

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST

The Regional Councillors returned to Rome towards the end of June; and July, August and September were busy months with a build-up of business to be attended to, and sometimes two meetings per day.

1. Meetings of the Superior Council

The main matters dealt with at the meetings of the Council were: new appointments, completion of the examination of SPC deliberations, study of the Councillors' visitation reports, sorting out the resultant problems common to the whole Salesian world and working out a line of action for the immediate future. A few words about each:—

Appointments. The new Provincials were appointed according to the more responsible and exacting procedure required by the SGC. There was also the choice of Father Castillo's successor (v. pp. 3 and 56).

The SPC's. The Deliberations of the following Provinces were examined for approval: *Argentina:* Bahia Blanca, Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario; *Brazil:* Campo Grande, Porto Alegre, Sao Paulo; *Chile;* *Bogotá;* *Mexico:* Guadalajara, Cuenca and Quito; The Philippines; Lyons, France; the two German Provinces; the two USA Provinces; Uruguay; Central Province; Peru; Valencia, Spain; the Vietnam Delegation; the Generalate.

The procedure for the examination of the SPC documents is fully explained in the Jan.-March Acts of this year, No. 269, page 54. It is a matter of a purposeful and accurate study because of its great

importance. Indeed, as the Rector Major has pointed out, these deliberations formulated by the provincial communities and approved by the Superior Council truly « point the way » to our genuine post-capitular activity.

Reports on visitations. Besides the visitations of the six Regionals in April, May and June (as already noted above) visits to a number of Salesian houses were also made by the Councillors for Formation and the Missions.

Detailed reports of all visitations were handed to the Superior Council. The six reports of the Regional Councillors include a wealth of statistical data of the Provinces and their labours over the last few years: numbers of confrères, works undertaken, personnel movements, etc., all set against the social, economical and pastoral background of the particular zones visited. The reports then review the practical aspects of Salesian realities: religious life, formation of Salesians, redimensioning, youth apostolate, apostolate for adults and so on. Each report was examined, with the respective Regional supplying the necessary clarifications and further information. The problems emerging were treated as matters of urgency.

A line of action for the immediate future. The examination of the reports brought to light several problems of a general nature that involve the whole Society. These were dealt with in the September meetings; and in sorting them out certain practical directives were formulated and will be proposed to the Congregation for the immediate future. At the time of writing this short-term work plan is still being elaborated.

Worthy of mention is this new note in the Congregation: with a view to closer collaboration with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the six Regional Councillors, in the last ten days of September, went in turn to meet the Superior Council of the FMA to give a run-down on their visits to the Salesian world.

Many other matters were dealt with in the Council sittings — such as the unification of the Provinces of Ecuador, the exact interpretation of article 195 of the Constitutions (at the request of some Provincials) and the World Congress of the Salesian Brother... and the list goes on.

2. The work of the Commissions

From June to September the four Commissions dealt mainly with the following matters.

The COMMISSION FOR ONGOING FORMATION has put the finishing touches to preparations for the « Four-month Courses of Ongoing Formation » for Salesians (venue: The Salesianum).

Three courses are envisaged for 1973-1974. The first is mainly for confrères from Italy and Spain and begins 20 October this year; the second (March-June), mainly for confrères from Latin America; and the third (beginning October next year) will be mainly for confrères from the East.

The Commission is also organizing the « Course for Novice-masters » for the whole Congregation. This will be held at Rome next March.

Plans are also afoot to commemorate an important anniversary: the centenary of the approval of the Salesian Constitutions (4 April, 1974).

In the past months the Councillor and his staff have been busy in various parts of the Salesian world with conferences, sermons, study-week addresses, retreats and days of recollection.

The COMMISSION FOR YOUTH APOSTOLATE. The Commission for Youth Apostolate is carrying on Father Castillo's initiatives, now under the direction of Father Dho. The first important happening is the « European Convention on the Preventive System » (detailed in the Communications section, page 47). Two other subjects of considerable importance today are being studied: « Schools and the Salesian Mission » and « Sharing School Government with Externs ».

COMMISSION FOR ADULT APOSTOLATE. We announce the appointment of two confrères to cover certain duties: Father Hector Segneri takes over the direction of the Office of the Salesian Press and Social Communications; and Father Mario Cogliandro becomes the Secretary General of the Salesian Co-operators.

At Orsay, France, last June, Father Raineri presided at a meeting of the French Provincials (SDB and FMA) to discuss the Salesian Bulletin.

Father Raineri also (at the end of August) represented the Rector Major at the « Fifth International Symposium on the Salesian Life » at Luxembourg. The theme of the Symposium was « The Salesian Family ». It was attended by many Salesian scholars of note and (for the first time) by Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Co-operators and Volunteers of Don Bosco.

The COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF THE MISSIONS organized for September a Course of Preparation for Departing Missionaries (v. Communications section, page 47).

On 30 September Father Tohill was present at the farewell ceremony for the 103rd. Salesian Missionary Expedition.

3. Important functions in Mexico

In October Mexico City will be the centre of many important events. The Rector Major and certain Council members will be present, together with the Provincials of the Pacific-Caribbean region. One of the events will be the Fourth Latin-American Congress of Salesian Past Pupils.

The meeting of the Major Superiors with the Provincials of the Region entrusted to Father Henriquez is in obedience to the post-capitular procedure required by the SGC. ASGC 761 (12) reads, « At a convenient time the Rector Major and some of the members of the Superior Council will arrange meetings with the Provinces of the different Regions to take stock of the progress that has been made in the implementations of the directives of the General Chapter ».

The meeting will take place 2-12 October; and besides the Rector Major and Father Henriquez, the Councillors for Formation and Youth Apostolate will also be present. After the Provincials' reports on the « SGC implementation », will follow an exhaustive discussion on Salesian themes which will be helped by experts in their respective fortes.

« The work will be tough », Father Henriquez wrote to his respective Provincials, « and the programme exhaustive. It will certainly be a tiring meeting. But its importance is truly exceptional,

and its fruits will be beyond measure for the future of our Provinces. »

The Fourth Congress of the Latin-American Past Pupils will also be held at Mexico City from 11-14 October. The Rector Major will attend its opening and closing; and the Councillor for Adult Apostolate will attend all sessions. There will also be representation from other National Federations of Past Pupils. This remarkable event takes on further significance because of its theme: « The Salesian Past Pupils and Justice in Latin-America ».

OTHERS MEETINGS. The trip to Mexico will give the Rector Major a chance for various encounters with confrères. He will visit Guadalajara (headquarters of the second Mexican Province), Guatemala, Managua and the Mexican missions; he will also visit Cuba; then he will fly to Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide and Sydney. In Australia he will close the celebrations of the 50th. anniversary of the arrival of the first Salesians in the New Continent.

Father Viganò will visit the Salesian formation centres for discussions with those responsible. He will visit Guatemala, San Domingo, Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Brazil.

Father Raineri will meet a number of Provincials, and Delegates of Co-operators and Past Pupils at Panama, Caracas, Bogota, Medellin, Quito, Santiago and La Paz.

Father Dho will travel to Bogotá to meet the Delegates of the Pacific Region Youth Apostolate, and will visit the aspirants of Mexico, Colombia, Caracas and San Domingo.

These comprehensive meetings between confrères at the various levels of the Congregation are truly an expression of a unanimous desire for dialogue and renewal for the ever-better fulfilment of Don Bosco's mission in the world.

V. DOCUMENTS

1. Appointment of the new Councillor for Apostolate of Youth

Letter of the Rector Major sent to all Provincials (dated at Rome 25 July 1973).

Dear Father,

I am pleased to inform you that in accord with my Council I have appointed a successor to Father Castillo (now Coadjutor Bishop of Trujillo in Venezuela). The new Councillor in charge of Youth Apostolate is Father Juvenal Dho, vice-Rector of the PAS and Professor of the Faculty of Educational Science.

Father Dho is well known and highly esteemed not only in the Congregation but also in the Departments of the Holy See and in many dioceses and Religious Institutes of men and women, especially for his constructive work in youth problems as they relate to vocation.

He has accepted my invitation with Salesian simplicity and will place at the service of the Congregation all his preparation and experience (which includes twentyfive years in South America).

Please inform your confrères of Father Dho's appointment; and I know he would like me to recommend both himself and his new work to the prayers of all.

With every good wish,

FATHER LOUIS RICCERI

2. The unification of the Provinces of Quito and Cuenca

(Decree of the Rector Major, Father Louis Ricceri, dated at Rome 6 July 1973).

Taking into account the various consultations and the proposals approved by the Special Provincial Chapters of the Sacred Heart

Province (Quito) and the Mary Help of Christians Province (Cuenca), the Rector Major and the Superior Council, in their meeting of 4 July 1973, have consented to the unification of the two Provinces concerned.

Therefore in execution of this deliberation, I, Father Louis Ricceri, Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, by virtue of the powers conferred on me by the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes (« Ad instituenda experimenta » of 4 June 1970) and by article 162 of our Constitutions, decree the discontinuance of the Provinces of the Sacred Heart (Quito) and Mary Help of Christians (Cuenca), and the erection of the single Province of Ecuador (The Sacred Heart Province) with its headquarters at Quito. To the new Province will belong all the territories, houses and personnel of the two former Provinces.

This decree goes into force 15 August 1973, Feast of the Assumption.

FATHER LOUIS RICCERI

3. Erection of Delegation of Méndez y Gualaquiza

(Decree of the Rector Major, Father Louis Ricceri, dated at Rome 6 July 1973).

The Rector Major and his Council, at their meeting of 4 July 1973, taking into account the recommendations of the Special Provincial Councils of the discontinued Provinces of Ecuador, have decided as follows.

The territory of the Vicariate Apostolic of Méndez y Gualaquiza is erected "ad experimentum" as a Delegation subject to the new unified Province in accordance with article 165 of the Constitutions.

After the erection of the new Provincial the Rector Major and his Council will proceed to the appointment of a Delegate for the new Delegation, taking due account of the wishes expressed in the consultation conducted by the missionaries concerned.

He will be a member of the Provincial Council and further to the usual powers of a Vicar Apostolic he may be endowed with others delegated by the Provincial himself, with the exception of what belongs to the Provincial Council in accordance with the Constitutions.

The Rector Major and the Superior Council hope that the decree of reunification of the two Provinces, and the erection of the missionary territory into a Delegation, will be a spur to the new Province to retain its missionary outlook, and that the young will find in it an ever-increasing outlet for their missionary generosity (SGC 463). The communities too will find in this an easier path to renewal, and the whole Province, with its missionary ardour, will be able to manifest in a more lively way the apostolic vitality of the Congregation (ibid.).

FATHER LOUIS RICCERI

4. The World Congree of Salesian Brothers

On 5 August 1973 the Rector Major sent the following letter and appendix to all Provincials for the general information of all confrères regarding the forthcoming World Congress of Salesian Brothers. The two documents follow.

My dear confrères,

I am writing regarding the World Congress of Salesian Brothers. I know that many provinces and regional groups are already working on its preparation, and I am very pleased that this is so. The Formation Commission, through Bro. Renato Romaldi, is also collaborating by giving help and suggestions to the different groups. The object of this present letter is to emphasise certain ideas which will affect the preparation and therefore also the outcome of the Congress.

1. *The Reasons for the Congress*

The problem of the Salesian Brother is one which has repercussions on the very nature of the Congregation, which Don Bosco

wanted to be made up of « clerics and laymen », and in consequence it is an important element in the renewal promoted by the SGC. The latter clearly perceived that there could be no re-launching of the idea of the Salesian Brother — and consequently of the corresponding vocations — without a profound re-thinking of the figure of the Brother in the light of Don Bosco and Salesian tradition, seen in the new context of religious life and the needs of the times given by Vatican II. To this end the SGC decided on the preparation and convocation of a *World Congress*.

The principles and guide lines leading up to this congress are to be found in two of the documents in the Acts of the SGC. These documents are of different emphasis but motivated by the same concern. The first lays down (ASGC 184):

« With the intention of producing a more intense “communion”, even from the point of view of direct responsibility, the SGC, after an ample debate on the subject of the Brother in the context of our renewal, has decided that Brothers can become members of councils at all levels (local, provincial and world). An adequate and gradual move in this direction is therefore imperative in order to render this decision operative. Therefore:

a) each province should provide the Brothers with an adequate religious and theological preparation, together with technical and professional qualifications, in view of these new posts of responsibility;

b) wherever possible, posts of direct responsibility should be given to them in the different spheres of Salesian work, e.g. schools, youth centres, publishing houses, etc;

c) the main point however at the moment is to change the mind and attitude of the whole Congregation towards the Salesian Brother;

d) with this in view, provision should be made for:

1. a general meeting of the Brothers of each region (or at least each group of provinces) within two years of the close of the SGC, at which problems can be aired and steps taken for a practical application of the Chapter decisions;

2. a world meeting of Brothers some time in the following two years with representatives from each region. »

The second document includes the following amongst the suggestions for the post-capitular programme:

« a) As a sign of support for what the SGC has said with reference to Brothers, efforts should be made, at least in those provinces where the proportion of Brothers is similar to the figure for the whole Congregation, to include a Brother amongst the provincial councillors. The same principle should be followed in the case of house councils.

b) During the first two years immediately following the Chapter there should if possible be meetings of Brothers to study those points in the documents of the Chapter which particularly concern them with a view to the suggestion of practical applications. These meetings should be held in each province and all Brothers should take part in them; thereafter similar meetings should be held in groups of provinces, with the participation of Brothers elected in each; finally, there should be a world congress with representatives from each region. »

2. Those to whom the initiative is directed

The World Congress of Brothers marks something new in the Congregation's history. Its preparation, realization and consequences are destined to have an influence difficult to foresee on the Brothers, on confrères in general, and on the whole future of the Congregation. This congress is in fact something which involves the whole Congregation and not only a part of it.

This is the authentic interpretation of ASGC 184, 4(a) and (b), and 763, 4(b) where mention is made respectively of the "World Congress of Brothers" preceded by "meetings of Brothers". The sense of these expressions in their context is that although the Brothers are of necessity the protagonists and immediate object of the World Congress and of the provincial and regional meetings which precede it, the Congress is the responsibility of everyone, including the priests. Each one is called upon to collaborate at his particular level along the following lines:

The question: « Who is the Salesian brother? » leads automatically to another question: « What is the nature of the Congregation? What is its mission and its spirit? ». The Congregation as Don Bosco wanted and founded it is unthinkable other than as an apostolic community of “consecrated laymen” and “clerics”. What it amounts to is that the problems of the Brothers are the problems of the Congregation itself, our real and most vital problems.

History reveals the paradox that as far as the Brothers’ problems are concerned those who should be most interested are not the Brothers but the other confrères. It sometimes happens that it is the “clerics” who are lacking in knowledge and esteem of the Brother’s vocation because of a mentality produced by past history. Salesian life, with its characteristic deep organic unity, implies a continual interaction between Brothers and priests.

For these and other obvious reasons the Congress needs the active participation also of our priests. It is intended to clarify many points and resolve many difficulties. The rediscovery and reactivation of the Brother will mean a greater fidelity to Don Bosco’s idea and a deepening of our own Salesian “community character”.

These considerations become even more compelling when we remember that tomorrow’s world, ever more technical and scientific, will require a new presence of the figure of the consecrated layman and will open up entirely new horizons and possibilities for the Salesian Brother.

3. The chief objectives of the World Congress, and of the regional and provincial meetings

The objectives of the various congresses can be summarized as follows:

1. To study the lay religious vocation of the Brother in the Salesian Congregation in the light of Don Bosco, the SGC, the renewed theology of Vatican II, and in the social and cultural context of the present day.
2. To formulate practical plans for a true, up-dated and effective presentation of this apostolic figure formulated by Don Bosco.

3. To give to the Congregation and the whole Salesian Family a new awareness and understanding of the reality of the Brother and the irreplaceable contribution he brings to the common mission.

4. *Renewal of Salesian Vocation*

It has been said that the Salesian Brother was a brilliant creation of Don Bosco. At the present day in this technical and material world this brilliant creation seems more relevant than ever. His potential apostolic capacity has so far been only partly understood. A historical legacy, common to so many areas in the Church, has had its effect even amongst us of undervaluing the figure of the consecrated layman, a vocation old and at the same time new. A negative contribution has also come from the lack of formation, especially in the religious field.

Modern times — and the need in future will be greater still — need a clear apostolate of witness. To this end a full and complete rediscovery of the Brother's vocation is necessary, followed by a re-launching of this new apostle in the new kind of world. The apostolic initiative of the Salesian Brother will certainly open up in our Salesian mission new means of evangelization, side by side with the traditional methods duly up-dated. We must broaden our ideas so as to give full scope to the Brother's vocation. This is the task of the Congress: study, reflection, prayer; and everyone should feel the obligation to take part in this work. Let us therefore set aside all misgiving; let us look ahead with joy and enthusiasm to the task awaiting us. The Congress and all that goes with it should be an occasion of strengthening amongst us, if this should be necessary, the bonds of true Salesian brotherhood.

5. *Various dates*

The organizational details for the preparation of the various phases leading to the World Congress of Brothers appear as an Appendix to this letter. They should be carefully observed so that

we are able to reach our goal. To enable the work to be carried out expeditiously the following calendar is suggested:

By 31st March, 1974	Completion of the provincial congresses
By 30th September, 1974	Completion of regional or inter-provincial congresses
By 31st January, 1975	Despatch to the Central Commission of the Acts of the regional or inter-provincial congresses.

6. Conclusion

I end this letter with a renewed appeal for support and collaboration so that the meetings may be successful. They will help to clear up misunderstandings, to clarify truths not well understood at the present day, especially with regard to the nature and validity of our religious vocation and the original idea of the figure of the Salesian Brother.

May Mary Help of Christians the inspiration and support of our Congregation, give us light and strengthen us with her blessing.

With affectionate greetings and the request for a remembrance in your prayers,

FR. LOUIS RICCERI
Rector Major

APPENDIX

Organization details for the preparation of the World Congress of Salesian Brothers

1. Provincial Commission

— This has the task of studying the figure of the Salesian Brother in the light of Salesian tradition, the Acts of the SGC, Vatican II, and in the context of practical life.

— It will be constituted on the Provincial's initiative in the manner he considers most opportune, due regard being paid to an adequate representation of priests.

— The setting up of this commission shall be communicated as soon as possible to the Regional Superior and the Central Commission, with an indication of the confrère in charge.

— It will study the details of the preparation of the provincial congress, its organization and realization.

— It will decide on the topics to be studied, keeping in mind local conditions and the guide-lines of the Central Commission.

— It will foster initiatives and promote the study of the different topics in local communities and by individual confrères, with a view to the provincial congress and the necessary development of a new sensitivity of the figure of the Brother.

— It will assign subjects to speakers at the provincial congress.

— It will specify how representation at the provincial congress will be decided.

— It will draw up the Acts of the provincial congress and present them to the regional commission.

— The members will be ex-officio members of the provincial congress.

2. *Regional (or inter-provincial) Commission*

— Its function is organizational and technical, but none the less essential in the preparatory process.

— It will be set up by the Regional Councillor, in agreement with the provincials concerned and will include both Brothers and priests.

— At least half the members will be Brothers.

— It will study the details of the preparation of the regional congress, its organization and realization.

— It will decide on the topics to be studied, bearing in mind the views of the provincial congresses and the general guidelines of the Central Commission.

— It will keep in touch with the provincial commissions and coordinate their work.

— It will assign subjects to speakers at the regional congress.

— It will integrate and draw up a synthesis of the work of the provincial congresses and will send copies to the provincial delegates to the regional congress.

— It will specify the details concerning representation of provinces and the election of provincial delegates.

— It will draw up the Acts of the regional congress.

Note: By "region" is meant the collection of provinces having the same Regional Councillor. Where the distance between provinces, diversity of language, or other reasonable cause does not allow of the holding of a single congress for the whole region, several inter-provincial congresses can be held, each with its own responsible commission.

3. *Central Commission*

Of its nature this commission will be international and comprehensive in scope; it will be composed of Brothers and priests.

— It will have the assistance of experts, as may be found necessary.

— It will study the details of the preparation of the World Congress.

— It will work out and suggest the general themes to be studied.

— It will provide a liaison with the regional or inter-provincial commissions and will co-ordinate their work.

— It will nominate the speakers for the World Congress and will assign subjects to them.

— It will integrate and draw up a synthesis of the work of the regional congresses, and will send copies to the regional delegates to the World Congress.

— It will make proposals to the Superior Council concerning the representation of the regions and the election of regional delegates for the World Congress.

4. *Participants in the various congresses*

Provincial Congresses: All the Brothers will take part (ASGC 763, 4b) plus an adequate representation of priests with a knowledge of matters of religious life and the specific problems of the Brothers, according to arrangements laid down by the provincial council after hearing the opinion of the provincial commission.

Regional or inter-provincial Congresses: Those Brothers and priests will take part who are elected by the provincial congresses, following the rules drawn up by the regional or inter-provincial commission.

World Congress: Those Brothers and priests will take part who are elected by the regional or inter-provincial congresses, following the rules to be promulgated in due course by the Central Commission.

5. *Acts of the Congresses*

The Acts of the Congresses at the different levels must contain:
— a list of those taking part, with their respective qualifications and duties during the congress, and in their normal Salesian lives;

- the date, place, and duration of the congress;
- themes dealt with;
- text of the reports and the respective speakers.
- conclusions arrived at and voting results.

The Central Commission will need to have copies of everything. The Acts of the World Congress will be printed and at the disposal of all confrères.

6. *Information and correspondence*

All matters dealing with the above Congresses should be referred to:

*The Central Commission
Salesian Brothers Congress
Casa Generalizia Salesiana
Via della Pisana 1111
00163 Roma*

5. Erection of the Pas to a Pontifical University

a) *Letter (No. 237.940) from Cardinal Villot, Secretary of State, to the Rector Major, Father Louis Ricceri (dated at the Vatican 11 August 1973).*

Very Rev. Father,

I am pleased to forward to you herewith the « Motu Proprio » by which His Holiness Pope Paul VI has conferred the title of University on the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum.

I add my own congratulations and sincere good wishes for this important recognition.

Most sincerely yours in Christ,

G. CARD. VILLOT

b) *Latin text of the « Motu Proprio » conferring the title of University on the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum.*

Paulus PP. VI

Magisterium vitae, quo animi, praesertim iuniorum, et christianis virtutibus excolerentur et perpolirentur doctrinis, Societas S. Francisci Salesii quasi praeclaram hereditatem a S. Joanne Bosco, conditore suo ac legifero patre, accepit ac per temporum cursum sedulo exercere nisa est et amplificare, neque in praesenti id agere desinit. Nam egregius ille Christi sacerdos ad quendam traditur scripsisse: « Studium et pietas verum te reddent Salesianum » (cfr. E. Ceria, *Memorie Biografiche del Beato D. Bosco*, Torino 1934, XV, p. 28). Ipse enim, « gravissimum educationis momentum in vita hominis eiusque influxum semper maiorem in socialem huius aetatis progressum » (Conc. Vat. II, Grav. educ., 1) praesentiens, ita suorum munus anno MDCCCLXXIV in proemio Constitutionum Societatis Salesianae effinxit: « Catholicae religionis ministris persuasum semper fuit in adulescentulis instituendis maximam esse sollicitudinem adhibendam. Etenim iuventute malis aut bonis moribus imbuta, bona aut mala ipsa hominum societas fiet. Ipse Christus Dominus huius rei veritatis nobis clarum exemplum suppeditavit praesertim cum parvulis ad se advocatis divinis manibus be-

nediceret, atque clamaret: "sinite parvulos venire ad me". Nostris vero temporibus longe maior urget necessitas » (A. Amadei, *Memorie Biografiche di S. Giovanni Bosco*, Torino 1939, X, p. 846).

Sodales vero Societatis Salesianae mirum illud a Sancto Fundatore et patre traditum artis educandi charisma pie receperunt non modo quasi quoddam sacrum depositum custodiendum, sed etiam tamquam uberrimum germen fideliter excolendum. Quod quidem altiora et diligentiora studia superiore et organica, ut aiunt, institutione exercenda deposcit, quibus omnia, quae in fontibus continentur, et catholico sermone methodoque scientifica explicantur et novis postulatis apte respondeatur.

Propterea, tanti parentis vestigia secutus, B. Michael Rua, proximus eiusdem in regenda Societate successor, cui non ita pridem Beatorum Caelitum honores Nosmet decrevimus, mature, id est anno MCMIV, Fulgittii in Salassis, quem pagum Foglizzo Canavese vulgo appellant, prope Augustam Taurinorum Institutum Theologicum Internationale a S. Michaële condidit, quod esset Salesianis sodalibus primaria domus studiorum. Cui annis MCMXII et MCMXIV a Sede apostolica est concessa facultas alumnos ad gradus academicos Baccalaureatus et Licentiae in sacra theologia promovendi. Praeter hanc sedem studiorum theologicorum, a MCMXXXIII in ipsam urbem Augustam Taurinorum, nomine indito S. Joannis Bosco, translata, etiam Institutum philosophicum scholasticos Salesianos exciniebat.

Denique anno MCMXL hoc doctrinarum domicilium, eiusdem Apostolicae Sedis auctoritate, ad dignitatem Pontificii Athenaei, ad Salesianos discipulos pertinentis, est provectum, quod Facultates theologiae, philosophiae, iuris canonici complecteretur.

Quod cum laetis esset auctum incrementis iuvat potissimum memorare Institutum disciplinarum paedagogicarum, omnibus patens, eidem accrevisse — anno MCMLXV, Augusta Taurinorum relicta, in aedibus permagnis, ornatis, instructis Romae est feliciter collocatum.

Huic Athenaeo Nosmet ipsi, optatum Joannis XXIII, Decessoris Nostri rec, mem., ad effectum deducentes Pontificium Institutum Altioris Latinitatis commisimus ac deinde addidimus, quo responderetur « ei qua Ecclesia angitur, sollicitudini inter clericos studia Latinitatis promovendi eiusque magistros instituendi » (Alloc. ad Salesianos sodales in Pont. Athenaeo eorum habita 29 Oct. 1966, A.A.S., LVIII, 1966, pp. 1164-1165). Utroque eiusmodi Instituto Paedagogico scilicet, quo

« ars artium » a Salesianis, quasi domestico usu in ipsam assuetis, docetur quodque hac aetate florere cognoscitur, et Latinitatis schola, quae, nonnullis difficultatibus pro huius saeculi moribus circumsaepa, ad exoptatum profectum niti videtur, eidem magno disciplinarum domicilio Salesiano peculiaris indoles et commendatio inter consimiles Romanas doctrinarum sedes accedunt.

Cuius quidem Athenaei Facultates omni sollertia et industria praestarent operam ad illam studiorum superiorum promovendam renovationem ac progressionem, quam Sacra Congregatio pro Institutione Catholica, attentis auspiciis ac praecentis Concilii Vaticani II, diligenter efficiendam ac provehendam constituit.

Nec praetereundum hoc esse videtur, quod ad eius vitalitatem pertinet: praeter scilicet quinque Romae erectas Facultates, in numerum conferri etiam Sacrae Theologiae sectionem, quam dicunt, Augustae Taurinorum conditam, Pontificiam Facultatem Disciplinarum Educationis a Filiabus Mariae Auxiliatricis in eadem urbe Augusta Taurinorum institutam atque cum Pontificio Athenaeo Salesiano consociatam, decem deinde Salesianorum Instituta ad theologicos cursus peragendos destinata, Sacrae Theologiae Facultati ipsius Athenaei « affiliata », in variis Europae, Asiae et Americae « regionibus distributa; atque fore spes est ut et alia proxime his annumerentur.

Pontificium igitur Athenaeum Salesianum efficacem vitam exercet et naviter operatur in toto fere terrarum orbe ea mente, ut viis et rationibus, quae proprie ad Studiorum Universitatum magisteria spectent, doctrinis iam quadamtenus formatorum institutionem promoveat iuxta peculiarem illum sancti Fundatoris spiritum, qui « systemate praeventivo », quod vocant, explicatur, quique germanam suam naturam et vim ex Evangelio non sine divino consilio haurit.

Denique recens Speciale Salesianorum Capitulum Generale decrevit, ut Pontificium Athenaeum Salesianum, pastoralibus obtemperando Concilii Vaticani II praeceptis, singulari ratione sibi proprium haberet doctrinas, ad apostolatam maxime pertinentes, penitus pervestigare et collustrare, instante spectata necessitate iuventutem christiane instituendi, necnon postulationibus attentis hanc institutionem scientificè fulciendi, ita ut fructuosus dialogus cum mundo hodierno instaurari possit.

Cum ergo religiosa ista Familia de optimis studiis bene meruerit et spes effulgeat fore, ut, novo sibi Pontificiae benignitatis munere col-

lato, novas utilitates et in hac regione Ecclesiae et humanae afferat consortioni, Nos motu proprio et Apostolica auctoritate decernimus atque pronuntiamus Pontificium Athenaeum Salesianum, legitime erectum atque iisdem S. Joannis Bosco filiis creditum, nunc et in posterum Pontificiam Studiorum Universitatem Salesianam esse nuncupandum; pariterque praecipimus, ut nova haec appellatio in Statuta et leges Athenaei, quod usque adhuc dicebatur, inducatur, quae quidem vi sua pergunt valere.

Quaecumque vero a Nobis hisce Litteris motu proprio datis decreta sunt; ea omnia firma ac rata esse iubemus, contrariis quibusvis nihil obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, in festo Beatae Mariae Virginis Auxiliatricis, die XXIV mensis Maii, anno MCMLXXIII, Pontificatus Nostri decimo.

PAULUS PP. VI

c) *English translation of the Motu Proprio « Magisterium vitae », conferring the title of University on the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum (formerly PAS; now UPS).*

The fundamental principles of life by which the young in particular are trained and educated in Christian teachings and virtues have been bequeathed to the Society of St. Francis of Sales as a precious heritage from its Founder and Legislator, St. John Bosco; and over the years the Society has endeavoured to practise and develop them, and still perseveres today. St. John Bosco, exemplary priest that he was, once wrote to one of his clerics, « Study and piety will make you a true Salesian » (cf. E. Ceria, MB, Turin, 1934, XV, p. 28). Indeed he foresaw « the fundamental importance of education in the life of man and its growing influence in the social progress of modern times » (Vat. II, Grav. Educ. 1); and in 1874 he thus formulated the mission of his collaborators in the Introduction to the Constitutions of the Salesian Society: « Catholic priests were always convinced of the need of putting every effort into the education of the young. Society will be good or bad depending on whether the young have been raised according to good or bad

principles. Christ himself exemplified this truth very clearly when he called to himself the little children and blessed them saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me". In our times this need is far more urgent » (A. Amadei, MB, Turin, 1939, X, p. 896).

The members of the Salesian Society have received from their Father and Founder his remarkable educational charisma. It is not just a revered gift to be guarded jealously but a fruitful seed to be faithfully nurtured. This task naturally requires to be studied in depth in an Institute of Higher Studies so that the principles may be expounded scientifically in a language understood by all and adequately meet modern requirements.

Thus in 1904, Michael Rua, the Founder's first successor (whom we recently declared Blessed) founded in Foglizzo Canavese near Turin an International Theological Institute dedicated to Saint Michael: it was to be the central seat of study for the Salesians. In 1912 and 1914 the Holy See granted this Institute the faculty of conferring the Licentiate and Baccalaureate. Further to this theologate (transferred in 1923 to Turin) there was also the Don Bosco Philosophate for Salesians.

Then in 1940 the Apostolic See raised this centre of studies to the status of a Pontifical Athenaeum for Salesian students; it included the Faculties of Theology, Philosophy and Canon Law.

This Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum grew and developed; and a pleasing feature was the addition of the Institute of Pedagogy, which was open to all students. In 1965 it was transferred to Rome to a new, larger and more suitable complex.

In pursuance of the desire of John XXIII, our predecessor of happy memory, we conferred and added to the Athenaeum the Higher Pontifical Institute of Latin. This was in answer to the Church's constant solicitude to foster Latin Studies among clerics and to prepare professors in this discipline » (Address to the Salesians at PAS, 29 Oct. 1966; AAS LVIII, 1966, pp. 1164-1165).

The pedagogical section, where the Salesians teach the « art of arts » (this subject is a family tradition for them) is flourishing; and the Latin section is battling away despite the difficulties of today's cultural attitudes. Each Institute is clearly making every effort to achieve its desired end. From them derives the special character

this important Salesian Centre has among the academic institutes in Rome, and it merits just commendation.

Furthermore the Faculties at the Athenaeum are making a keen and constant contribution to reform and develop those higher studies which (in accordance with the principles and norms of Vatican II) the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education has fostered and furthered.

And we must not overlook this sign of vitality in the Athenaeum: besides the five Faculties in Rome there is the Sacred Theology section in Turin, and the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences, instituted by the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (also in Turin and associated with the Salesian Athenaeum). Then there are the ten Salesian Theological Institutes in various nations in Europe, Asia and America, and which are affiliated with the Salesian Athenaeum; and there are hopes of others in the future.

Thus the PAS is efficient, vital and operating on a world-wide basis, and its aim is to use the science and methods of the university to educate and form those who will in turn be responsible for the formation of others; and this according to the Founder's spirit, the Preventive System, which under divine inspiration draws its nature and strength from the Gospel.

Furthermore, the recent Special General Chapter of the Salesians laid down that the Athenaeum, obedient to the pastoral directives of Vatican II, should deepen and spread the knowledge of those disciplines which are of greater use for the apostolate in view of the wide-spread and growing urgency to train the young in Christian living. And with these pressing needs in mind it is endeavouring to place this formation on a scientific basis so that a fruitful dialogue with the modern world will result.

Indeed this Religious Family is worthy of high praise for the serious attention it has consistently given to studies. We nourish the hope that this new sign of Pontifical benevolence will spur it on to further good work for the good of the Church and civil society. So by virtue of our apostolic authority we decree and declare that the Salesian Pontifical Athenaeum, canonically erected and entrusted to the Sons of St. John Bosco, from now on be called the Salesian Pontifical University. Likewise we establish that this

new name be inserted into the statutes and laws of the heretofore-styled Athenaeum, which will retain their validity.

We order that all that is decreed in this « Motu Proprio » letter be ratified and confirmed, all dispositions to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at St. Peter's, Rome, on the Feast of Mary Help of Christians, 24 May 1973, the 10th. year of our Pontificate

PAUL PP. VI

VI. FROM THE PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTERS

So far we have received newsletters from forty-eight Provinces (albeit with a certain understandable irregularity). Recent arrivals show a preference for the speedy and economical duplicating machine, and deal with practical matters in a plain and simple style. Many items are of genuine importance to the Provincial communities and the Congregation in general.

All in all there is a wealth of good informative material, and it is not easy to make a choice for this section of the Acts; and space does not allow of a complete coverage of all the matter worth reporting.

These pages do not always give preference to news that is in itself most important, but rather to items that carry ideas and experiences that are not widely known, or that are likely to suggest and stimulate similar experiments elsewhere.

While repeating our thanks to the Provincials, we also iterate our request that newsletters be sent regularly to the Rector Major, the interested Superiors, and to the Press Office.

1. Provincials to confrères

a) THE SPECIAL PASTORAL SERVICES OF THE RECTOR

The Rector must render three special pastoral services to the community. *First* of all, spiritual and apostolic incentive must emanate from him. If anyone should have an abundance of courage in these difficult moments in our history, it is certainly the one who has accepted the task of the responsibility of the community. *Secondly* the Rector must be dynamic and selflessly inspire this quality in

others. We have to be practical Salesians and realise that we must work with the people we are given. We must help them, get the best out of them and increase their apostolic efficiency. *Thirdly*, the Rector is responsible for the formation of his confrères. Life must be seen as a « school of formation ». Don Bosco worked hard for those who lived with him to assist them grow to maturity.

(Father Anthony Calero - Cordoba, Spain - August 1973).

b) RELAXATION

Relaxation in a manner consonant with our religious state is in keeping with the Gospel: « Come away with me and rest awhile ». Even Don Bosco felt the need to suspend his prodigious activities and take time off for rest. A proper period of repose increases our efficiency and restores our psychological balance (which these days is subject to so much wear and tear). One of the causes of community tensions is that time is used inefficiently and poorly programmed. Periods for relaxation may and should be planned and revised if we do not wish to jeopardise basic values.

(Father G. Sangalli - Ligure-Toscano - June 1973 - page 2).

c) PERSONNEL SOLIDARITY

Our financial solidarity to the missions and to needy enterprises is indeed important; but personnel solidarity is no less important. For instance we could try to stir up some of the more mature youngsters to sacrifice a part of their lives (one or two years) in Africa or elsewhere; and then organize groups to support them — these other groups trying at the same time to live up to the ideals of such a gesture of « service to others ». (Father Tanguy wrote to me last December: « If in your travels you come across any young people ready to work in with African youngsters, let me know ».) Or again, we could make known the anguished appeal of confrères at grips with inhuman problems. (Father Gimbert in Haiti, 92 years old and almost blind, wrote to me: « If only I could last another twenty years! »).

Missionary help goes a long way; for charity readies the way for justice. As Father Raineri wrote: « Hungering for justice means two things: denouncing injustice and endeavouring to suppress it — and we start by doing something ourselves ».

(Father Michele Mouillard - Lyons, France - Feb., 1973, pp. 2-3).

2. The China-Vietnam Province - The centenary of the birth of Mgr. Versiglia

The China-Vietnam Province has decided to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Mgr. Versiglia - 5 June 1973. The newsletter of June-August 1973 refers to this.

In his circular of 7 April 1973, V. Rev. Father Provincial suggested that each community organize a solemn commemoration of this centenary during the scholastic year 1973-1974 « in order to revive his memory among the confrères and make his resplendent figure known to our boys. On the one hand such a commemoration will serve to illustrate to them his heroic martyrdom; and on the other hand the confrères will be duly impressed by the example of his virtues. This is an excellent incitement towards the spiritual renewal required by the XX General Chapter ».

The following reasons are given for such a commemoration.

a) Mgr Versiglia was the first Salesian missionary in China, the founder of the house at Macau and of the Salesian missions Heung Shan and Shiu Chow.

b) He was the first Salesian bishop in Asia.

c) He was a man of outstanding virtues which can serve as a pattern for our present Salesians. We can all admire and imitate in him « the spiritual life, prayer, the spirit of poverty, love of sacrifice and the cross » so warmly recommended by His Holiness Paul VI in his discourse to the members of the Special General Chapter.

c) Mgr. Versiglia died a martyr of charity, generously giving up his own life in defence of chastity. His heroic death has won for him the admiration of the whole Church. His Cause of Beatification has already been some years in progress, and there is a well-grounded hope that in two or three years this much longed-for event will take place. It is therefore the duty of the Salesians of China not to allow his memory to fall into oblivion.

d) The celebrations of his centenary are in perfect harmony with the missionary motto given this year by the Rector Major to the whole Salesian Family.

V. Rev. Father Provincial naturally hopes that if the celebrations at community level are successful, this « will enable the Provincial Office to consider the feasibility of a commemoration to be held by the whole Province ».

3. Southern Province - Questionnaire on boy's retreat

During the scholastic year the theology students of Castellammare (Naples) assisted with the boys' retreat at the « Centre of Spirituality » of the Province. The following questionnaire was then prepared, with a request for thoughtful answers with a pastoral slant. (Newsletter, May 1973, pp. 3-4).

We took as a basic principle that the retreat is closely bound up with the education work of the community; hence this work is seriously compromised, even negated, by deficiencies in the retreat. Hence the following questions.

— What use is the retreat if it is a mere episode in the community's educative work — without preparation or follow-up, without being an integral part of the whole activity of the Institute?

— What use is a retreat which is not a « God-encounter » at the boys' own level, with prayer that really comes from the heart and is not imposed by a bell; and seeing that the Word of God really means something to them?

— What use is a retreat without the full and enthusiastic collaboration of all the confrères, especially the teachers (who need to be also physically present)?

— What use is a retreat « delegated » to outsiders, who take delivery of the flock and run the risk of leading it who knows where?

— What use is a retreat if it does not put the boys in contact with life lived in Christian fashion — even if this only means learning from our dedicated confrères? (problem of behaviour patterns).

— What use is a retreat without explaining the what, the how and the where; giving due importance to the spiritual situation of the boys; seeing that they meet the preacher, the organizers...)?

— What use is a retreat when imposed on all, especially the senior lads, as a structure of the college? (problem of free assent).

— What use is a retreat when juniors and seniors are lumped together, with no account taken of the different spiritual situations and apostolic preferences?

— What use is a retreat when immediately afterwards everyone leaves for the holidays?

— What use is a retreat when squeezed into two or three days? Would it not be better to have monthly days of recollection that would give an opportunity for talks on Christian involvement with subsequent follow-up?

— What use is a retreat for boys who may have major problems to solve (such as the existence of God, of Christ, the validity of the Gospels) and need to go back to first principles?

— What use is a retreat which perforce must touch on everything and thus runs the risk of treating nothing in depth?

— Should the word « retreat » be changed for something closer to reality?

We think it is not good enough to adopt the attitude: « Still, something good always comes out of them »; and to be satisfied if everyone goes to confession and communion. This is not treating the apostolate with the seriousness it deserves.

We are not out to destroy everything, but to transform from within what risks being (according to some lads at Castellammare) « just one of the many structures imposed on us by the college ».

We need to be apostolically inventive and discover new forms if we want this educative and pastoral means of Don Bosco to achieve its desired results.

4. Province of Recife

Vocation Week

In the first half of 1973 the Salesian College of Fortaleza, Brazil, experimented with a week of « communication of the message of Christian living », which included meetings, bible groups and hymns, climaxing with a Vocation Week in June. (Newsletter, Sept. 1973, pp. 10-11).

The week was well prepared and aimed at boys in the 12-16 years age group. Forty-two turned up. First we had to prepare the place: general meeting room, smaller rooms for group meetings, projection room. Then a stack of placards and posters for illustrating Christ's call to the Church, to follow him in service to others, etc. These were set up in strategic places.

The timetable was drawn up with care, and only the mornings were used, the afternoons being free for sport, music, records and reading.

The general structure of the week consisted in meetings. The Salesian clerics from Nordeste, on holidays from Sao Paulo, were immensely helpful, and their friendly presence enlivened the meetings, groups, conversations and recreations.

The week ended with two impressive ceremonies: perpetual profession of a confrère and ordination to deacon and lector of two others.

The results of the week exceeded our expectations. Many of the youngsters felt drawn to a more authentic Christian life, to follow Christ more closely in their choice of religious life or the married state.

5. Salesian Family Convention

The Salesian Province of Verona (Italy), and the FMA Province of Padua planned together a « Convention of the Salesian Family of West Veneto », and the following matters were dealt with. (Newsletter, July 1973, pp. 6-7).

The scope of the Salesian Family Convention was to promote the spirit of unity among the various groups making up the Salesian Family, and a fraternal exchange for mutual enrichment and greater apostolic output.

The Salesians and the FMA were represented by their Provincials, vice-Provincials, Delegates for Co-operators and Past Pupils, local Superiors. There were also two Co-operators, two Past Pupil Presidents and a Salesian Brother.

The Convention held its first meeting 10 June at Padua and the agenda consisted of three reports on the three aims: « The Salesian Family wants unity — in mutual friendship, in prayer and in apostolic work ».

The vice-Provincial, Father Zanella, spoke first and suggested ways and means of fostering mutual friendship: to reflect on the documents regarding the twin Congregations, the Union of Co-operators, the Past Pupils, the Volunteers of Don Bosco, etc., studying also their history and their common Father.

The second address was given by a Co-operator. She represented Salesian prayer as the deep source of unity, and touched on the sacramental life, devotion to Mary and loyalty to the Pope.

The Mother Provincial spoke on unity in apostolic collaboration, with reference to various means (top-echelon meetings, participation in parish councils, approved methods of association of boys and girls, praying together, mutual efforts to further vocational guidance, helping Co-operator and Past Pupil groups, missionary activities and so on). This practical talk contained a wealth of proposals and opened up the way for discussion regarding the type of work that could be done together.

6. Province of Leon - A travelling missionary exhibition

A travelling missionary exhibition, organized in the Province of Leon and entrusted to Father Ezechial Gonzalo has done the rounds of the Salesian Houses in Spain. Here are a few facts regarding the venture. (Newsletter, June 1973, pp. 17-18).

Aims. To contribute to the aim of the « Strenna » to make confrères more « intensely mission-minded »; to make our pupils aware of the missionary work of the Congregation — as a possible area for their calling in life; to apprise people connected with our Salesian work of a facet of the Society that is little known and here and now in dire need.

Results. We were pleasantly surprised at the effect the exhibition had everywhere; and foresee many fine possibilities for the future. It stimulated natural curiosity, and even more, interest for the message it carried. The boys and the externs were the most impressed. It proved an excellent way of making known the wide extent of the Salesian activities, especially in the Third World which today arouses so much sympathy. The exhibition demonstrated its validity as an education-aid in the vocational field and in opening up new horizons.

Problems. We had to do a fair amount of improvising in our presentation, as we were not expecting the great amount of interest that was aroused. The time spent in each house was generally too short to reach all the pupils easily; and even more so for the outside people.

It was plain that in many places there is still a childish conception of missionary activity: and this meant that in some houses the senior boys did not turn up. Each community needs a confrère whose task it is to whip up enthusiasm for the missions.

Results. (The interior results are of course impossible to assess.) 58 houses visited; 39250 youngsters saw the exhibition; 59 mission Masses; 20 paraliturgies; 40 community meditations; 58 conference-cum-film sessions; 92 sermons; 82 mission film showings; missionary knick-knacks sold: 310,000 pesetas; donations: 451,000 pesetas.

7. Province of Belo Horizonte - « My vacation on the mission-field »

In some countries those Salesians who work in our colleges are given the chance of a vacation that is an enriching pastoral experience — on the mission-fields. Here is an interesting article from Brazil. (Newsletter, April 1973).

Juareté, February 1973. I have enjoyed my second holiday at the Rio Negro mission here. My reasons? I have to admit the economic tourist attraction is great; but hardly sufficient justification. No one berated me for being extravagant — and really it was more than tourism that brought me here; it also took a little courage.

The Acts of the SGC say that the renewal of our missionary enthusiasm is the best medicine for the comfortable life. How true!

I am not ashamed to admit that I lost my missionary vocation — I'm not quite sure how. Today I feel it coming back, but I face the fact that it cannot be. I lack the courage to part with some of the city college comforts. I have often jokingly said to the confrères here that a missionary needs apostolicity, a sense of adventure and a poet's heart. I don't know how much I can claim of these qualities — I am certainly found wanting.

I can guarantee that this period definitely helped cure me a little of my love of comfort. I made up my mind to stay all my time in the one mission so as to live the ordinary daily life without being treated as an outsider or visitor. I wanted to assimilate something of the missionary spirit.

Now I return happy for I found what I was looking for. I feel I have been toughened up a bit; my faith is stronger; my vocation as a Salesian and a priest has benefited. I learned something of optimism and hope. I carry away with me the desire to do something for the missions — even if it has to be done from afar. I want to get back there as often as I can.

Father Ivo

VII. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

1. Ten ways to help modern man pray better

When Paul VI was asked whether men prayed today, he answered, « Where the Church is alive, yes! » To the packed audience of 22 August he suggested ten ways to help Christians pray better.

(The following translation is taken from the English edition of the OSSERVATORE ROMANO dated 30 August 1973).

When we would promote a religious renewal, we think inevitably of return to prayer, both individual and collective. It is not without reason that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, that is, on the official prayer of the Church, is among the most important documents of the recent Council. Prayer is the characteristic act of religion; therefore, if we wish to impress a certain awareness upon religious life, an expression that meets the needs and capacities of the people of our time, we must invite them and teach them to pray. What an immense subject! It is indeed, but let us limit our talk to the most basic remarks.

The breath of the Mystical Body

One question arises before all others: in these times does man pray?

Where the Church is alive, he does. Prayer is the breath of the Mystical Body, its conversation with God, the expression of its love, its striving towards the Father. Prayer is recognizing His Providence in the dynamic of world events, it is asking His mercy and His aid in our weakness, it is confessing the necessity of His Being and acknowledging His glory. Prayer is the joy of God's People at being able to praise Him and all that comes to us from Him: prayer is the school of Christian life. That is to say, prayer is a flower that springs from two deep and vital roots: the religious sense (natural root), and the grace of the Holy Spirit (supernatural root), which moves us to pray. One may even say that prayer is the Church's highest expression, but it is equally the Church's nourishment and basic principle: it is the classical moment when divine life begins to move within the Church. Therefore prayer requires of us the greatest care

and the highest regard, though we must remember, as the Council says, that "the Sacred Liturgy does not exhaust the Church's sphere of action; in fact it is necessary that men be first called to faith and conversion" (Const. S. Conc. 9).

How to lead man to prayer

Here, then, is another gigantic obstacle to the religious renewal as desired by the recent Council and as planned for the coming Holy Year: how to bring men to prayer in these times?

For we must recognize that the irreligiousness of so many people today makes it very difficult that the spirit of our contemporaries be moved to easy, spontaneous and joyful prayer. To simplify, we will say that this is so for two reasons. The first objects radically to the very existence of prayer, as if it were not turned to a divine Interlocutor, and were thus superfluous, useless and even harmful to human self-sufficiency and therefore to the personality of modern man. The second in practice neglects contact with the experience of prayer, keeping lips and heart closed, as one who dares not speak a foreign tongue, as one used to conceiving of life without God ("like Françoise Sagan, who one day said to a reporter: 'God! I never think of him!'").

A gigantic obstacle, we said; but not insuperable. For one very simple reason: because, like it or not, the need for God is ingrained in the human heart, which suffers so often, or falls into illogical scepticism, because repressed within it is the voice that, for a thousand reasons, would call to heaven, not as to an empty and terribly mysterious universe, but as to Prime Being, absolute, creator, to the living God. In fact, for what they are worth at least as psycho-social phenomena, one finds among today's youth strange forms of collective mysticism. These are not always cases of mystification, but rather seem a thirst for God, perhaps still unaware of the true spring at which it may be quenched, but sincere in its wordless acknowledgement of what it is: thirst, deep thirst.

In any case, the problem of prayer—both private, and thus adapted to the needs of age and background, and collective, suitable, therefore, to community life—draws our special attention, particularly as regards the spiritual rebirth for which we are hoping and preparing.

A Suggested decalogue

We can put together empirically what could be called a decalogue of suggestions that have been offered to us by many who toil for the Kingdom today. The list is simple and will perhaps not be without utility.

I. Faithful, intelligent and diligent application must be given to the liturgical reform promoted by the Council and defined by the competent Church authorities. Any who impede or injudiciously slow it down are wasting a providential moment for a true revival and a felicitous spreading of the Catholic religion in our own time. Anyone, on the other hand, who takes advantage of the reform to indulge in arbitrary experiments, wastes energy and offends the ecclesial sense.

The time has come for a joyful and concordant observance of this solemn "lex orandi" of the Church of God: the reformed liturgy.

II. A philosophical, scriptural, theological and pastoral catechesis concerning divine worship, such as that professed by the Church today, will always be opportune. Prayer is not blind sentiment; it is the projection of the soul illuminated by truth and moved by charity.

III. Authoritative voices exhort us to advise great caution in the process of reforming traditional, popular religious customs, taking care not to extinguish religious feeling in trying to clothe it with new and more authentic spiritual expressions. The taste for the true, the beautiful, the simple, and for that which serves the community, and also for the traditional (where it deserves to be honoured), must guide the exterior manifestations of worship, in seeking to preserve the people's affection for it.

IV. The family must be a great school of piety, spirituality and religious fidelity. The Church has great trust in the delicate, authoritative and irreplaceable religious teaching supplied by parents.

V. Observing holy days of obligation is serious and fundamentally important as never before. The Church has granted facilities to make it possible. Anyone who is aware of the inner meaning and the practical utility of this obligation ought to consider it not only a primary duty, but equally a right, a necessity, an honour, a fortune, which no eager and intelligent believer may fail to fulfil without serious reasons.

Socially a unit

VI. The established community asserts its right to count all the faithful as its own. Even if some of them have been granted a certain autonomy in religious practice in distinct, homogeneous groups, they must not lack understanding for the ecclesial spirit, which is that of being a people with but one heart and one soul, that is, of being (even socially) a unit, of being a Church.

VII. The celebration of divine worship, especially of the Holy Mass, is always a very serious act. It must therefore be prepared and carried

out with great care in every aspect, including the exterior ones (seriousness, dignity, schedule, length, etc.; let every word be simple and holy). In this field the clergy have great responsibility in execution and setting example.

VIII. The congregation must likewise collaborate in the dignified performance of religious functions: punctuality, composure, silence and, above all, participation are essential. This is the fundamental point of the liturgical reform. On this everything has been said, but how much there is still to do!

IX. Full provision must be made for both aspects of prayer, the private and the collective; as is stated in the liturgical rules.

X. As to music, what a problem! But let us take courage: it is not insoluble. A new era is arising for Sacred Music. Many ask that the Latin and Gregorian chant of the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei be kept for all countries. May God will that it be so. One can study how this can be done.

How many things there are to do! But, in fact, how beautiful and how simple! And, if they were observed, how strong their spiritual influence would be in the communities of the faithful for bringing the wished-for religious renewal to the Church and the world!

2. Rebuilding unity within the Church

In his address given at the general audience of 22 August, Paul VI pointed out one of the aims of the Holy Year: to rebuild spiritual and physical unity within the Church. He emphasised two disruptive elements that militated against this unity: uncharitable "contestation" and the erroneous opposition between the charismatic and institutional Church.

(The following translation is taken from the English edition of the OSSERVATORE ROMANO dated 6 September 1973).

How, dearest Brothers and Children, are we to set about resolving the problems and overcoming the difficulties that the Church's programme for the Holy Year raises in all their enormous dimensions? For, let us say again, the Holy Year, now approaching and already making itself felt in Churches all over the world, is intended to have that character of general reconciliation and sincere renewal of Christian life which the recent Council has bequeathed to us and of which we have often spoken. We wish to impress upon this event, or better still, this movement that will be the

Holy Year, a quality of seriousness and efficacy. We have several times mentioned the grave difficulties that stand in the way of our intention—shared, we hope, by the whole Catholic Church—and, as we look more and more closely at the moral, sociological and historical reality of our time, in which we have to demonstrate the validity of our aims, new problems and new obstacles become apparent. All this demands of us a profound investigation of present religious and moral conditions, and a more generous “estimate” more firmly based on trust in divine assistance.

Catholics after their own fashion

How, for example, are we to overcome the difficulty of the division, the disintegration which unfortunately is now to be found at many levels within the Church? It is not that the Church is openly divided in itself; on the contrary, those very persons who create the discomfort and at times the interior torment of dissent and of irreconcilable wills, assert more than ever before that they wish to be in the Church, or better, that they wish to be “Church”—so imperious is the need, stemming from the Christian vocation, of the organic and visible unity of the Mystical Body. Never before has so much been said regarding communion, and often by those very people who promote forms of association which are the opposite of true communion. That is, they seek to be distinguished, to be separated from the authentic brotherhood, from the univocal, ecclesial family. After having perhaps tried to discredit the canonical, that is the juridical, institutional, aspect of the Church, they would like to legalize, by claiming the widest tolerance, their own official membership in the Church, and annul any hypothesis of schism, or self-excommunication. That is to say, the division so much felt in the Catholic Church today is not so much in its structures as it is in the minds, in the ideas, in the attitude of many who still, and often with a stubborn sense of their own superiority, call themselves Catholics, but after their own fashion, with a liberal and subjective freedom of thought and of doctrinal position joined to an arrogant ambition for indisputable authenticity.

Dearest Brothers and Children, certainly you are aware of the phenomena, of some at least, of this situation, and you can understand how deeply they fill our heart with loving grief. Rebuilding spiritual and physical unity within the Church is today one of the Church’s most serious and urgent problems. We do not wish to trouble you by raising fearful spectres, but rather we wish to invite each of you on the occasion of the Holy Year, to re-establish in the Church a real feeling for its constitutional unity, love and sacrifice for its inner peace, zeal and desire for a sincere harmony between faith and charity.

"Contestation" that lacks charity

As far as the basic character of this talk permits, we may summarize, in what we consider to be two main points, the negative diagnosis of this deplorable state of affairs.

The first point concerns the spirit of contestation, become fashionable nowadays: everyone in the ecclesial sphere who claims a modern, popular and original style, has adopted this spirit, often with a barefaced irresponsibility. In itself, contestation is an attempt at identifying and correcting errors deserving censure, and therefore aims at conversion, at reform, at an increase of good will: and we will not ban positive contestation, if it should remain thus. But, alas, contestation has become a kind of self-destruction; too often it lacks wisdom and love. It has become a facile habit, clouding the vision of the beam in one's own eye to look more closely at the mote in others'. It leads to judgements that are often rash about the Church's defects, and indulges, even to the point of sympathizing and connivance, the defects of the Church's adversaries, of those who deny the name of God, of those who subvert the social order. Contestation is completely on the side of the most daring and dangerous reforms, and then withdraws its humble and filial adherence from the effort at renewal which Catholicism is trying to make in every sector of human life and activity. This negative spirit gives rise to a facile instinct towards distinguishing oneself from the community, towards selfishly preferring one's own group, towards refusing solidarity with the grand cause of the apostolate striving for the Kingdom of God. It talks of liberation and, without intending to, travels, bitter and joyless, towards a "free analysis," that is towards a subjective statement which certainly does not agree with the spirit of charity.

It is this very charity that must cure the Church of the contagion of a corrosive and contesting criticism which has penetrated here and there deeply into the Mystical Body: the charisma of charity must be restored to its rightful place, the first: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13, 4-7). And so forth. Remember this hymn of St. Paul to charity: this—charity, love—must purify legitimate, sometimes even obligatory, contestation and re-accustom the Church to seeking within itself its own heart, in the depths of which beats the divine heart, sweet and strong, of Christ: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart," (Mt. 11, 29).

One Church only

And the second point? This concerns a distinction that slips easily but unlawfully from the sphere of logic to that of experience—the distinction, let us say, between the institutional and the charismatic Church; between the Church of Jesus Christ and that of the People guided by the Holy Spirit; between the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church and a church conceived according to one's own personal views or even according to one's own subjective spiritual tastes. This point, too, will deserve our reflection, especially as concerns the negative consequences deriving from the shallow preference many today are wont to give to a so-called charismatic church as compared with the traditional, institutional Church. And the negative consequences are mainly two: disobedience and pluralism beyond its legitimate limits. These are themes to be developed broadly and with frankness; they will be our task on a future occasion, God willing.

But now let us limit ourselves to denying the substantial distinction between the institutional Church and the presumed purely charismatic Church. What Church did Jesus actually found? Jesus founded *His* Church upon Peter, upon the Apostles; He founded no other Churches. There are not several Churches; complete and perfect in its conception, there exists one only. And this is the Church to which Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit, in order that the institutional Church may live through the animation of the Holy Spirit. The charismata, that is the special gifts which the Holy Spirit infuses in the Faithful, are as we know, for the benefit of the only existing Church and for its diffusion throughout the world (cf. 1 Cor. 12).

Therefore we must restore that true "sense of the Church" which answers to the divine purpose and which confers upon the Church that interior unity, that vitality, the joy in being and working which bear witness to us and to our time of the presence and the salvation of Christ (cf. Jn. 17).

3. Mission Sunday in the light of the Holy Year

Pope Paul's message for Mission Sunday (to be held on 21 October).

(The following translation is taken from the English edition of the OSSERVATORE ROMANO dated 2 October 1973).

The Feast of Pentecost has traditionally, been the occasion for Us to address our Mission Sunday message to the Pastors and faithful throughout the world. We are convinced that this feast is a most fitting and significant

time to draw attention to the preaching of the Gospel, which is the primary and essential mission of the Church. We have always held, and still continue to hold, that, on this day specially consecrated to the Holy Spirit, the minds and hearts of men are more ready to welcome his divine inspiration which is the only true source and nourishment of missionary zeal. The fact that this same day sees the beginning of the spiritual movement which will reach its fulfilment in Rome with the celebration of the Holy Year of 1975 does not in any way distract our attention from the missionary cause which is neither contrary to nor separate from this important religious event.

The theme of renewal and the reconciliation of men with God and with one another must henceforth arouse interest, reflection, and initiative both in the Churches with an older Christian tradition and in the younger Churches in mission countries. This theme will be the subject of common research, the occasion for drawing men closer together, the path along which to promote greater unity of energy and purpose. Renewal must surely include the renewal of the Church's missionary spirit since reconciliation must certainly be among the ultimate aims of her work of evangelization. Is not reconciliation the most outstanding feature which outlines, defines and reveals "conversion"? In this context we do not use the term conversion in the outdated and incorrect sense of an extrinsic or triumphalistic conquest nor as the result of superficial proselytism. What We mean by conversion is the truly evangelical turning towards God of the soul moved by a faith which sees in him the fullness of all reality and the author of the moral order, and, what is even more important, urged on by charity which sees God as a loving and merciful Father.

This message for Mission Sunday, then, should be seen in the perspective of the forthcoming Jubilee and it is Our sincere wish that all those who hear this message and grasp the fundamental theme which it contains, will share the depth of Our call to action to the best of their ability.

The phenomenon of the decrease in missionary vocations

This year there is one special theme which We take very much to heart since it has a special right to Our solicitude as Pastor of the Church. This theme arises from a painful phenomenon to which we have all been witness in recent times. We refer to the decrease in missionary vocations which is taking place at the very moment in history when their support is most necessary in our missions. It would be superfluous here to refer to figures and statistics or to attempt to compare or interpret numbers. It is sufficient that we be aware of the situation as it is in order to realize what it means

and the dangers involved by this lack of personnel in a sector so vital for the development of the faith and the growth of the Church. Our awareness of the fact is sufficient to bring to Our mind amidst feelings of apprehension, the words of Christ our Saviour: *Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci* (Mth. 9, 37-38; Cfr. Luc. 10, 2).

Historical and sociological reasons which explain this decrease in vocations are certainly not lacking; the religious crisis in a secularized world, the systematic attack on spiritual values, certain methods of doubtful value used in the past; these are some of the causes to which the phenomenon is attributed. There is a decrease everywhere in the number of priests and it is therefore no wonder that the number of missionaries and their collaborators is also diminishing. Must we therefore conclude that the faith is being eclipsed or that the preaching of the Gospel has run its course? It would be a most unhealthy attitude to insist on the declamation of the negative factors and thus dispense ourselves from personal action and responsible commitment. The lack of vocations should be, in fact, a motivation for the whole ecclesial community to reflect, to awaken its generosity, to renew the call of Christ to the Lord of the harvest so that He may send labourers into his harvest (*ibid.*).

Relationship between local missionaries and those from other countries

There is an expression of Vatican II which provides us with enlightenment on this point and helps us to consider what are our duties with regard to the Missions: "In order to be able to offer to all men the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, the Church must become part of all these groups for the same motive—*eodem motu*—which led Christ to bind himself, in virtue of his Incarnation, to the definite social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom He dwelt" (Decree *Ad Gentes*, N. 10). In this matter also Christ is our Teacher who points out to us the path we must follow in order to make the mission more effective and fruitful: the path of direct contact, psychological affinity, an identity of life-style with the peoples to whom the Gospel is to be announced.

There can be no denying the fact that, right from the beginning of the Christian era until our own day, missionaries have accomplished wonders in preaching the Gospel according to the mentality and the language of the peoples to whom they were sent. They have laid the foundations on which rest the existence and independence of the young Churches whose originality and vitality We ourself have found so consoling during Our journeys in Africa, in Asia and in Oceania.

Today, however, under the pressure of so many social and cultural transformations, there are many missionaries whose anguished cry is: "How is the work we have begun going to continue?" Certainly the seed of the Gospel has borne fruit and, in relation to the past, there are more local missionaries announcing the Good News but, for quite some time yet, the African and Asian countries will need vocations, that is priests, Sisters and lay people, to answer the needs of evangelization. We hear so many Bishops at the present time who repeatedly ask: "Come to us, missionaries, come and help us in our countries".

The proportionate increase in local vocations who answer the missionary call is simultaneous with the decrease in the overall number of missionaries from Europe, America and Canada who decide to leave their own countries. Added to this fact is the disquieting feature of aging personnel since half of the missionaries from foreign countries are already advanced in years while there are few young people to take their place.

What can be done in this situation? We wish to state the problem clearly: there is local personnel and this local personnel is being called upon to take an ever-increasing part in the evangelization of their own people; there is also the personnel coming from other Churches who genuinely desire to be of service and who, consequently, must continue in their missionary commitment. It is not merely a question of equilibrium: the common cause of God's Kingdom associates both ranks of evangelical messengers closely together so that they may collaborate closely with one another. Such collaboration is necessary and most certainly fruitful. We do not mean merely a working relationship but, rather, harmonious coordination which should be the expression of ecclesial communion. We therefore renew our call to Our Brothers in the Episcopate that they give serious consideration to the possibility of sending priests from their dioceses so that the numbers may thus be better distributed in the different Churches. This is an aspect of pastoral programming which is already necessary and which is not confined by national or regional boundaries. Future canonical legislation will facilitate this distribution.

Promoting local vocations

We likewise appeal for promotion of local vocations. May they be provided with an adequate formation and never allowed to suffocate for economic or social background reasons. No vocation must be lost, no vocation must remain undecided, none must fail to reach maturity for want of means. Here we touch upon another aspect of the problem. The young Churches, for the most part, share the conditions of poverty and economic insecurity of the peoples among whom they accomplish their mission.

Consequently all Christians have the duty to help and do justice to the priests, Sisters, Brothers and catechists who labour with little means or with none for the welfare of their fellow citizens. We have already said in the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* that development is the new name for peace (Nos. 76-77). It must not be forgotten that the missionaries themselves are among the first collaborators and assistants in the gigantic undertaking for the social and economic development of new peoples because they know best what are the needs of their fellow-citizens and they include this service also as part of their missionary mandate. It is they who, in proportion to the help which they receive, take the sick into their hospitals, direct the schools, promote in large measure the often tedious development of their people. Undertaking the formation of local personnel, therefore, means serving the cause of the Gospel and, at the same time, the cause of progress and peace.

Reasons for optimism

If We have so far outlined the most urgent needs We must also enumerate the motives for hope so that We may present a more complete analysis and judge the situation more calmly. Our own efforts are always supported by the strength of God since the cause of the Gospel is His cause: all our trust rests in Him and especially in matters concerning the work of the apostolate *sufficiencia nostra ex Deo est* (cfr. 2 Cor., 3, 4-6). But We like to recall all the positive elements on the Church's missionary horizon.

We find it specially pleasing to think of all the young people from the older nations who go, if even for a short time, to the parishes and outposts in mission countries where they give a wonderful account of themselves and acquire precious experience. There they get to know the real problems of development without any distortions, there they have scope for their creativity and they bring to these peoples a worth-while contribution in the fields of organization, culture and social progress. We think also of the priests, both religious and secular, who set forth from their diocese or religious Institute for the countries of Latin America and Africa and who establish outstanding "twinning" relationships between their places of origin and the mission countries. They have the support of older Churches and parishes who sustain their work and help directly their apostolic and charitable undertakings. We think, too, of the contacts at an ecumenical level between Catholic missionaries and those of other ecclesial communities. Inspired as they are by evangelical charity, these contacts, especially in the fields of health assistance and civic life, as also in the cultural and development fields, help to erase the bad impression left by the division of the Christian family and help also — We hope — to hasten

the reconstitution of that unity longed for by both parties so that their witness to the faith may be more convincing and unmistakable.

We feel that it is necessary in all justice to recall these facts so that the painful phenomenon which is the subject of this message may be put in its proper perspective and not overshadow the real missionary situation.

The Pontifical Mission-Aid Societies

Mission Sunday which we will celebrate next October should have a salutary and stimulating effect, instilling a new missionary dynamism into the hearts of the faithful, a dynamism which is an essential element of our faith. Not only will such a renewal of the missionary spirit be an offering to God of prayer and penance but it will bring a fresh flowering of missionary vocations and thus provide the missions with the help they so sorely need (Cfr. Decree, *Ad Gentes*, No. 36).

Once again, in conclusion to these points of Our message, We wish to recommend the Pontifical Mission-Aid Societies. These institutions, at the service of the Pope and of the Bishops, foster fraternal relations among the local Churches and are particularly adapted for promoting a missionary spirit among the whole People of God. The principal aim of these Societies is, in fact, the formation of a missionary conscience (Cfr. Decree, *Ad Gentes*, No. 38) and the fact that they are called Pontifical does not mean that they are apart from the diocesan framework but that the local Church, through their services, can more effectively share in the overall activity of the missionary Church. By underlining their importance here we are complying with the declarations of the Council which assigned to them a position of greater responsibility. We exhort all Christians to support them and keep in touch with the work they are doing, a work which is truly universal. At the same time we earnestly ask the Bishops and priests to promote them in their respective Churches and parishes assuring them of the necessary facilities for their proper functioning.

May the Lord bless this Mission Sunday for which we address this appeal to you with all Our heart. We wish to place this day under the special protection of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus the centenary of whose birth we celebrate this year and we wish, furthermore, to place this day in the perspective of the forthcoming Holy Year. The hour of the mission has by no means passed for the Church, and, in fact, for many peoples it is only just beginning. The words of Our venerated predecessor, Pius XI, are still most applicable in our time: *Nihil actum, si quid agendum*. Yes indeed, nothing has been done if so many, far too many, things still remain to be done.

PAULUS PP. VI

VIII. NECROLOGY

Father Louis Baracchini

* Leric (Genoa, Italy) 4-6-1887; † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 26-6-73; 86 years of age; 65 profession; 51 priesthood.

For forty-four years he dedicated himself to the missions in the south of Argentina, and in Porto Natales and Punta Arenas in Chile. He loved the liturgy and sacred music; and even in the last months of his life the faithful were edified by the sound of his fine singing during the parish ceremonies. He will be remembered for his fidelity to Don Bosco to the point of total sacrifice.

Father Eusebius Battezzati

* Monte di Valenza (Alessandria, Italy) 9-4-1895; † Bagnolo Piemonte (Cuneo, Italy) 12-5-73; 78 years of age; 61 profession; 51 priesthood; 10 rector.

He came of a family much devoted to Don Bosco. After military service during World War I he went to the USA, completed his studies, was ordained and began to work for the migrants. Later he was appointed Rector and Master of Novices. Back in Italy he worked as long as his health held out. He was respected for his solid formation; and the kindly assurance of his spiritual guidance bore the mark of much experience in the trials of life. His labours ended in quiet acceptance of the will of God.

Father Robert Baudin

* Péron (France) 23-1-11; † Marseille (France) 4-8-73; 62 years of age; 41 profession; 30 priesthood; 15 rector.

An open character and always at the disposal of others. His pleasant and spontaneous joy won the friendship of all who had dealings with him. His love of the boys often led him, like Don Bosco, "to race ahead to the point of temerity". He died after a long illness that reduced his activities from 1967 onwards.

Father Leo Bockstal

* Celles (Tournai, Belgium) 26-11-00; † Sainte-Ode (Flamierge, Belgium) 16-5-73; 72 years of age; 52 profession; 42 priesthood.

A man of great initiative and always available for others. At 65 years of age he went to Israel to put a professional school on its feet at Nazareth. He was a cheerful, pleasant and decisive man, full of faith, with no time for over-sentimentality. He is remembered by the many friends he made by his untiring activity.

Father Joseph Boursotty

* Grasse (Nice, France) 3-7-1883; † Santiago (Chile) 15-6-73; 89 years of age; 69 profession; 61 priesthood; 16 rector.

His life supplies a magnificent page in the history of the Province. He is remembered for his openness to the Spirit, for he really lived the renewal required by the Church and the Congregation, like Pope John, with optimism, serenity and hard work. He was the spiritual father of generations of Salesians and layfolk, young and old. He aroused in all an enthusiasm to build up the Kingdom of God.

Brother Louis Brunner

* Kulz (Germany) 8-2-12; † Ensdorf (Germany) 14-7-73; 61 years of age; 38 profession.

Apart from the time he bore arms in the Second World War, he passed all his Salesian life looking after the garden in the novitiate at Ensdorf — a quiet man, an exemplary religious, who performed his duties with a true sense of responsibility. He bore his long illness (cancer of the stomach and bowels) with wonderful patience.

Father Francis Burger

* Stockenweiler-Hergesweiler (Bavaria, Germany) 24-6-08; † Benediktbeuern, (Germany) 3-6-73; 65 years of age; 46 profession; 37 priesthood; 25 rector; 6 provincial.

He died suddenly, during the festivities celebrating the elevation of the Salesian church at Benediktbeuern to the status of a minor basilica, a few weeks before the completion of his term of office as Provincial. He was

a fine priest, Salesian and educator and used his talents effectively in posts of great responsibility in the Province of South Germany. His whole life was spent in working enthusiastically for Don Bosco and the Congregation. "When we remember Father Burger we think of his kindness, his optimism, his generosity and his understanding of others" (Fr. Ricceri).

Brother Italo Callegari

* Monastier (Treviso, Italy) 26-9-49; † Caorle (Venice, Italy) 26-6-73; 23 years of age; 7 profession.

A talented chemist. He loved his Salesian vocation and his educational work in the school and the Oratory of San Donà di Piave. He enjoyed the esteem and affection of both confrères and boys; and had just made application for final vows. Christ anticipated his "visible meeting of the love of Christ who calls with the love of the disciple who answers" (Const. 73).

Father Olinto Calussi

* Montecchio-Cortona (Arezzo, Italy) 1-11-16; † Macerata (Italy) 19-5-73; 56 years of age; 38 profession; 28 priesthood.

As a boy he lived with Mgr. Olivares and always remained deeply impressed by his powerful influence. He was noted for his punctuality, fidelity to the Rule, his constant availability, his careful exercise of the ministry and his spirit of work. He loved poverty. For him this meant not just a willing lack of material things, but a genuine detachment from success, prestige, the lime-light, self-interest, even life itself.

Brother Joseph Calvi

* Moio de' Calvi (Bergamo, Italy) 1-9-1881; † Sao Paulo (Brazil) 20-5-73; 91 years of age; 71 profession.

He considered it a boon to have made his first profession into the hands of Don Rua; and he endeavoured to imitate him in his spirit of work and union with God. He went as a missionary to Brazil in 1901 and worked actively and faithfully in different houses in the various duties of economer. He enjoyed the esteem of all for his hard work, kindness and understanding. He was humble, cheerful and self-effacing.

Father Anthony Candiani

* Busto Arsizio (Varese, Italy) 25-2-1887; † Cremsan, Bethlehem (Israel) 25-7-73; 86 years of age; 66 profession; 54 priesthood; 24 rector.

A true son of Don Bosco and ever faithful to our heritage of work and temperance. He was Recor in various houses of the Middle East and was a fine example of faith and dedication. His generous nature never counted the sacrifices. Esteemed and loved, he will be missed greatly.

Father Emilius Cantarutti

* Zagreb (Jugoslavia) 11-9-1896; † San Justo (Buenos Aires, Argentina) 16-7-73; 76 years of age; 57 profession; 49 priesthood; 25 rector.

Much of his life was spent in houses of formation. A humble and devout man whose life was an example of the Gospel and the charity of Don Bosco. He suffered a heart attack while concelebrating with a newly-ordained priest.

Father Raphael Curti

* Frascati (Rome, Italy) 23-4-1883; † Banpong (Thailand) 21-7-73; 90 years of age; 74 profession; 63 priesthood; 10 rector.

He went with the first missionary expedition in 1927 to Thailand, and remained there till his death without ever visiting his home country. He was parish priest for ten years at Donmottanoi and consecrated the rest of his long life to the work of the confessional. He was a man of exceptional integrity and lived the humble and hidden life.

Father Joseph Mary Doblado

* Lucena (Cordoba, Spain) 24-11-1892; † Malaga (Spain) 14-5-73; 80 years of age; 63 profession; 54 priesthood; 23 rector; 6 provincial.

An orphan himself at an early age, he became like Don Bosco the father of many orphans. As a true Salesian he had a predilection for poor and abandoned boys. The houses of formation were his special care during the time he was Provincial. The latter part of his life was dedicated to continual prayer for the Province and the Congregation.

Fater Caesar Fazzini

* Buenos Aires (Argentina) 26-3-1889; † there 29-6-73; 84 years of age; 55 profession; 48 priesthood.

A good and simple Religious, always ready to help and comfort others in distress. He was tireless in his paternal ministrations in the confessional. In his last years he endured much illness and suffering, but was devoutly resigned to the will of God.

Father Louis Ferrari

* Florida (Uruguay) 9-7-1885; † Montevideo (Uruguay) 21-7-73; 88 years of age; 67 profession; 58 priesthood.

The oldest Salesian in Uruguay. He died quietly as he had lived after having worked solidly up to the last few days. He was responsible for four foundations in the Province; and spent himself completely, despite the ills of old age, in the priestly apostolate and in the ministry of the confessional especially for the aspirants and Salesians. He was a great admirer and imitator of Don Rua in his humility and poverty. His nature was quiet, orderly and exact, and for thirty years, till his death, he was in charge of the provincial archives.

Brother Carmelo Galea

* Birkirkara (Malta) 17-8-1890; † Sliema (Malta) 29-7-73; 83 years of age; 59 profession.

He had frequented the Salesian Oratory at Birkirkara before becoming a Salesian. Most of his life was spent in St. Patrick's, Sliema, where he gave generous help in the adjacent oratory. He was an exemplary Religious and is deeply mourned.

Father Augustine Gindri

* Turin (Italy) 21-9-19; † Cheung Chau (Hong Kong) 2-7-73; 53 years of age; 32 profession; 23 priesthood.

Healthy, active and intelligent, he had the will and ability to do a lot more work in his life. One day he went fishing (his one relaxation) and was seen no more. We have no explanation: maybe he was swamped by a wave, or slipped and fell heavily; we have only his memory and the mourning of so many young souls baptized by him... they will be his glory in eternity.

Father Joseph Gorczaty

* Dzieckowice (Poland) 17-4-10; † Jaciazek (Poland) 7-3-73; 62 years of age; 44 profession; 34 priesthood; 1 rector.

Most of his life was spent at Jaciazek. As Catechist he was a diligent teacher of Christian Doctrine; and is also remembered for his organ-playing and singing. He specialized in embalming animals and left some valuable collections. He suffered his diabetic problems with patience and submission to the will of God.

Father Joseph Knapp

* Kalch (Vienna, Austria) 24-4-06; † Bogotà (Colombia) 5-7-73; 67 years of age; 45 profession; 36 priesthood.

He consecrated his Salesian priestly life to the poor of Colombia; he was friend and brother to all, simple and transparent as a child. We was loved by all because he loved all; and his cheerfulness hid the heroism of many years of true missionary work. He rests in peace in the cemetery of Agua de Dios, the last field of his labours.

Father Francis Krajewski

* Prochensko (Kielce, Poland) 11-9-10; † Bialogard (Koszalim, Poland) 12-2-73; 62 years of age; 41 profession; 32 priesthood; 13 rector.

He was ordained during the War and was parish priest and rector for many years. Much esteemed by his confrères, he was noted for his apostolic zeal and practicality. After a heart attack he worked as chaplain for the Sisters.

Brother Sigismund Labanowski

* Radziuszki (Baialystok, Poland) 6-3-1898; † Aleksandrow Kujawski (Poland) 27-4-73; 75 years of age; 46 profession.

He consecrated his life to the Lord in his simple work as gardener. Unassuming and quiet, he was an example of painstaking service. His last years were spent as sacristan.

Father Anthony Manuel Latorre

* Cuzco (Peru) 7-7-1891; † Lima (Peru) 16-7-73; 82 years of age; 58 profession; 32 priesthood.

A long life spent completely for the poor. He was known for his simple kindness, love of the Oratory (where he gave unstinted service) and

unconditional fidelity to Don Bosco and the Congregation. Whatever house he was in always found him dedicated to the oratory. His last ten years were spent with the working-class youngsters of Gran Lima in the impoverished quarter of Rimac where the first Salesian house in Peru was founded.

Brother Alphonsus Marucci

* Marseille (France) 8-4-11; † Casale Monferrato (Alessandria, Italy) 2-6-73; 62 years of age; 19 profession.

He was teacher, sacristan, door-keeper and general factotum—these were the stages of his Salesian life. He knew how to turn to good account the various events and difficulties that came his way, using them to strengthen his faith and his liturgical, eucharistic and Marian devotion. He was always enthusiastic for the decorum of the house of God. Despite his rather rough exterior he was diligent, trustworthy and generously available in the service of others.

Father Martin Massalski

* Bojszowy (Poland) 26-10-1891; † Lodz (Poland) 8-1-73; 81 years of age; 61 profession; 50 priesthood.

He held a degree from the Gregorian University at Rome and taught philosophy in the studentate at Krackow, and later mathematics in various colleges. Then he taught successfully for more than thirty years at the Technical School of Lodz until it was nationalized. After leaving the school he gave his energies to translating books on ascetics and Salesian formation. He died suddenly while working at his typewriter.

Father Joseph Melle

* Saluggia (Vercelli, Italy) 8-4-1891; † Bari (Italy) 29-5-73; 82 years of age; 58 profession; 53 priesthood.

He was noted for his great love of the Eucharist, his simple ways, his affability and irrepressible love of art. To assist at his Mass was an edifying experience. He had the transparent and lovable qualities of a child, and the young treated him as one of their companions. He was a self-taught artist, but allowed himself to be guided by those of experience and skill. Three of his works are worth special mention: his frescoes in our Temple of the Redeemer (Bari), Mary help of Christians (Rome) and our parish church of St. Joseph (Molfetta)—works that show his imagination and artistic talent.

Father Paul Michalek

* Bottrop (Germany) 29-6-17; † Rydułtowy (Poland) 2-5-73; 55 years of age; 36 profession; 27 priesthood.

He spent his priestly energies helping the Polish immigrants at Tel Aviv and Nazareth. He returned to Poland in 1947 and thenceforth dedicated himself generously to pastoral work.

Brother George Mibojévic

* Punta Arenas (Chile) 16-5-02; † Santiago (Chile) 25-5-73; 71 years of age; 51 profession.

For thirty years he was reduced to inactivity by Parkinson's disease, and edified all by his joy and serenity despite his sufferings—especially during his last years of immobility in bed. He was indeed a powerful mediator for the confrères, recommending to the Father of Mercy the problems of the Salesians, of Chile and of the Province.

Brother John Murtas

* San Pantaleo Dolianova (Cagliari, Italy) 9-3-1884; † Ancona (Italy) 10-6-73; 89 years of age; 61 profession.

A powerful and robust character and at the same time a truly gentle soul. He was most diligent in his duties of dispenser and sacristan at our parish church of The Holy Family, Ancona. He had a great love for the Congregation and was deeply devoted to Don Bosco, Don Rua and Don Rinaldi.

Father Ampelio Ortega

* Pedrosa de Urbel-Tardajos (Burgos, Spain) 20-11-03; † La Plata (Argentina) 7-7-73; 69 years of age; 53 profession; 46 priesthood.

His life as a consecrated apostle was lived with profound generosity. He loved the liturgy and the decorum of God's temple. He was devoted to the ministry of the Word and the confessional, and wherever he was parish priest there was always a resurgence of enthusiasm. One could well say that the zeal for the house of the Lord consumed his energies. In his declining years his simple and good presence brought joy and peace to his confrères.

Father Edmund Rosenbajger

* Zakopane (Krackow, Poland) 10-2-06; † Oswiecim (Poland) 2-6-73; 67 years of age; 45 profession; 37 priesthood.

A true Salesian of Don Bosco and a parish priest who spent himself for his flock. His simple kindness endeared him to all. With his engineering talent he rendered great service to the archiepiscopal curia of Wroclaw and to our Province. And besides his material edifices he also raised up spiritual edifices by his care for his confrères and parishioners.

Father Mario Ruzzeddu

* Sassari (Italy) 5-2-10; † Bangkok (Thailand) 5-8-73; 63 years of age; 47 profession; 40 priesthood; 23 rector; 6 provincial; 6 delegate Sth. Korea.

He went to Thailand in 1928 and proved a zealous missionary, being entrusted with many important duties. After some years in Korea he returned to Thailand this year and was put in charge of the large Church of St. John Bosco in Bangkok (which he had built as Provincial). He accepted with willingness whatever task was given him. He died suddenly after a very heavy day working in the apostolate.

Father Paul Stacul

* Podgora-Gorizia (Italy) 20-6-02; † Guatemala (Central America) 24-1-73; 70 years of age; 51 profession; 44 priesthood.

A restless and dynamic personality, we went to China and Thailand as a cleric. Back in Italy after ten years of priesthood and fruitful missionary work, he obtained a degree in ecclesiastical history and applied himself to study and teaching. At seventy years of age he showed his youthful spirit by welcoming an invitation to go to South America for the first time in his life; and after a few months of practice in the new language, he was able to teach ecclesiastical history in Spanish.

Father Joseph Strus

* Strusy (Siedle, Poland) 31-1-05; † Lodz (Poland) 29-4-73; 68 years of age; 50 profession; 39 priesthood; 16 rector; 6 provincial.

He taught physics for many years in our colleges and in the studentate in Kutno; and he was the first Rector of the studentate of theology at Lad.

He did excellent work in the education of young Salesians and has left with them the heritage of his fatherly kindness. His period of provincialship sapped his energies to such an extent that after his term of office he was unable to recover physically. Though suffering much he did not spare himself as president of the capitular commission; and he organized the preparatory stages of the SPC but was unable to take part in the Chapter itself.

Brother Constantine Vincent

* Ratte (Saône et Loire, France) 6-7-1885; † Pressin-St. Genis Laval (Rhône, France) 2-7-73; 88 years of age; 67 profession.

This Salesian Brother consecrated his uninterrupted and active presence to the service of the young at the Agricultural Centre of Pressin. He was the personification of that profound act of the will, made once and for all and never revoked, to achieve his chosen ideal. His deep love of work well done spurred him on to the limits of his physical energies. All this was enriched in him by a simple and sincere piety that could not be faulted.

Father John Wos

* Hamborn-Bruckhausen (Westphalia) 21-1-1899; † Lodz (Poland) 10-4-73; 74 years of age; 56 profession; 46 priesthood; 6 rector.

He was a lecturer and counsellor in the seminary at Lad, and prepared many excellent vocations for the Salesian, diocesan and missionary apostolate. For five years he lived the dehumanized life of the Oswiecim and Dachau concentration camps. After the War he did parochial duties in various places. When he could no longer be active, he dedicated himself (at the wish of the Primate of Poland) to preparing the statistics regarding the priest martyrs of 1939-1945.

Father Louis Yeb

* Wenchou (China) 20-12-12; † Shanghai (China) 22-5-73; 60 years of age; 38 profession; 28 priesthood.

His parents opposed his vocation but he heroically overcame all obstacles and persevered to the end of his life. He was arrested in 1951 under the Communist régime and spent seven years in prison; then he passed the rest of his life as a simple labourer. He suffered heroically for the faith and his priestly and religious vocation.

Father Germain Zandonella

* Comelico Superiore di Dosoleto (Belluno, Italy) 8-7-1897; † Lanzo Torinese (Italy) 15-7-73; 76 years of age; 58 profession; 48 priesthood, 16 rector.

He was the tenth of fourteen children. He went through the problems and difficulties of an immigrant to Germany in search of bread and found his vocation at the age of seventeen. During the War he was a lieutenant and was decorated for bravery. Don Cimatti admitted him to ordination with this remark: "Excellent and worthy in every way". He threw himself into the apostolate of the school with complete loyalty to Don Bosco and his system: reasonableness, kindness, love of God and a friendly presence. He had a particular enthusiasm for the Past Pupils. A gifted and cultured man, he wrote some excellent and thoughtful books on education. Health problems obliged him to retire to Lanzo, where he applied himself to the apostolate of prayer, suffering and writing.

3° elenco 1973

N.	COGNOME E NOME	LUOGO DI NASCITA	DATA DI NASC. E MORTE	ETÀ	LUOGO DI M	ISP.
89	Sac. BARACCHINI Luigi	Lerici (I)	4.6.1887	26.6.1973	86 Buenos. Aires (RA)	BA
90	Sac. BATTEZZATI Eusebio	M. di Valenza	9.4.1895	12.5.1973	78 Bagnolo (I)	Cn
91	Sac. BAUDIN Roberto	Pérone (F)	23.1.1911	4.8.1973	62 Marseille (F)	Ly
92	Sac. BOCKSTAL Leone	Celles (B)	26.11.1900	16.5.1973	72 Sainte-Ode (B)	Lb
93	Sac. BOURSOTTY Giuseppe	Grasse (F)	3.7.1883	15.6.1973	89 Santiago (RCH)	Cl
94	Coad. BRUNNER Luigi	Kulz (D)	8.2.1912	14.7.1973	61 Ens Dorf (D)	Mü
95	Sac. BURGER Francesco	Stockenweiller (D)	24.6.1908	3.6.1973	65 Benediktbeuern (D)	Mü
96	Coad. CALLEGARI Italo	Monastier (I)	26.9.1949	26.6.1973	23 Caorle (I)	Vn
97	Sac. CALUSSI Olinto	Montecchio-C (I)	1.11.1916	19.5.1973	56 Macerata (I)	Ad
98	Coad. CALVI Giuseppe	Maio de' Calvi (I)	1.9.1881	20.5.1973	91 São Paulo (BR)	SP
99	Sac. CANDIANI Antonio	Busto Arsizio (I)	25.2.1887	25.7.1973	86 Cremona (IL)	Or
100	Sac. CANTARUTTI Emilio	Zagreb (YU)	11.9.1896	16.7.1973	76 San Justo (RA)	BA
101	Sac. CURTI Raffaele	Frascati (I)	23.4.1883	21.7.1973	90 Banpong (Thailandia)	Th
102	Sac. DOBLADO Giuseppe M.	Lucena (E)	24.11.1892	14.5.1973	80 Málaga (E)	Cb
103	Coad. FAVA Lodovico	Bospolengo (I)	19.2.1880	12.7.1964	84 Ananindeau (BR)	Mn
104	Sac. FAZZINI Cesare	Buenos Aires (RA)	26.3.1889	29.6.1973	84 Buenos Aires (RA)	BA
105	Sac. FERRARI Luigi	Florida (U)	9.7.1885	21.7.1973	88 Montevideo (U)	U
106	Coad. GALEA Carmelo	Birkikara (M)	17.8.1890	29.7.1973	83 Sliema (M)	Ig
107	Sac. GINDRI Agostino	Torino (I)	21.9.1919	2.7.1973	53 Cheung Chau (H. Kong)	Ci
108	Sac. GORCZATY Giuseppe	Dzieckowice (PL)	17.4.1910	7.3.1973	62 Jaciazek (PL)	Lz
109	Sac. KNAPP Giuseppe	Kalch (A)	24.4.1906	5.7.1973	67 Bogotá (CO)	Bg
110	Sac. KRAJEWSKI Francesco	Próchensko (PL)	11.9.1910	12.2.1973	62 Bialogard (PL)	Lz
111	Coad. LABANOWSKI Sigism.do	Radziuski (PL)	6.3.1898	27.4.1973	75 Aleksandrów K. (PL)	Lz
112	Sac. LATORRE Antonio M.	Cuzco (PE)	7.7.1891	16.7.1973	82 Lima (PE)	Pe
113	Coad. MARUCCI Alfonso	Marseille (F)	8.4.1911	2.6.1973	62 Casale Monferrato (I)	No
114	Sac. MASSALSKI Martino	Bojsszowy (PL)	26.10.1891	8.1.1973	81 Łódz (PL)	Lz
115	Sac. MELLE Giuseppe	Saluggia (I)	8.4.1891	29.5.1973	82 Bari (I)	M
116	Sac. MICHALEK Paolo	Bottrop (D)	29.6.1917	2.5.1973	55 Rydutowy (PL)	Kr
117	Coad. MIHOJEVIC Giorgio	Punta Arenas (RCH)	16.5.1902	25.5.1973	71 Santiago (RCH)	Cl

118	Coad.	MURTAS Giovanni	S. Pantaleo D. (I)	9.3.1884	10.6.1973	89	Ancona (I)	Ad
119	Sac.	ORTECA Ampelio	Podrosa de U. (E)	20.11.1903	7.7.1973	69	La Plata (RA)	LP
120	Sac.	ROSENBAJGER Edm.	Zakopane (PL)	10.2.1906	2.6.1973	67	Oswiecim (PL)	Kr
121	Sac.	RUZZEDDU Mario	Sassari (I)	5.2.1910	5.8.1973	63	Bangkok (Thailandia)	Co
122	Sac.	STACUL Paolo	Podgora (I)	20.6.1902	24.1.1973	79	Guatemala (G)	CA
123	Sac.	STRUS Giuseppe	Strusy (PL)	31.1.1905	29.4.1973	68	Lódz (PL)	Lz
124	Coad.	VINCENT Costantin	Ratte (F)	6.7.1885	2.7.1973	88	Pressin-St. Genis (F)	Ly
125	Sac.	WOS Giovanni	Hamborn-B. (D)	21.1.1899	10.4.1973	74	Lódz (PL)	Lz
126	Sac.	YEH Luigi	Wenchou RC)	20.12.1912	22.5.1973	60	Shanghai (RC)	Ci
127	Sac.	ZANDONELLA Germano	Comelico S. (I)	8.7.1897	15.7.1973	76	Lanzo Torine (I)	Sb

