



ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

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S. G. S. - ROMA

I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Rome, April 1974

My dear confrères and sons,

On the 3rd of April a hundred years ago the Church gave definitive approval to our Salesian Constitutions.

This centenary is an important and significant event for us and should be celebrated as such — just as every country solemnly observes the anniversary of its own national constitutions.

It is truly an historic moment for us Salesians, and indeed for others too, as we look back over the past hundred years of steady development and see its impact on the burgeoning forth and maturing of the Salesian vocation in the Church.

We have every reason to hope that with God's help the good work begun in 1874 will continue in the future, despite the problems that are inevitable in the life of man and the history of human and ecclesial society.

We have to realize, of course, that this will not happen of itself. It is not a case of physical cause and effect. The Salesian vocation received the seal of authority on that memorable day, and the fruits of its development are many: but they depend on the activity of man — that is, the many generations of Salesians called by God to take possession of this precious heritage. Church history makes this abundantly clear.

A fruitful celebration

Looked at in this way, the centenary cannot be limited to mere sentimental reminiscences, or complacency in a rich and glorious past. We should feel the urge to further the development of all the spiritual and apostolic values inherent in our "Code of Life". In practice, for us Salesians of the seventies, the event should mean a life of motivated conviction and generous enthusiasm in the practice of the principles Don Bosco has laid down for us in the Constitutions. After all, we were fully aware of their import when we gladly and freely professed them as our safe and reasonable guidelines on the way marked out by our vocation.

Now it is exactly this that I am concerned about, and while inviting Rectors and Provincials to use all suitable cultural, spiritual and liturgical means to make the centenary fruitful and meaningful, I wish to put the following few thoughts before you. They will be appreciated by all who recall our origins so richly and extraordinarily gifted and full of teachings worthy of meditation. They will also help to motivate our fidelity to the Constitutions and render it convinced, loving and enthusiastic.

This re-awakening of loyal, sincere and effective esteem for Don Bosco, whose voice we hear in the Constitutions, is the very nub of the matter. It will give every Salesian and every community labouring in these difficult times that enthusiasm, generosity and joy in our vocation that was the distinguishing mark of the early Salesians.

1. DON BOSCO SAW THE APPROVAL AS GOD'S SEAL

In a circular letter dated 15 August 1875, Don Bosco presented the confrères with the Constitutions definitively approved by the Holy See eighteen months previously, and spoke

to them in these words: “We should welcome this fact as among the most glorious in the annals of our Society, since through it we have the assurance that in observing our Rules we rest on a firm and secure basis...” (1).

The Congregation was approved on 19 February 1869 and the text of the Constitutions on 3 April 1874. For Don Bosco this was not just a simple act of recognition by the Church: it was the seal of God on his work; it was given by the hierarchy, “the indispensable means instituted by Christ to translate the message of the Word (2) into language we can grasp”; it gave authenticity to that first “dream” and the mysterious voice that guided him, in ways that were marvellous and increasingly clear, in founding his work for the young.

For Don Bosco this divine voice, expressed “in two different ways wonderful and converging” (3), was the soundest guarantee that this work, with all its difficulties, was truly the will of God. He knew that if he followed the ways so plainly pointed out by Providence, he and his sons would see the gradual realization of that vast and wonderful future that the mysterious voice revealed to him from time to time. No wonder Don Bosco and his successors repeatedly appealed for fidelity.

Fidelity to Rule and Mission

The vast development of the Salesian work proved that this was no pious illusion. Father Rinaldi wrote to the confrères on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee, “In fifty years these Constitutions have meant the salvation of hundreds of thousands of boys... they have made saints of so many confrères: Don

(1) Appendix to the Constitutions, p. 233.

(2) Address of Paul VI on 5-5-65.

(3) *Ibid.*

Rua, Don Beltrami, Don Czartoryski, Dominic Savio — and numerous others whom we remember with deepest veneration, such as Don Bonetti, Don Belmonte, Don Sala, Don Durando, Don Lazzero, Don Rocca, Don Bertello, Don Lemoyne, Don Cerutti, Don Bretto, Mgr. Fagnano, Mgr. Costamagna, Mgr. Marenco, and most especially my predecessor Father Albera” (4).

Now after a hundred years, some of these names are to be found in the Church’s calendar, some have been declared Venerable, and others are no longer remembered; but the list could easily be updated with many names more recent and vivid in our memories. Known or unknown, they have left us “a great burgeoning of works and activities due to their zeal and sacrifice” (5) that have made the Salesian Congregation “one of the most notable, beneficial and promising phenomenons of Catholicism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (6).

These words fill us with pride — but we cannot let the matter rest there: we could well have qualms about the responsibility we have before God and our confrères who have gone before us. Among them were extraordinary men — yet the vast majority were just ordinary souls with their very human frailties. But they were men of fidelity; they handed down to us intact the heritage they had received; they trod the path Don Bosco pointed out for them; and God did not fail to work wonders through their humble labours.

Don Bosco had said, “Our Congregation has a fine future before it; and its glory will last as long as the Rule is faithfully observed” (7). Our future is a matter of fidelity — not so much to a code of prescriptions, but to the spirit and life that code expresses, contains and transmits.

(4) DON RINALDI, *Acts of the Superior Chapter*, n. 23 (24-1-24) p. 193.

(5) PAUL VI: *Address to members of XIX General Chapter*.

(6) *Ibid.*

(7) *Memorie Biogr.*, XVII, 279.

The Constitutions grew out of a way of life

Our Constitutions were indeed a way of life before becoming a written Rule.

Father Rinaldi wrote, "The Constitutions are the very heart of our Society; and our Society meant everything to Don Bosco. Indeed, in them we have Don Bosco himself. In them we find his great ideals: the salvation of souls, the perfection he sought through the vows, his spirit of gentle kindness, his tolerance, piety, charity and sacrifice" (8).

This spirit can be found in embryo in the "first dream" of the nine-year-old John Bosco when he was still living in the Becchi cottage under the educative influence of his wonderful mother. He saw, in a vague manner, his future mission; and Providence was to develop this first notion with gradual clarifications.

As he saw God's will more clearly, Don Bosco went ahead "calmly, without haste, but with wonderful constancy and tenacity, studying, consulting, praying, taking the first steps in founding the Society. And without noticing it, his men were being groomed long before the event. No mention was made of vows, ties, or Congregation" (9).

Don Bosco, could justly be called "the creator of his Society rather than its founder: he was able to work on his men, beginning from nothing, as it were, developing them and gradually imbuing them with his spirit." Father Rinaldi continues, "Don Bosco wrote his Constitutions in the practical lives and thoughts of his spiritual sons and only set them to paper when he saw that they were suitable" (10).

(8) DON RINALDI, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 178.

(10) *Ibid.*

1874: definitive approval

In the 1847 Regulations for the Oratory we catch a first glimpse of a "written code" of the Salesian Constitutions (11). The tentative outlines of the future organism are indeed visible in the tiny cell of the Oratory of those days. However, the first true draft of his plan for a Congregation is that presented to Pius IX in 1858. Handing him the first sketch of our future Constitutions, he remarked in all sincerity that it contained the teaching, methods and spirit that had guided his Oratory helpers for twenty years (12).

Don Rinaldi made a good and authoritative summing-up of this draft of the Constitutions that described the character of the future Congregation: "Not constraint, but the bond of fraternal charity, so as to form one heart and soul; aiming to practise perfectly that spiritual and corporal charity towards the young and poor; carefully fostering sacred vocations; eschewing material things and living as though possessing nothing (even though retaining ownership rights); practising unselfish, generous and filial obedience that makes commands from a Superior unnecessary; not having many practices of piety in common, but living in complete union with God in the active life which is the distinctive feature and glory of his sons.

« Rather than found a Society, Don Bosco wanted a family based on a fatherliness that was gentle, loving and vigilant, and a sonship that was affectionate, filial and brotherly. He wanted authority and obedience, but with equality and no distinctions" (13).

This was the style of life written into the Constitutions; and in the various phases of approval it had to get by the restrict-

(11) Published in 1852; cf. *Memorie Biogr.*, III, 93 et seq.

(12) *Memorie Biogr.*, V, 881.

(13) DON RINALDI, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

ive ideas and Canon Law of the period. (On 23 July 1864 the Decretum Laudis was granted; 19 February 1869 saw the definitive approval of the Society; and 3 April 1874, the definitive approval of the Constitutions). Throughout all this difficult procedure Don Bosco was guided by his practical and adaptable nature, and most of all by his deep faith in the guiding hand of Providence.

From a purely human point of view it might seem that in all this reshaping of the Constitutions the more original characteristics of Don Bosco's project would have become blurred; but the eye of faith can see in this temporary redimensioning the hand of Providence: for the time was not yet ripe for them. Had Don Bosco insisted on every detail of his project, perhaps the Salesian Congregation would not have enjoyed that unified yet flexible verve and that prodigious development that characterized it.

2. A hundred years of fidelity

Indeed 3 April 1874 was a decisive stepping-stone in the history of the text of the Constitutions. This text, now approved by the Holy See, became the constant point of reference for future generations, for it showed forth the characteristic aspects and the basic lines of the Congregation as the Founder envisaged it.

That 3 April, however, was by no means the end of its evolution. The text of the Constitutions had its origin in life itself, and continued to develop and adapt itself to new situations, keeping pace with the steady, vital growth of the Congregation. It was like a seed that, without changing its nature, sends up a slender shoot, and from a seedling becomes a mature plant and puts forth buds, flowers and fruit according to the seasons.

Continuing development of the text

The supplementing of the basic project approved by the Holy See began during the life-time of Don Bosco and continued during the first years of Don Rua's period as Rector Major. These additions were formulated by the regular three-yearly General Chapters (1874-1904). Hence were added the special regulations regarding all Superiors, Rector Major, Provincials and Rectors, the houses of formation, and the norms for conducting the General Chapters.

These rulings were tried out for twenty-eight years, reviewed and co-ordinated into a single text by the X General Chapter, and only then were a number presented to the Holy See for approval. The latter were then incorporated into the Constitutions, and the others added to the Regulations.

Father Ceria, in the "Annals", describes the spirit in which the X General Chapter worked. In the lengthy and sometimes animated discussions there was not the slightest desire to innovate, but rather a constant and calm effort by all not to lose sight of the Rule given by Don Bosco (14).

Indeed the passage of the years had witnessed a steady growth. The small seed had become a tree. The Society had spread to distant corners of the globe. But the original cell had kept its nature as it grew in the structures and organization of houses and provinces. The same sap that nourished the trunk of the tree flowed also into the branches; sustenance for the whole tree was drawn from the same root — Don Bosco. And this Don Bosco was no figment of the imagination. He was very real: he spoke in the Rule he had given his Congregation; he lived in his successor. Don Bosco had quelled the fears people had expressed at his death, and had truly formed a solid, compact Congregation; he had created a "spiritual relationship, a family

(14) E. CERIA, *Annali*, III, 557.

in which could be recognized a particular type, a common style in its educative activity and other enterprises" (15).

Certain distressing adaptations necessary

The first General Chapters made notable contributions in the supplementing of the text of the Constitutions so as to keep pace with the development of the Congregation; and a similar capacity for adaptation was shown by the Congregation regarding the dispositions of the Holy See in matters of religious discipline. This certainly showed a total fidelity to the spirit of the Founder.

The most notable act of fidelity was shown in the revision of the Constitutions (19 July 1921) so as to conform to the Code of Canon Law. But this was not the most trying.

In the mind and practice of Don Bosco the Superior was not a bureaucrat or an official, nor a mere guardian of religious discipline: he was the spiritual father of the educative community; hence he was also the ordinary confessor. This followed logically in a Congregation that aimed at being a "spiritual family".

For Don Bosco, the Congregation was very much a matter of the pastoral heart of the Superior, with his specific role of spiritual father of the community. He wanted the structuring to stress the primacy of persons over organization, charity over legislation, the spiritual and physical good of the members over economy and efficiency. This delicate balance underwent a crisis when the Holy See made the provision, wise in its way, forbidding a Superior to be the ordinary confessor of his subjects.

We can well imagine the distressing fears of Don Rua and the early Salesians in having to depart from this practice left them by Don Bosco. But total docility to the Holy See prevail-

(15) P. STELLA, *Don Bosco*, II, 406.

(16) *Decrees of Sacred Office*, 5.7.1899 and 24.1.1901. Cf. *Annali* III,
170 *et seq.*

ed — this was a precious heritage of the Founder to his sons, and he had given example in word and deed.

That was in 1901, and Don Rua addressed the members of the IX General Chapter in these words: "Take heart. We can be sure that prompt and perfect obedience to the Supreme Authority is the best way to receive God's blessing and ensure the advancement of the Congregation as God wills and as our father Don Bosco had in mind when he founded it » (17).

This matter was so important as to be called a turning-point in the Society's history; and the prompt and docile adherence of the whole Congregation to the directives of the Holy See was another instance of the solid spirit of unity infused by Don Bosco.

No less distressing for Don Rua and the early Salesians (and a sad day especially for the FMA) was the general reorganization of Religious Congregations of women (19). This meant the separation of the two Institutes founded by Don Bosco. Here too, despite the regrets of the Salesians and the fears of the Sisters, Don Bosco's ingrained spirit of faith prevailed in his children — God would not abandon the works he had raised up; indeed he made use of human instruments to bring them to even greater fulfilment.

Radical revision required by the Council

The updating of the text of the Constitutions did not end with the 1921 revision. Nearly every General Chapter did some retouching, some supplementing, so as to suit the unified development of the Congregation. New articles were introduced into the Regulations to help direct and make practical the choices in the new situations the Society had to face. However, it is doubtful whether any General Chapter in history had to tackle

(17) E. CERIA, *Annali*, III, 189.

(18) *Ibid.*, III, 193.

(19) *Ibid.*, III, 645 et seq.

such an onerous task in the reshaping of the Constitutions as was required by the Church of all Orders and Congregations after Vatican II. (The relevant document was the motu proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae".)

As time marches on the more profoundly do we realise the important influence this decision of the Church has had, is having and will have on the basic bearings of our Religious life. This is the first time in the history of the Church that Religious Orders and Congregations have been invited to undergo so profound a revision of life. Of course the Church had no intention to upset the fundamental values that have been the foundations up to then; yet this did not make the revision any the less radical — going to the very roots from which every Religious organization drew its life and continued to nourish itself: the Gospel, the charisms, the evangelical aims, the spirit, the mission of the Founder.

In the face of the novelty of the task it was natural to feel concern about tackling it, despite all the good will to act prudently and responsibly. Even though the Church laid down in "Perfectae Caritatis" and "Ecclesiae Sanctae" the basic guidelines for the renewal and adaptation of the Rules and Constitutions, there still remained a vast free area for choices of paramount importance and risk. No doubt this showed the faith the Church had in the Religious; but it was a severe acid test for all Institutes, for they had to gauge their own solidarity, solidity, maturity and responsibility.

The Church's directives for renewal

Our task loomed forth in its enormity. The starting point was that all Religious had to take the Gospel as their "Supreme Rule" (20). The text of the Constitutions had to be re-thought

(20) Cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 2 a.

and so cast that the Gospel-inspiration of the Religious life was made clear (as the Council had expressed it) according to the original project and the special mission each Institute had inherited from its Founder.

The Church directed that the Constitutions had to contain above all “the evangelical and theological principles regarding the Religious life and its union with the Church, and suitable and precise phraseology that recognized and safeguarded the spirit and purpose of the various Founders” (21).

“The juridical norms necessary to define the character, aims and means of the Institute” had to be preserved, but they had to be limited in number (22); all that was “antiquated or changeable according to the time”, or “bound up only with local usage”, had to be expunged (23). Any norms, then, that belonged only to the present moment or to particular circumstances, and which did not belong to the basic structure of the Institute, were to have no place in the text of the Constitutions but “had to be set down in supplements called ‘directories’, ‘customaries’, or some other such names” (24). In fine, the text of the Constitutions had to fuse together the spiritual and juridical elements so that the fundamental codes of the various Institutes would have an enduring basis and be imbued with a genuine spirit and vital norms (25).

Furthermore, that the Rule should be authoritative and stable, it had to be expressed in a way that flowed from “a need of life”. Hence the recommendation to “avoid drafting a text purely juridical or purely exhortative” (26). In fact, as Father Beyer SJ happily expressed it in an introductory conference

(21) *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, II, 12 a.

(22) *Ibid.*, II, 12 b.

(23) *Ibid.*, II, 14.

(24) *Ibid.*, II, 14.

(25) Cf. *Ibid.*, II, 13.

(26) *Ibid.*, II, 13.

to our Special General Chapter, the text “should serve as a manual of prayer”. Indeed the real strength of the Constitutions lies not so much in their very necessary juridical dimension, as in their capacity to bring about a genuine vocational dialogue with God in accordance with the actual project they establish.

The form of government too was to be so structured that “the chapters and councils, each in its own way, should be an expression of the participation and concerns of the entire community” (27). The way to achieve this was to have the Religious participate “effectively in the choice of the governing bodies” (28).

Then, to make the exercise of authority more efficient, more realistic, more in touch with local circumstances, more expeditious and in line with modern times, the “various Superiors at different levels had to be granted opportune powers to avoid over-frequent and useless recourse to higher authorities” (29). This was an application to government-in-Religion of what had already been introduced by the Council into the government of the Church: participation, decentralization and subsidiarity.

The various Institutes, according to their particular missions, were to participate in the life of the universal and local Church, making their own and fostering the enterprises of the Church according to need (30).

Members of such Institutes, thanks to a deeper awareness of modern conditions, of men, and of the needs of the Church, should be able to “judge the present conditions of the world wisely and according to the principles of faith. Full of zeal, then, they would be able to help others more effectively” (31). In our case (being consecrated to the service of youth) this last principle of renewal laid on us the obligation of making a careful

(27) *Perfectae Caritatis*, II, 14.

(28) *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, II, 18.

(29) *Ibid.*

(30) *Perfectae Caritatis*, II, 2 c.

(31) *Ibid.*, II, 2 d.

appraisal of the signs of the times and a profound revision of our pastoral methods, so as to better fit ourselves to cope with the changing requirements of the young. (After all, they are the most sensitive of all to a world in radical transformation; and they are its first victims.)

Thorough and conscientious preparation

Even this brief summary makes us realise the wide area of revision the Church required of every Religious Institute. For Don Bosco and his sons the voice of the Church is the voice of God. Not to heed it would be to betray the Spirit who chose us and our mission. It was not an "itching for reform" rightly condemned by Don Bosco. It was a question of fidelity.

We set about this enormous task with trepidation, well aware of our frailty, of the risks involved, of the difficulties that could hinder its success. But we put our faith in God's help, in the motherly protection of Mary, and the protection of Don Bosco and our saints, confident of their intercession.

The XIX General Chapter had already made a start on this revision. The touching-up of the text of the Constitutions was done in a small way, a notable innovation being the increased numbers in the Superior Council with the introduction of the Regionals, whose task it was to foster unity in decentralization and be a connecting link between the Centre and the periphery of the Congregation. But the XIX General Chapter's greatest contribution in the way of renewal was the selection of themes that were to be studied by the whole Congregation as it made its preparations for the XX (Special) General Chapter.

This preparation was extensive and conscientious; there was certainly no undue haste. There were three full years and two Provincial Chapters that involved the participation of all confrères in a consultation that had no precedent in our Congregation. This was a vital matter, a matter of our own lives offered to

God in the Salesian Congregation, and the fate of our young charges whose salvation would be greatly influenced by our renewal.

Initial bewilderment and fears

The Special General Chapter took its first steps with some bewilderment and uncertainty. Our inexperience was justified by the complete novelty of the task we were given, despite our care to garner from the experience of others. The work clarified its direction and gathered momentum when, on 9 March, a month after its beginning, the Special General Chapter decided with near-unanimity to draw up a new text for the Constitutions. It was to be approved article by article by a two-thirds majority vote so as to better reflect the mind of the Chapter and carry greater authority with the whole Congregation.

As we look back, this stands out as an act of courage, given the uncertainty of the prospects confronting us. There would be long months of feverish work, with the inevitable tensions; there were so many aspects to be drawn together: fidelity to Don Bosco, to the Church, to our youth mission, satisfying the needs and expectations of the confrères.

Nevertheless our various points of view took second place to the all-pervading love of Don Bosco and attachment to his spirit — which consists, after all, in fidelity to God who raised up the Congregation, docility to the Church, and adaptability to the times and places of our work. The fruit of all this is now in our hands.

A text less juridical and more spiritual

Every effort was made to compose a text that was less juridical and more spiritual, as the Church required. The “evangelical and theological principles” taken from the Council

documents concerning the Religious life were chosen and written into the text with sensitivity. Rather than rules whose existence and content depend solely on the will of a human legislator, the text presents us with life-values that issue from God's call and a divine mission.

All this was made possible by the will to work in communion and strive towards unity, endeavouring to understand the views of others. The individual articles were approved with well over the two-thirds majority. It had been thought that for special cases the two-thirds majority would have to be lowered; but this was quite unnecessary, as things turned out. Humanly speaking, the most authoritative organ of the Congregation could not have given a clearer expression of the will of the members.

The renewal of the Congregation in drafting the new text of the Constitutions is a determined act of fidelity to Don Bosco (32). It is a rediscovery of the basic values obscured by the barnacles and the wear and tear of time, a salvaging of Salesian values, such as the unity of the Salesian Family and a formation more in keeping with our active life (both of which could not be embodied in the old text). It is an assimilation of new values which tally with the former ones, carrying them on and extending them. The Congregation is a living organism and so could assimilate only what would contribute to its harmonious development, to its real growth, without compromising its identity in any way.

Of course, like all human things, the new Constitutions are capable of improvement. Deeper studies will be made of the Salesian sources, and there will be even greater fidelity to the Spirit who raised up Don Bosco and called us to share his mission. The Constitutions may well be bettered as a result of this and correspond ever more closely to the gift God has given to the Church and the world in Don Bosco.

(32) Cf. *Acts SGC*, Doc. 2.

The new text is the result of life and a giver of life; and like all life, open to further perfecting and development . Still, it contains and passes on to us the very same ideal of life, the very same mission to the young, the very same spirit that animated Don Bosco and his faithful sons. It is up to us to translate it into a living and dynamic reality just as the Salesians of the past hundred years have done.

3. THE RULE IN THE MIND OF DON BOSCO

Naturally we cannot reduce the life of a Congregation to mere written rules, even if (as with our new Constitutions) they “enshrine the spiritual riches of our Salesian tradition and are the basic norms for the life of our Society” (33).

Life is not made to suit the code, but the code to suit life. But life cannot do without concrete rulings: to neglect the norms that regulate the relations between the members of a Society would destroy the unity and cohesion of the life and existence of any community, no matter what kind — even a small domestic group.

These are the elementary truths that are behind Don Bosco's insistence on the observance of the Holy Rule.

That the Society may endure

Don Bosco was eminently practical and attentive to the lessons of history and was deeply convinced that the observance of the Rule was “the only possible means to ensure the continuance of a Congregation » (34).

(33) *Consts.* 200.

(34) *Memorie Biogr.*, XII, 81.

In an important conference to Rectors in January 1876, a few months after presenting the confrères with the first text of the Constitutions (15 August 1875), he spoke about observance: “We are now no longer as in the past, when there was no Rule and only the Congregation was approved. We used go ahead with our traditional way of governing — a kind of patriarchate. That is all finished with now. We have to keep to our Code of Rules, study them in every particular, understand, explain and practise them. Instead of appealing to other authorities, we must always have recourse to the Rule. This will help the Rectors to govern in a fatherly manner as our tradition demands. When it is made clear that it is not the Rector who wants this or that, or advises this or forbids that, but the Rule, a member has no pretext for disobeying. The only way to spread our spirit is by the observance of our Rule. Not even good things should be done against the Rule, or without it. When enterprises are undertaken with good intention, but not within the ambit of the Rule, the result will be individual effort, not community effort. Now, the good expected of a Religious Order lies exactly in the fact that it is community-work; otherwise it would be impossible to pursue any enterprise with all one’s resources. When the strict requirements of the Rule are rejected, and one member gets off by himself in this direction and another in that, the aim may be excellent, but it is individual. This is where discipline is relaxed; and the work will not carry the blessing of God as before. The need for reform must follow, and a Congregation is greatly weakened thereby, as we have seen in many Religious Orders. This is always to the detriment of souls, and destruction and ruin follow” (35).

The address is plain and simple and quite without our modern complications; but it is full of wisdom, truth and experience.

(35) *Ibid.*, XII, 80-83.

The Superior a model of observance

On the same occasion Don Bosco explained his conception of the Congregation: a Congregation strongly centred in the Rule; the Superior a model of its observance; the Rule the binding and unifying force of the whole organism. He said, "The Superior must mean everything to us. All must help the Rector Major and sustain his authority, making him the heart and centre of all". And he added, "The Rector Major possesses the Rule. He must never depart from it. Otherwise instead of one centre there will be two — the Rule and his will. The Rector Major must be a model of observance; the Rule and the Rector Major must constitute one single unit. What holds for the Rector Major in relation to the whole Society also holds for the Rector in each community. He must be one with the Rector Major, and the members of his community one with the Rector. He too must be a "living Rule". All know that the Rule is the will of God, and that whoever opposes the Rule opposes the Superior and God himself" (36).

It is worth pointing out here that this principle is just as valid today, notwithstanding the fact that, to meet new dimensions and pluralism in the Congregation, certain competencies have been entrusted to Provincials and local communities (37). Decentralization does not mean anarchy, and pluralism is not to be confused with individualism. Both are quiet foreign to the thinking of Don Bosco.

The Rule the expression of God's designs

The above quote from Don Bosco confirms the fact that he looked on the Rule, not as an abstract principle, nor the impersonal expression of a collective will, but as the the manifestation of the

(36) *Ibid.*, XII, 81.

(37) Cf. circular letter on *Unity and Decentralization*, Acts of SC, n. 272.

will of God, and the visible path that leads the vocations of all individual confrères to the one goal — the fulfilment in Christ of God's will; and this will transcends all and unites all in a single brotherly communion.

Perhaps it is in this perspective that we ought to see the incredible number of Regulations drafted by Don Bosco even for the humblest tasks. He was not prompted by a mania for rules. He acted out of his high regard for the worth of each individual who saw his personal duty in the community defined not by a whim but by a ruling from above (which made every Salesian community an organism whose life and activities were the detailed interest of God himself) (38). Don Bosco argued that precisely because the Rules were the expression of God's will, we were committed to observe them. On 30 May 1865 he put the question whether it was a sin to break the rules of the house. He answered it himself, "I have thought seriously about this and I answer definitely, yes. I do not say whether grave or light: circumstances must determine that. But it is a sin" (39). We should note that he is not speaking here of the Constitutions approved by the Holy See, but only of the internal rules of his houses.

One could make distinctions here; but the clear statement of Don Bosco is a significant testimony of his thinking and the training of his boys in holiness.

Don Bosco maintained that the Rules demanded fidelity insofar as they were the expression of God's design and will, and this is exactly how the Special General Chapter sees the matter. Speaking of signs that help us discover God's will, the Chapter indicates the Gospel as the Supreme Rule and the main specific means. Then it adds, "The Constitutions form another instrument which is specifically ours. They are, so to speak, our *Gospel viewpoint* for understanding realities in depth. The fact

(38) Cf. *Memorie Biogr.*, IX, 571-576.

(39) *Memorie Biogr.*, VIII, 132.

that they have been approved by the Church is a guarantee for us that they give us a practical and safe road to follow, while at the same time they unite us in a spirit of obedience to the Church" (40).

Viewing the matter in the light of obedience to the Gospel and the Church, one can easily understand Don Bosco's contention that the conscious infraction of the Rule was a true act of infidelity to God, and not free from sin.

It should be clear to us how our Founder's thinking is in line with the Council when we read the words of the Special General Chapter saying, "There are not two levels in this vocation: that of Religious life which is a little higher, and that of Christian life which is a little lower. For the Religious, the testifying to the spirit of the Beatitudes with the profession of his vows is *his* manner of living out Baptism and of being a disciple of the Lord" (41).

The Rule does not dispense with initiative

The will of God, then, expressed through the Rule, did not, according to Don Bosco, relieve us of personal responsibility or initiative. It was not just a list of things to be done in a formalistic way; it was an ideal to achieve, a task to accomplish, a mission to fulfil according to the guidelines of the Rule, using all one's personal resources and sense of responsibility.

Don Bosco's thinking is better seen in what he did than in what he said: he entrusted tasks to the young that would have made grown men hesitate. He expected obedience that really proved the spirit of initiative and spiritual toughness in the most trying circumstances" (42).

A hundred years of tremendous development in the Society is the best proof that the past observance of the Rule has not inhibited originality or initiative.

(40) *SGC*, 630.

(41) *SGC*, 106.

(42) P. STELLA, *Don Bosco*, II, 407.

Charity in observance

The Rule is not the expression of a collective will, an impersonal requirement, or an abstract common good; it is a manifestation of the will of the God of charity; and it is thus in the spirit of charity that Don Bosco wanted it interpreted and practised.

Father Rinaldi said, "Rather than found a Society, Don Bosco wanted a family based on a fatherliness that was gentle, loving and vigilant, and a sonship that was affectionate, filial and brotherly" (43). But a well-ordered family, especially if large, cannot do without rules; and it also needs charity in interpreting and observing them.

However, this charity is no synonym for weakness; it is the desire for the genuine good of every member. There is no question of ignoring the Rule, or not bothering when infringements occur, or shutting one's eyes to imperfections or transgressions; but it does mean attending to situations not foreseen by the Rule; it means respecting the rate of maturity of each member; it means acting so that the Rule which is made for all should be adapted to the possibilities of each individual according to his pace, his energies, his rate of spiritual growth — so that each person in a Salesian house may feel at ease and one of the family.

In the eve of his life Don Bosco wrote from Rome in 1884, referring to his famous dream. He described the situation that had gradually been built up at the Oratory, and expressed the shock of one who is seeing his work distorted. He asked, "Why do people want to substitute cold, impersonal regulations for charity? Why do we see that loving vigilance that prevents disorders being gradually replaced by a system (quicker and less onerous for the one in charge) whereby laws are promulgated and upheld with chastisements that generate hatred and make trouble? Our old system must be restored: the Superior must be all things to all men, always ready to listen to queries or complaints, ever

(43) DON RINALDI, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

watchful as a father, always lovingly seeking the spiritual and material good of those entrusted to him by Providence" (44).

This well-known dream deals directly with relations between Salesians and pupils; but it is not difficult to see in the background the changing atmosphere in the Religious community itself, which in turn was having repercussions on the educative community.

Don Bosco wanted the Rule observed, but observed spontaneously and voluntarily, for, he used say, "God does not want things done by constraint; being a God of love, he wants things done for love" (45). He wanted this kind of observance so as to maintain the family atmosphere, so that "the Rector's government could always be fatherly, as desired by us" (46).

It is up to the Rector, then, to see that "cold, impersonal regulations be not substituted for charity". What Don Bosco wanted to emphasise was the coldness, the impersonality of a regulation when no account was taken as to whether it was for people's benefit or not.

4. PRACTICE OF THE RULE TODAY

Dear confrères, in putting before you these considerations on the value of the Rule, I have not shut my eyes to the modern tendency to reject all laws. Motivations vary; the problem is found here and there in the Church; and it is present in Religious Families, our own included. This hypercritical attitude extends to ecclesiastical law, and hence also to Constitutions and Regulations and so on.

(44) *Memorie Biogr.*, XVII, 112-113.

(45) *Ibid.*, VI, 15.

(46) *Ibid.*, XII, 81.

Emotional reaction

Such objections hold that a law lords it over one's personal make-up, crushing spontaneity, creativity, communion. It is the end of freedom, it stifles the individual. It encourages legalism, hampers progress, fosters formalism, sets up authoritarianism and destroys the spiritual vitality that is born of charity and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We cannot underplay these fears. Unhappily the law has often been used as a screen for selfishness, indolence and pride. At times it has been employed as an instrument of power and persons have been crushed under this juggernaut. It has been misused as an excuse for want of imagination and lack of generosity and availability in necessary renewal programmes. However, we should sincerely examine whether our emotional reaction against legalism (which has often afflicted the Church) runs the risk of condemning and rejecting both law and legalism, without distinguishing between the two. This attitude could damage the very reason of our battle against legalism — the defense of the individual.

The following quote is worth pondering often: "A community without laws is not, and never can be, a community of charity. It has always been, and always will be, a community of self-will" (47). We could add that it is a community of egotists under the guise of pluralism. In such a situation there is no respect for other persons, no charity. Even the elementary premise to charity, justice, is missing. Such a community is on the way to destruction.

These consequences are logical, evident and verified and do not call for lengthy proofs. They certainly set us thinking when we see to what extremes it is possible to go; and in some cases such extremes really exist. We must have clear

(47) L. BOUYER, *L'Église de Dieu* (Editions du Cerf).

notions that will overcome this emotional reaction that nowadays sees every call to obey a law or rule as an assault against freedom.

Observance a practical expression of love

Assuredly the temptation towards legalism and formalism, with all their baneful consequences, is seated in our human make-up, just as are pride, selfishness and slothfulness. They are very real dangers, and both he who commands and he who obeys must be constantly on their guard and arm themselves with an habitual asceticism. But the fact that laws are open to abuse does not mean they should be abolished — that would run counter to man's social nature. Nor does it mean we can belittle their value by contempt, treat them carelessly or violate them at will. The cure would be worse than the sickness, and its harmful results would soon become evident in the community.

The renewal of the Congregation can only come through a sincere and practical acceptance of our Constitutions; a faithful observance that eschews not only legalism and formalism but also arbitrariness and individualism; it will assure for each of us greater charity, for the community greater communion, and for our apostolate greater efficiency.

Father Karl Rahner prays to the Lord thus: "This wise knowledge I already possess, Lord, and I wish to increase it: that I shall never enjoy your freedom by crying out against him who is invested with your authority. When I find my burden heavy and try to be rid of it, I am not acting according to your spirit of freedom but according to my lower nature, my laziness, my selfishness. The fact is that I have not cared about scandalizing my brother, for whom your Son shed his blood; it means nothing to me that I consider every good thing licit, even though it harm my brother (48); I take no account that I have the

(48) Cf. *Rom.*, XIV, 13 et seq.

'knowledge that puffs up and not the love that builds up' (49).

"I have considered as hindrances to freedom precepts and injunctions that were safeguards for the freedom of your love and protections against the laws in my lower nature. Yes, again and again I see that the laws of your Church are a schooling in patience, in disciplining the will, in conquering myself, in attaining serenity of spirit, in practising respect and love for my neighbour. I see more and more that maturity comes through duty, not through pleasure. Not every duty is a constriction; and fidelity in work is not always a sign of a high moral standard or genuine freedom.

"I also realise that orders and injunctions, ceremonies and customs, methods and diligence that are recommended and imposed on me, can become a practical expression of my love — if I have love; and if I am weak and too lackadaisical to give them life, they become dead things" (50).

Just as much today as in the past does the Congregation depend on this sort of observance; and to help us all understand and live it the better, I put these reflections before you.

The Rule protects the individual and the community

When the Rule is viewed according to the above principles, we see that it is genuinely at the service of the individual person and his freedom in the true sense of the word. "The law, genuine and just, is a kind of outer protective skin that allows a person to be born and develop; to break that skin means attacking the life of a person" (51).

The Rule defends the person from arbitrary treatment — on the part of the Superior and even more on the part of the com-

(49) Cf. *1 Cor.*, VIII, 1 et seq.

(50) K. RAHNER.

(51) L. BOUYER, *op. cit.*, p. 596.

munity. It establishes what can be commanded, decided or directed. And this Rule is freely accepted by each member on the day of his profession.

The Rule also protects the community from the whims of the individual who would gravely or systematically fail in the duties he has freely accepted and would thus influence the lives of the confrères in a negative fashion.

Finally the Rule protects the individual from his own frailty and caprice. It is a constant reminder to him of the duties he has assumed before God and his confrères. Indeed, in this way it represents the freedom of his response to the call of God.

The Rule the guardian of important values

It is clear that the Rule does not merely carry out the negative function of protecting the Religious community. Its main function is positive — in the promotion of the values it contains: Gospel values lived in the charisma of the Founder; values of brotherly communion; values of the divine mission to save the young. It is precisely because these values are inherent in the Rule that the Community suffers gravely through poor observance — for the values are then not practised.

Naturally not every breach of the Rule damages them in equal measure — some of the values the Rules guards and promotes are more important than others. Some are so basic as to be part of Christian life; some belong to the essentials of Religious life in general (as stated by II Vatican Council), or the particular kind of Religious life to which we have been called and have freely embraced. Other values derive from the decisions the Congregation has made, after lengthy consultation, through the General Chapter (its supreme responsible organ) in order to be better equipped to carry out under modern conditions our God-given mission and work for the Church and mankind. Finally there are the values (such as organizational structures) that are practical

choices of ways and means considered helpful in the smooth running of our life and mission.

Then there are the different modes of expression in the Rule. Some articles express only the basic lines of a matter, leaving the details to the responsible initiative of the provincial or local community; whereas others express exact rulings and hence must be carried out by all.

Danger of picking and choosing

Every infringement or arbitrary interpretation of the Rule is a weakening of our mutual bond of union and communion — and assuredly not in accordance with God's will. He wants us to live and work together (52), and the visible road towards this brotherly communion is our Holy Rule.

What has been said about the Rule holds also for the decisions taken at the various competent and responsible levels of community life — Provincial Chapters and Councils, Communities Councils and House Assemblies.

The reasonableness of this is obvious. It would be a sad day for the Congregation if the principle of picking and choosing were accepted in theory or practice; if each member considered himself bound to obey only those legitimately established ordinances he found pleasing or in accord with his personal point of view, and rejected the rest. Selfish individualism would prevail, the very antithesis of Christ's Kingdom of justice, love and peace. The Congregation could not continue as a social structure, for mutual confidence would be lacking — and that is the very basis of living in communion.

The systematic lack of observance by a notable group of confrères would impoverish our Religious life, hinder fraternal communion, impede our apostolate and stifle vocations. The history

(52) *Const.*, 50.

of Orders and Congregations bears out the dismal reality of this picture.

There is absolutely no intention to use these arguments to establish that the Rule should be absolute and unconditional. Whilst warmly recommending observance, it must be borne in mind that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (53). The Rule is at the service of the life and mission of the Congregation, and can not and must not be an obstacle to its true mission. What really causes a rift in communion is not so much the infringement of the letter of the law as the individualistic arbitrariness of the infringement; it is the latter that runs directly counter to the spirit of the law — which is a spirit of solidarity, charity and communion.

Charity is not selfish and does not seek its own interests, but rather the good of others; it is not individualistic, for it tries to achieve this good “in the communion of brethren”. To avoid arbitrary individualism in this good we do and the way we do it, any possible exception to the letter of the Rule ought to have the purpose of observing its spirit. This means acting according to Don Bosco’s principle, “with one’s eyes fixed on the centre of unity” (54); and in matters of greater importance, one should act (at the various levels of competence) in accord with the community one belongs to: the members are the “day to day interpreters of God’s will” (55), and it is only with their consent that we can be assured of treading the path God wants.

The Rule promotes Salesian communion

To delve a little deeper: when we say that the Rule is at the service of the individual and the community, we wish to stress something very positive: fidelity to the Rule is the most important

(53) *Mk.*, II, 27.

(54) *Memorie Biogr.*, XII, 82.

(55) *Const.*, 91.

means of achieving the Salesian communion at all levels, that “living and working together that for us Salesians is a fundamental need if we are truly to fulfil our vocation” (56).

Indeed, if we believe that “the Salesian Society came into being not only by human agency but by the providence of God” (57), we must also believe that it is God who has called us into it and given us brothers to love (58), to accomplish in communion with them in our Religious consecration the apostolic project of Don Bosco, “in our own Salesian way trying to become signs of and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are the poorest and most in need” (59).

The bond that unites us all to one another is charity. This we received from the Holy Spirit at Baptism, when we became members of the Mystical Body of Christ, sons of God in Christ and hence brothers to one another. And this fraternal and apostolic charity was reinforced and became for each of us a solemn duty before God and confrères when we made our profession of the evangelical counsels. It presupposes certain relationships and commitments and thus tends by nature to become visible and social.

The Rule is simply a social expression of the duties we took on ourselves with our Religious profession. It defines the religious and apostolic life we intend to follow in communion with our confrères, the bonds that unite us, and our mutual commitments. On the one hand, the Salesian community, by accepting a member, binds itself to help him carry out the divine call; and “the member in turn realises his commitment to help build up the community in which he lives” (60). The least he can do is observe the Rule faithfully.

(56) *Ibid.*, art. 50.

(57) *Ibid.*, art. 1.

(58) *Ibid.*, art. 51.

(59) *Ibid.*, art. 2.

(60) *Ibid.*, art. 52.

The practice of the Rule is not the sum-total of the duties to which we have pledged ourselves: it is only a “way that leads out to Love” (61). But it is “the safe way” to know what God wants of each of us (62), so as to be able to fulfil the solemn pledges expressed in the new profession formula: “To live in the Salesian Society one in spirit and action with my brothers, to give of my best and all I have to those to whom I shall be sent, especially to poor and abandoned boys, and in this way to have some share in the mission of the Church”; and all this “according to the way of life of the Gospel traced out in the Salesian Constitutions” (63).

To achieve a oneness of spirit

This Gospel way delineated by the Holy Rule achieves “the community of spirit and action” not only at the provincial and local level; it goes further — it puts into practice article 56 of the Constitutions: “Through our vocation we become part of the world-wide Salesian community and participate in that communion of spirit, witness and service that the Congregation offers to the universal Church”.

We know well that Don Bosco was deeply aware of the need of communion at the world level. “We must do all we can to achieve a oneness of spirit”, he told his Salesians. He insisted again and again that the Congregation be united so as to carry out its mission in an efficient manner. He spoke of spiritual unity, corporate unity, unity of direction, unity of command, and even unity of sentiment (65).

“If small divisions find their way into the Congregation,

(61) *Ibid.*, Foreword.

(62) *Ibid.*, art. 91 and 200; cf. *SGC*, 638.

(63) *Const.*, 74.

(64) *Memorie Biogr.*, XIII, 286.

(65) Cf. *Memorie Biogr.*, XIII, 286; VII, 626; VII, 847; IX, 572; XII, 499.

our progress will be hampered. United in one heart we can achieve ten times as much and work far better" (66). The SGC says, "Unity at world level finds its first expression in the Constitutions. These mark out for the whole Salesian world the fundamental outlines of our credo, our life and our mission" (67); and the "ministry of unity" entrusted to the Rector Major, the Superior Council and the Superiors depends on them.

The General Chapter thus answered the feeling throughout the Society of "an urgent need to clarify and to reinforce the essential ties of unity, to keep intact the original project of our holy Founder and maintain the life and efficiency of the Congregation" (68).

Dear confrères, today more than ever does the Congregation need this complete communion of spirit for the efficiency of its mission.

The Rule and one's personal talents

Today we hear everywhere of "doing one's own thing", and the importance of personal talents. A modern author throws an interesting side-light on this matter. "Religious Families have at times taken this as an encouragement to spontaneous initiative and a justification for every Religious "to do his own thing". But the prospect of an exaggerated freedom to tackle any sort of individual apostolic dream is not a solid foundation either for the formation of those whom God calls, or for coherence in the community. A person who wants to do only what appeals to his judgement should consider that he would do it better outside the Religious life.

"The attractive force of an Institute lies in its being and manifesting itself as an "ecclesial group" that directs its members'

(66) *Memorie Biogr.*, XII, 384; cf. also XIII, 304.

(67) SGC, 720.

(68) *Ibid.*

talents to a specific and effective apostolate. The credibility of an Institute in this area depends on the clarity of its commitment in carrying on effectively a genuine apostolate" (69).

Fidelity to the Constitutions is the only guarantee of this universal solidarity that makes the Salesian mission visible and efficient in the Church. It unites the activities of all into the one great Salesian project for the salvation of the young. This is the only way to get back that corporate spirit so necessary for the sociological conditions of today. It is the only way we can be constantly sure that God's act in raising up the Congregation for the young is still going ahead — in that all its members live the Rule that enshrines this Congregation, this gift of God, and that they promote an ever greater fidelity to its observance (70). In Don Bosco's dream of the cloaked person who represented the Congregation we have these important words of recommendation, "Meditate morning and evening on the observance of the Constitutions" (71).

These thoughts are of paramount importance. It is not enough to be Salesians in name only — especially today. Unfortunately individual members, communities and even Provinces can, up to a point, find themselves outside the pale of the Congregation; for we are only Salesians insofar as is evidenced by our fidelity to the Constitutions.

These days, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that it is only observance of the Rule that can prevent us from heading for schism in our Salesian communion (at least in practice). It is only in the faithful observance of the Constitutions that the Congregation will draw ever nearer to the achievement of that strong unity as conceived and exemplified by its Founder (72).

(69) AHERN BARNABAS, *The Consecrated Life*.

(70) Cf. *Const.*, 200.

(71) *Memorie Biogr.*, XV, 186.

(72) Cf., *Const.*, 49.

Fidelity to the Rule a matter of faith

Don Bosco used often say that the Rule was the voice of God (73). It my hope that the thoughts outlined in this letter will help towards a better appreciation of the force of this statement.

This was the “voice” that spoke in the intimacy of the heart of Don Bosco. It called the poor shepherd of Becchi as he tended his sheep and made him a shepherd, father and master of youth. It was divinely confirmed and authenticated when the Church approved the Congregation he had founded and thus perpetuated the mission entrusted him by God; and the same voice called each of us to carry out, in community, as Salesians, and according to the Rule, his apostolic project.

The voice of God calling us “does not need to be heard in some extraordinary way. Rather is it recognized and weighed in the signs God uses every day to manifest his will to prudent Christians” (74). One of these signs is the Holy Rule, the safe way pointed out to us by the Lord so that we may carry out his call to perfect Love (75). It is a sign that can only be perceived in the light of faith. This is why the Foreward of the new Constitutions affirms that “only with a living faith can we meditate fruitfully upon this book of the Constitutions”.

If we have this faith it will not be difficult to perceive beyond the mere code the face and voice of the Father, inviting us to love him and to build up, in communion with our confrères, the Body of Christ among the young and throughout the world. But if our faith is lacking or weak and feeble, the Constitutions will mean little to us — or worse still, they will be seen as an obstacle to our freedom, perhaps a hindrance to the achievement

(73) Cf. *Memorie Biogr.*, XI,365; XII,81; XIV,849; XVII,296.

(74) *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 11 a.

(75) Cf. *SGC*, 630.

of our completely personal plans, a straight-jacket from which we shall do our utmost to escape as quickly as possible.

Let us consider the great number of Salesians who have gone before us. They were models of faith and fidelity, and answered God's call, following the way of the Rule pointed out by Don Bosco; and we know how fruitful was their faithful observance. Often they were but humble instruments in God's hands, but because of their fidelity and docility he accomplished great things through them.

For our common comfort, and speaking from experience, I can say that today also, so many confrères throughout the world and in greatly varying circumstances, have accepted the new Constitutions in a spirit of faith. They are discovering with joy the rich spiritual values and the Salesianity therein. They are living these Constitutions with profound conviction, and their communities plainly show the results: a spirit of generous work, brotherly love, fervent prayer and joyous optimism. This was the same spirit that animated the first fervent communities of the Congregation.

These confrères are efficiently building up the communities of today just as did the first Salesians of the golden age of our Society.

Let us be convinced that the new Constitutions are God's way we are to traverse together to answer his call and carry out his mission today. It is only by being docile to his voice that we can be sure of building something that will endure. To carry out his plan of salvation God does not need our personal talents so much as our fidelity which places them at his service.

A message for future generations

On the occasions of centenaries or jubilees of important events one often sees the erection of a monument in order to preserve for posterity the remembrance of the particular event.

This centenary is of the greatest importance for our Congregation; but there is no need for a monument. However, we feel the obligation of transmitting to the generations of Salesians who, please God, will take our places a message that is not couched in words but portrayed in our lives — our genuine love of Don Bosco that will translate itself into effective and practical love of our Constitutions. Don Bosco has told us that in them he lives and speaks. On the deck of the ship that was taking his first missionaries to South America, our good Father handed his sons a copy of the Constitutions recently approved by the Holy See, saying, "Through these Rules I am coming with you".

Dear confrères and sons, our sure way to be truly with Don Bosco is to live the Constitutions. This is the message that we Salesians of the 1970's feel obliged to leave for future generations, for the fruitful mission of the Congregation: the Constitutions in our own lives — not just practising them but living them with love as the expression of our genuine affection for Don Bosco.

May our dear Father and Founder bless this determination of his sons and help us carry out the Holy Rule ever more perfectly each day.

God bless you all. My prayers are for you, especially the more elderly, the very young and the sick.

Please pray for the many needs of the Congregation and for my own intentions.

In gratitude yours,

Father LOUIS RICCIERI
Rector Major

II. INSTRUCTIONS AND NORMS

Instructions regarding article 196 of the Constitutions

On 1 March 1974, the Economer General, Father Roger Pilla, sent the following letter to all Provincials. It contains instructions of the Rector Major and his Council relative to article 196 of the Constitutions.

V. Rev. and dear Father Provincial,

Now that we have at hand all the proposals from the Provincial Councils, it has been possible for the Rector Major and his Council to carry out Const. 197 and fix the sum of money within the limits of which the Provincial and his Council have the power to authorize the matters spoken of in Const. 196.

In deciding on this amount the Council examined not only the proposals of each Province but also the economic potential of the Province concerned, the local cost of living, and the sum (if any) decided on by the Episcopal Conference. The latter was used only as a point of reference, for there is also a sum fixed for Superiors General (who themselves have to have recourse to the Holy See if it is exceeded).

With this in mind, not only were the limits fixed by the Episcopal Conferences not accepted (as many had asked), but, except in cases where a very low figure was suggested, a considerably lesser sum was decided on — more or less according to the cost of living and the economic potential of the Province.

The sum is expressed in US dollars, since this currency is acceptable throughout the world, is stable at the moment, and local calculations can easily be made.

For your Province the limit of competence for operations cited in Const. 196 is US\$...

To avoid mistakes in the use of this concession, the Superior Council makes the following points:

a) The above limit refers to the amount needed for a *complete operation*, even if this is carried out in sections and at different times. Thus if the overall amount is greater than the sum allowed, permission must be sought from the Superior Council. For instance, if a Salesian House wishes to put up a building at a cost in excess of the amount allowed, it is not permitted to divide the construction up into sections so that each section is within the limit permitted. Hence even if the building goes up piecemeal and at different times, permission must be sought from the Rector Major. The same holds for the buying and selling of immovables.

b) In the case of a building relating to a new house to be opened, or that would mean changing the scope of an existing work, it is plain that, even if the costs are within the sum allowed, the permission of the Rector Major is needed to open the new house or modify the scope of the work already in existence (Cost. 172). (Such applications should include a copy of the plans).

c) Loans and mortgages for a house or Province must be added to existing loans or mortgages. If the sum then exceeds the amount allowed, permission must be sought from the Rector Mayor.

These clarifications are by way of example, to make clear the spirit of the concession and indicate a certain criterion in its application. However, the Rector Major and his Council count on a sense of responsibility and a proper and balanced interpretation on the part of the Provincial Councils.

The concession of this faculty should be communicated to the houses, and this letter kept in the archives of the Province as documentary evidence of the same faculty.

I take occasion of this communication to wish you every blessing.

Father ROGER PILLA
Economer General

III. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Missions request personnel

Over the past few months the Councillor for the Missions, Father Bernard Tobill has been in touch with bishops and provincials on the mission fields and askd them to list their present personnel requirements. Father Tobill now presents these needs to the Congregation.

a) LETTER OF THE COUNCILLOR FOR THE MISSIONS TO ALL CONFRÈRES Dear Confrère,

The Mission Office is constantly receiving letters from the mission fields begging for help in the matter of personnel. I have made out a list of some of these needs and herewith present it to you, though it is far from complete.

I realise of course that most places are suffering from a shortage of man-power; but I feel it a matter of conscience to put before you these urgent requests from the mission territories.

Missionary activity is a mandate of Christ, and the recent Vatican Council (the first Council to draft a missionary document) has stressed its urgency; and moreover, Don Bosco wanted the Congregation to be deeply committed to missionary work, as we are reminded in the Acts of the Special General Chapter, n. 471. In presenting the latter, the Rector Major spoke of the "way of the missions" as one of the three main roads we have to traverse in the renewal of our mission to the young and the working classes.

In the Acts of the Superior Council, no. 267, page 35, Father Ricceri writes: "Let us listen to Father Albera calling on the various Provinces to be generous with the missions and not count the cost. He spoke in 1920, when difficulties were great and personnel at a low ebb. His refrain was, 'Train missionaries — good ones and lots

of them'. Dilating on the subject, he said, 'If any Provinces say they cannot do this because of their own pressing needs and scant personnel, my answer is that this is the very reason why *must* do it: in order to increase their own numbers. The more confrères a Province sends to the missions, the more vocations the Lord will send to that Province. Send your men to Paraguay, Brazil, Ecuador, Africa, India, China — to wherever we have mission stations'."

Below is a list of the needs of these and other missions. Our personnel problems are very real, I know; but the countries in this list are feeling the pinch to a far greater extent.

There are not only mission stations involved, but also schools and parishes, etc. These latter are strictly missionary in character and not at all like those, for example, in Europe. In so many of these places the Salesian presence is distressingly below par.

Dear confrères, please glance through this list and give it both thought and prayer. If the Holy Spirit prompts you to volunteer, get in touch with the Rector Major or myself. Your request will receive all the attention that so important a matter deserves.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father BERNARD TOHILL
Councillor for the Missions

P.S. - 1) The list to hand so far is incomplete, but still too lengthy for these pages; Hence we have deemed it better to print only half, reserving the rest for the next issue of the Acts of the Superior Council.

2) Some cases mention layfolk: these non-Salesians are also needed and welcome.

b) MISSIONS IN NEED OF PERSONNEL (part I)

Latin-America

HAITI (French-speaking):

- priest for Cap-Haitien: school & parish;
- Brother for Cap-Haitien: agricultural section;

- Brother for Cap-Haitien: workshop section;
- Brother for Port-au-Prince: electro-mechanic workshop.

PORTO RICO:

- priest for youth centre, Calle Lutz (over 400 youngsters & many university students);
- teacher: chemistry & mathematics, secondary level (Santurce).

BOLIVIA:

- priest for mission centre, San Corazon di Santa Cruz: pastoral, ministerial and social work among the natives on the land;
- priest for mission centre, Escoma, Altopiano La Paz: pastoral, ministerial and social work among the natives on the land;
- 2 Brothers for Don Bosco Youth Centre, Santa Cruz: to run youth groups and the mechanical & carpentry sections;
- Brother for Technical School Muyurina di Santa Cruz: agronomist for school, theory and practice;
- priest for Don Bosco Youth Centre, El Alto, La Paz: evangelization & catechetics among the vast numbers of poor youths;
- priest for Don Bosco College of Suché: spiritual direction of college inmates and pastoral work in youth centre;
- Brother for Don Bosco College, La Paz: night school for young adults; formation & pastoral work.

BRAZIL:

- urgent request for 5 priests, Mission of Porto Velho;
- urgent request for young priest, Mission of Humaitá: pastoral & catechetic co-ordination, etc.;
- priest for pastoral work among people living on 650 km of new roads;
- 2 priests to help parishes of Auxiliadora & Carapanatuba; much river travelling;
- Brothers to help missionaries in residences; no specialization necessary;
- priests & Brothers for Recife: youth work in parishes & schools;

CENTRAL AMERICA:

- urgent request for confrères to travel among Indians of San Pedro Carchá mission.

COLOMBIA - Prefecture Apostolic of Ariari:

- travelling missionaries for 5 centres;
- 2 priests & 2 consultants for agricultural school, La Holanda;
- 6 catechists for Prefecture;
- 2 doctors for Prefecture.

ECUADOR:

- frère electro-mechanic (even if only for 3 years) for technical school, Quito;
- printer for technical school, Quito;
- frère for programming: Radio Sucua;
- frère for programming: radio catechetics, country parish of Rocafuerte;
- person to run youth centre: Cuenca;
- mechanic & electrician for Dominic Savio House, Guayaquil, for impoverished youngsters.

PARAGUAY (Province)

- a team of trained men for youth apostolate;
- helpers in the parishes — catechetics.

PARAGUA (Vicariate of Chaco-Paraguayo):

- agricultural technician for a large cattle-breeding station & agricultural enterprises for the Indians;
- mechanic: machine maintenance sector — motors, generators, etc.;
- travelling priest for the Indians (good health needed: tough circumstances, extremely hot climate).

MEXICO:

- missionaries needed for the mission stations.

AFRICA:

- priests for missionary parishes: Burundi;
- motor mechanic for Cité des Jeunes: Zaire;
- frères for a Social Institute: Zaire;
- priests for missionary parishes: Zaire.

Asia

THAILAND (Province):

- urgent need of mechanic for Don Bosco technical school: Bangkok;
- head printer for Don Bosco Press: Bangkok.

THAILAND (Mission of Surat Thani):

- willing and trained Salesians for the mission;
- trained men for missionary youth centres.

2. The World Congress of Salesian Brothers

The Central Committee had fixed March 1974 for the completion of all Provincial Conventions, and this has been carried out in most places. Some Provinces held their conventions very early; a few will complete them in April.

Many confrères are already engaged in the next step: writing up the Provincial minutes that are to be forwarded to the Regional and Central Committees. These committees in turn are eagerly awaiting this information, for it will form the basis for their own work in the preparation of reports for both regional and world gatherings.

The Central Committee met for the second time (9-11 March) at the Generalate and all members attended (for a list of the members, v. issue 272 of the Acts, page 45). Father Viganò attended the opening session, and the proceedings were wound up on the third day in the presence of the Rector Major.

The work began with an appraisal of the progress at the Provincial and Regional levels. It was clear that many Provinces were in very close touch with their respective Regional Committees, and this augurs excellent results. The presence of the six Regionals at one session proved very helpful in a better sizing up of the situation.

The preparations for the the World Congress were well discussed: there was need of more information from the base and better communication and guidelines from the top; the Central Committee had much to do in this line, and needed to keep more in touch with the the Provincial and Regional Committees; the Co-ordinator of the Central Committee (Brother Romaldi) obviously needed a secretary;

discussion turned on how to make the best use of the material coming in from the Provinces and Regions, and how to set about a system of filing and translating.

It was suggested that the existing archives be supplemented with all possible relevant material, especially the biographies of Salesian Brothers. All modern means of communication were to be employed to stir up interest in the World Congress and render it efficacious. Various decisions were made, in accord with the Superiors, regarding the running of the Congress. Also the date was definitely fixed for 31 August - 6 September 1975 (not March, as mentioned in the Acts, issue no. 270, page 24).

The Central Committee received considerable criticism of the first plan for the election of delegates, and has formulated a new proposal accordingly. It also worked out a list of themes for the World Congress and has submitted to the Superior Council a number of names for a choice of speakers. Finally, steps were taken to draw up a set of « Regulations for the Congress ».

The next meeting of the Central Committee will be 26 - 27 October 1974.

Study matter for the World Congress.

What follows is a remodelling in accordance with suggestions received by the Central Committee from various Regional Committees.

Theme I: "Identity of the lay religious vocation of the Salesian Brother working for the one Salesian mission". (Historical profile: from Don Bosco's launching of this vocation to the achievements of a hundred years of Salesian history in the life of the Church; future prospects. Theological basis according to the teaching of the Council and the documents of the Special General Chapter. Juridical aspects.)

Theme II: "Future of the Salesian Brother's apostolic activity according to his lay religious character, present times and local needs".

Theme III: "The formation of the Salesian Brother". (General principles; content; stages; those responsible for formation.)

Theme IV: "Presenting the Salesian lay religious vocation to the young people of today". (Social and religious research into most suitable ways and means.)

Delegates to the World Congress. In drawing up the scheme below, the Central Committee bore in mind the following points.

— A maximum of 140 delegates, including the members of the Central Committee.

— Every Province to be represented by one Brother — to be elected by all the Salesians of the Province before the Regional Convention.

— Every Region to be represented by one Regional Delegate for every 320 confrères. These Regional delegates to be elected in the Regional or inter-Provincial Conventions.

For the inter-Provincial Conventions the total number of delegates for the Region to be divided in proportion to the Provincial groups of the Region.

R E G I O N S		Provincial Delegates	Regional Delegates	Total
1.	Italy, Middle East	13	15	28
2.	Pacific, Caribbean	11	7	18
3.	Portugal, Spain	8	9	17
4.1	South Belgium, France	3	2	5
4.2	Austria, Germany	3	2	5
4.3	Jugoslavia	2	1	3
4.4	North Belgium, Holland	2	1	3
4.5	Central Africa	1	1	2
		11	7	18
5.1	Cuenca del Plata	7	4	11
5.2	Brazil	6	4	10
		13	8	21
6.1	England, Ireland	2	2	4
6.2	USA	2	2	4
6.3	Far East	6	2	8
6.4	India	4	3	7
6.5	Australia	1	—	1
		15	9	24
7.	Poland	2	2	4
	Total	73	57	130

N.B. - All Provincial delegates will be Brothers only: and this should be kept in mind when electing Regional delegates, in order to ensure an adequate representation of priests at the World Congress.

In conclusion: the serious attitude of so many Provinces in regard to the Congress shows that there is really a problem in the Congregation and that the fact is realised. It is hardly necessary to remark that the Conventions at the various levels are not goals in themselves but stepping-stones to further progress.

3. Appointments

The Rector Major has appointed the following Provincials.

Father JORGE MEINVILLE: Province of Cordoba, Argentina.

Father ANTHONY RASERA: Province of Manaus, Brazil.

Father VICTOR REYES: Province of Paraguay.

The Holy See has made the following appointments.

Bishop PETER CARRETTO: member of the Secretariate for non-Christians.

Father JOHN SHIRIEDA, Japanese Salesian priest: consultor in the Pontifical Commission for non-Believers.

4. Course for Novice-Masters

On 3 March the "Month for Novice-Masters" began as scheduled at the Generalate's "Salesianum", under the aegis of the Commission for Salesian Formation. At the time of writing thirty-seven Masters of Novices are participating; only six were unable to come.

The programme is a heavy one: organized by the Formation Commission and under the dedicated guidance of Father Joseph Aubry and Father Angelo Botta. Other helpers are the various members of the Superior Council, advisers from the different Commissions, and also some non-Salesian specialists.

But the people really running the course are the Novice-Masters

themselves. In discussing the practical problems of their 446 novices, they are working out together the proper lines of action to take in the light of the SGC documents. This is exactly the task given them by the Rector Major: "to make a profound re-examination of all the work that is to be done in the novitiate, that privileged period of the first steps in Salesian training".

5. Courses of Ongoing Formation

On 14 February *the first of the Courses of Ongoing Formation* at the Generalate came to a close with the visit of Cardinal Tabera, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

In the four months the participants passed from an initial attitude of getting to know and appreciate one another to an ever increasingly responsible participation in the achieving of the aims of the course: revision of life, spiritual replenishment, studying problems together, and Salesian brotherliness. It was a course that concentrated on personal religious and Salesian formation, and resulted in a period of fruitful experience and reflection on the religious life, including a cultural, theological and pedagogical updating. Preference was given to matters that dealt with religious renewal, theology of the religious life and principles of Salesian asceticism.

Those who did the course (they were mostly from Europe and a few from South America) agree that the experiment was a success. One wrote back, "This is something middle-aged Salesian need — to help them renew confidence and spread it among others". Another wrote, "I have acquired a broader vision and a greater love of the Congregation, more religious maturity, greater understanding of my confrères, and a brighter optimism". And another, "Well done. You must carry on with the good work".

On 9 March the *second Course of Ongoing Formation* began — mainly for Salesians from Latin America. Another group of some thirty confrères are deepening their sense of Salesian vocation and will return to their Provinces to share their experience with their fellow Salesians: greater enthusiasm and renewed energy in fostering Gospel and Salesian values.

6. Convention regarding Youth Apostolate among migrants

Last December three Regional Councillors (Father Ter Schure, Father Fiora and Father Mélida) went to Cologne to attend a convention dealing with Youth Apostolate among Italian and Spanish migrants in West Germany, especially in the Ruhr district. The Convention included the three German-speaking Provincials, an Italian Provincial, a Spanish Provincial (each representing his respective Episcopal Conference), a few confrères actually working among the migrants, and a number of non-Salesians interested in the problem (such as Mgr. Koenen, in charge of the migrant apostolate in the diocese of Cologne).

The Convention had a two-fold aim: to examine practical ways to better the existing apostolate (in line with our traditional work for migrant youth); and to examine ways of linking together the Provinces where the migrants came from with the Provinces where they were now working.

Letters had previously been written to the bishops of the more densely populated zones, especially the Ruhr, Europe's industrial centre in dizzy expansion. The replies from the bishops listed numerous proposals and offers of work with enormous pastoral potential and of the utmost urgency.

The Cologne Convention came up with some practical suggestions and paved the way for a more consistent plan of work to begin this year.

7. European Convention on the Preventive System

As scheduled, the European Convention on the Preventive System of Don Bosco took place at the Rome Salesianum from 31 December to 5 January. It was organized by the Commission for Youth Apostolate and the Faculty of Educational Science of the UPS.

Three hundred persons participated; and their findings will be published in due course. Some of the more important conclusions are given here.

Throughout proceedings the Convention never lost sight of the

young — the hall was filled with the spiritual presence of these all-important, silent actors in the drama of education. The « life-origin » of Don Bosco's system was stressed, and the difficulty of translating it into mere ideas. It was constantly emphasised that Don Bosco used the word « preventive » as an antonym for « repressive », i.e., punitive and authoritarian; hence the necessity to give importance to all that prevention implied: maturing of the young « from within », respect for their freedom and help in developing it, progressive maturity in human and Christian commitment. Insistence was given to the fact that Don Bosco's system meant action that had clear human and Christian aims.

Education was not a one-man affair — the importance of the community effort was unanimously emphasised. The activity of the educative community was characterized by a family spirit, and this must regulate relations within the educative community itself.

The school was accepted as a genuine community expression of the « Salesian presence ». There was general agreement that youth centres, groups and associations of the young were valid forms of Don Bosco's typical Oratory work. Finally the matter of the mass-media as part of the Preventive System was touched on.

8. Consultative Gathering to discuss “The School and the Salesian Mission”

A week was spent in consultation (11-16 Feb.) at the Generalate to examine the matter of the « School and the Salesian Mission ». Present were representatives from Belgium, France, Italy and Spain. The two pivots of discussion turned on

- what the Salesian mission requires of the schools;
- and practical ways our schools can answer these requirements..

Special importance was given to discussing the educative community, and evangelization and catechetics in our schools.

In the general audience at St. Peter's on 13 February, Pope Paul spoke encouragingly to the group, urging fidelity to Don Bosco and perseverance in the apostolate of the school. At the end of the audience the Holy Father went over to the Salesians and spoke to them for a short time.

9. Three-day seminar on Vocational Guidance

The Councillor for Youth Apostolate, Father Juvenal Dho, recently presided at a short seminar (26-28 January) at Madrid. This was organized by the Spanish delegates for Youth Apostolate, the subject being Vocational Guidance.

In the interests of efficiency the participants were few in number, and consisted of the Provincial delegates for Youth Apostolate, the vocation promoters, Rectors and others responsible for formation in the aspirantates, and a few Salesian Sisters.

Father Dho was the main speaker and guided the discussions. The seminar had the following objectives:

- to make the participants vividly aware of Vocational Guidance as being an essential part of all educative and pastoral activity;
- to see Youth Apostolate and Vocational Guidance as inseparable; and Vocational Guidance as a necessary part of genuine Christian education;
- to look into the possibilities of Guidance offered in the various fields of our educative activity (teaching, youth movements, youth groups, catechetics, retreats, courses, camps, etc.).

10. Brotherly Solidarity (12th instalment)

a) PROVINCES WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED

EUROPE

Austria	lire	368.000
Ireland		739.452
Italy: Ligure		300.000
Italy: Lombardia		800.000
Italy: Sicula		1.000.000
Italy: San Marco		450.000
Italy: San Zeno		100.000
Italy: The Generalate		200.000
Spain: Seville		660.000

ASIA

India: Gauhati	525.000
Middle East	200.000

AMERICA

USA: New Rochelle	2.863.250
USA: San Francisco	3.800.000

AUSTRALIA

1.074.499

Total received from 18-12-73 to 7.3.74	13.080.201
Plus cash in hand	495.554

<i>Monies available as at 7-3-74</i>	<u>13.575.755</u>
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b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONIES

ASIA

Korea (Seoul): for the poor of the youth centre	lire	600.000
Philippines (Pasil): medical assistance for the poor		600.000
India (Calcutta): for the Azimganj dispensary		600.000
India (Raipur): for the orphans		100.000
India (Madras): for the building of a small chapel		1.000.000
India (Gauhati): motorcycle for the Doomini mission		600.000
India (Gauhati): for the Mawkhar-Shillong dispensary		1.000.000
India (Gauhati): for repairs to buildings damaged (Manipur)		600.000
India (Gauhati): hospital expenses of a confrère		966.085
Israel (Nazareth): for the professional school		1.000.000
Timor: for the needy of the mission		200.606
Vietnam: for the Tram Hanh novitiate		600.000

AFRICA

Zaire (Lubumbashi): formation courses for laity and catechists	1.000.000
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SOUTH AMERICA

Chile: for the hospital expenses of a confrère	1.120.600
Colombia (Bogotà): to organize help for «street-arabs »	1.500.000
Mexico (Guadalajara): for social enterprises directed by the Young Co-operators	500.000
Paraguay: for the Chako Indians	500.000

AUSTRALIA: for the Kimberley mission for Australian Aborigines

700.400

Total monies disbursed from 18-12-73 to 7-3-74

13.187.691

Cash in hand

388.064

Grand total

13.575.755

c) GENERAL SUMMARY OF BROTHERLY SOLIDARITY

<i>Monies received up to 7-3-74</i>	238.994.238
<i>Monies distributed up to 7-3-74</i>	238.606.174
<i>Cash in hand</i>	<u><u>388.064</u></u>

ERROR TO BE CORRECTED

On page 49 of the last issue of the ACTS (no. 273) the following was omitted under « Provinces supplying the missionaries »:

Barcelona and Seville: one each.

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

1. The Regional Councillors returned about 15 January and left again in mid-March to continue their visits to their respective Regions. Thus so far the Superior Council has been together at the Generalate only two months in 1974.

The matters detailed below may not be teeming with interest, but they need to be noted, for they manifest an explicit effort to be in union with the confrères and a genuine striving to achieve our post-capitular renewal.

1. Council meetings

In these two months spent together, the Superior Council carried out its normal functions. The Regionals presented their reports on their canonical visitations; and other Councillors who had participated in various meetings of confrères also made their reports. These summaries have served to crystallize problems of general interest and have helped in the search for common lines for solving them. Certain significant experiments in various parts of the world also received attention.

Other matters raised were the missionary impact on the Salesian Family (especially in view of the proximate missionary centenary), the approval of the Regulations of the Salesian Co-operators, and the work-programme of the Commissions and Regionals for 1974-1975. The latter included the scheduling of the Regionals' visits in the six four-monthly periods available before the next General Chapter, and the convening of the Provincials of the various Regions; also the arranging of certain initiatives at the Generalate and elsewhere.

A few of these matters are mentioned below.

2. Other initiatives of the Rector Major and his Council

First of all, the convening of Provincials of various Regions. This is required by the Special General Chapter and gives all the Provincials of a Region a chance to discuss matters with the Rector Major and members of the Superior Council. The purpose is to determine how things stand with regard to putting into practice the directives of the Special General Chapter.

The first of these conventions was held in October last in Mexico City (v. Acts of SC, no. 273, page 58). Two more were held in Rome: in February the Provincials of Australia, England, Ireland and USA, and in March those of central Europe.

The conventions for the other Regions will be held in April and June and October. In April the Rector Major, Father Vecchi (Regional), Fr. Vigandò, Father Dho and Father Rainieri will travel to Buenos Aires for the Atlantic Region; in June the Provincials of the Iberian Peninsula, Italy and the Middle East will meet at the Generalate; and in October the Provincials from the Far East.

These meetings help to widen the horizons of the Superior Council and give each Provincial an opportunity to air his problems and have them discussed authoritatively.

After his long journeyings last October-November, *the Rector Major* remained at the Generalate till the end of March, when he paid a brief visit to the confrères of the Bilbao Province.

The Formation Commission has wound up its first course of ongoing formation and the second is already well advanced. At the time of writing, the course for novice-masters is drawing to a close. Preparations are continuing for the World Congress of Brothers (v. Communications sections of this issue, page 45).

Father Vigandò has taken part in various Provincial gatherings in France and Italy. He also presided at the Convention of Dogma Professors at the UPS, 2-5 January (v. Acts of SC no. 273, page 51), which was quite successful and should prove beneficial for our theological centres.

The Commission for Youth Apostolate organized, in conjunction with the UPS Faculty of Educational Science, the European Convention on the Preventive System. Then in January, Father Dho presided at the Seminar of Vocational Guidance in Madrid. In February, Father

Anthony Ferreira, a consultor in the Commission, directed a week of discussion on « The School and the Salesian Mission » (v. Communications section in this issue, page 51).

The Commission for Adult Apostolate has had the new Regulations for the Salesian Co-operators approved by the Rector Major and his Council. It is now working on a Manual of Prayers for the Co-operators.

The survey on Salesian publishing houses has now been completed, and a document of findings has been compiled by the Salesian Press Office and is being circulated to interested parties. One of the findings points up the need for greater mutual knowledge, collaboration and interchange.

The Secretariate for Social Communications has sent out a questionnaire on “Salesian news and the mass media in our communities” and is now collating the replies. The result should make for greater efficiency in the future. To better co-ordinate the activities of this sector (so close to the heart of Don Bosco), a Council for Social Communications has been constituted and met for the first time in mid-March.

In preparation too is a consultative committee for the implementation of the directives of the Special General Chapter regarding parishes.

The Commission for the Missions has completed the data relating to personnel requirements in the missions (v. Communication section in this issue, page 41). It is also busy with the preparations for the approaching centenary.

The Economer's Commission has implemented article 197 of the Constitutions and set down the decision of the Superior Council defining the limits of competence for Provincials and their Councils. (The letter of Father Pilla, Economer General, informing the various Provincials of this matter is printed in the Instructions & Norms section of this issue, page 39).

The Regional Councillors have remained at the Generalate since their recent visits abroad — with the exception of Father Vecchi, who has been engaged in the extraordinary visitation of Venezuela. Father Fiora, Father Mélida and Father Ter Schure took part in a meeting at Cologne last December to discuss what could be done for young migrants in Germany.

In March Fr. Ter Schure was present at a meeting at Brussels of all the French-speaking Provincial Councils. The agenda included Salesian formation, the Salesian Family, and new plans for the Salesian Bulletin.

The Superior Council spent 23 February as a day of recollection and was addressed by Cardinal Garrone. He spoke tellingly on "What God expects of the Religious Superior today". An interesting discussion followed.

3. The programma for the next few months

From mid-March to the end of June the Regionals will be on visitations, meeting will multiply, and a busy time will be had by all. The Provincials' conventions in Argentina and Rome have already been mentioned above. Most of the Superiors will have lengthy itineraries. The Rector Major will be in Latin America 16 April to 17 May. He will spend a few days in Ecuador (which he has often seen from the air but never yet visited); then he will go to Argentina for the Provincials' convention. Finally there will be brief stays in Uruguay, Brazil and Peru.

Father Scrivo (Vicar General), Father Pilla (Economer General), Father Ter Schure (Regional Councillor) and Father Rokita (Delegate for Poland) will visit Poland 1-5 May to take part in the 75th anniversary of Salesian work in that country.

Father Viganò, Father Dho and Father Raineri will travel together to meet the Rectors of practically all the Provinces of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — in three-day sessions (a day for each Commission). They will also meet the particular Salesians responsible for the work of their respective Commissions.

The Economer General, Father Pilla, has arranged meetings with Provincial Economers of various places.

The Regionals will continue their canonical visitations: Father Fiora, Venice; Father Mélida, Madrid; Father Ter Schure, North Germany and Holland; Father Williams, San Francisco and Japan; Father Henriquez, The Antilles and Chile; and there will be many other meetings in the various Regions. Finally, the Provincial and Regional Conventions for the Salesian Brothers' World Congress will take place nearly everywhere.

V. DOCUMENTS

1. The new Salesian Necrology

On 5 January 1974 the Rector Major forwarded to all Provincials the following letter regarding the new Necrology.

V. Rev. and dear Father Provincial,

The new Salesian Necrology will be posted to you within the next few days — a copy for each community. The following characteristics are worthy of note:

a) It unites the two volumes at present in use.

b) It includes deceased confrères up to the list given in the Oct.-Dec. Acts (no. 272).

c) It follows a new system in the daily distribution of the anniversaries; one should read the instructions at the beginning of the book.

In introducing the new Necrology I cannot better the words of Const. 66 & 122: « We keep alive the memory of all confrères now asleep in the peace of Christ. For the love of our Lord they have worked in the Society, some even to the point of martyrdom. We pray for them. Their remembrance is for us a stimulus to continue faithfully in our mission. » « The memory of our departed brothers unites in 'love that never ends' those who are still pilgrims on earth with those who already rest in Christ ».

Reg. 41 gives this practical directive: « Let each community remember in a special way all deceased members as a sign of their brotherly communion with them. To do this, let each Provincial establish an opportune moment for the daily reading of the Necrology as a community practice ».

The reading as a community practice is a prescription; all the Provincial has to do is to settle on the best time to carry it out.

Please do your best to see that every community follows Reg. 41. If you judge it better to reduce the daily list, you could instruct your Rectors to include only the first names (with an asterisk) and the deceased members of one or more « Regions » that for some reason or other may be linked more closely with your Province.

I hope the reading will not be a mere formal observance. I repeat here what I said in a concelebration for our deceased confrères during the Special General Chapter: « A Society or a family should not ignore its history and the men who made that history; this would be tantamount to breaking the bonds of union; it would be cutting off the channels that have through the years supplied all those true values, benefits and traditions that are the very purpose of the family's existence and the nourishment of its vitality and activity ».

You and your Province are in my daily Masses; please remember me too, and the many needs of our Family.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

LOUIS RICCERI
Rector Major

2. Message of the Rector Major on the centenary of the Constitutions

On 31 January, feast of St. John Bosco, the Rector Major addressed all Salesians from the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Turin. His message concerned the centenary of the approbation of the Salesian Constitutions and was broadcast by the Vatican Radio in ten languages. The text is as follows.

Today is the feast of our Father and Founder and I wish to send my affectionate and fraternal greetings to every part of the world where there is a son of Don Bosco working for the Kingdom of God.

1974 is already singularly blessed in that all local churches are celebrating the Holy Year, year of reconciliation, year of grace.

And this year involves us Salesians yet further, for we celebrate the centenary of our Constitutions and all that this implied for our holy Founder.

Our Constitutions have now been re-written in the light of Vatican II and in absolute fidelity to Don Bosco's spirit. They are not a mere code of laws, but a refreshing and sure guide for us all in the joyous living of our total consecration to God as we follow the example and spirit of our Founder and engage in the increasingly urgent work for the young.

Dear confrères, let us live our new Constitutions with generosity and love; in this we shall prove our practical fidelity to Don Bosco and to our vocation in the Church.

I send you this message with affection from Our Lady's Basilica in Valdocco and I know our Founder's blessing goes with it.

VI. FROM THE PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTERS

The Generalate has now received newsletters from 62 Provinces: which means that six out of every seven Provinces have made a start on them. May we humbly offer the following suggestions that could be of some use to those responsible.

— *Nature and function of the newsletters.* First and foremost they are meant to carry news. On occasions some newsletters contain treatises or documents. This would hardly seem within the scope of a newsletter ,and if such matters are to be included, it would seem better to insert them in an appendix, or separately from the newsletter proper.

— *What sort of news?* Some newsletters give ample space to minutiae regarding communities and confrères; others are a compendium of activities and decisions of the Provincial and his Council or the various Delegates. Perhaps a judicious mixture of the two is desirable — and this in fact is the method followed by most newsletters.

— *Printed or duplicated?* The printed newsletter certainly looks better. Most Provinces, however, use a duplicator, and this would seem the better course, since costs are lower, preparation is quicker, and the number of pages presents no problem. The newsletter is not produced for libraries or archives, but for the speedy circulation of news among friends, and can unobtrusively find a final resting-place in the waste-paper basket.

— *How important is the newsletter?* The Provincial of Cordoba, Argentina, has this to say in the first Provincial issue: « It is not likely to solve the problems of the Province; but it is another constructive service offered to the confrères ».

1. Province of Léon: School for parents

The Salesians in Vigo, Spain, offer this idea to confrères for a try-out in other houses of the Province — a « School for Parents of the Pupils ». (Newsletter, February 1974, pp. 18-19).

In this « School for Parents » we parents and educators are both masters and pupils. Our « school » has the following aims.

a) It must be active. The parents do not « come » to school — they themselves constitute the school, being both teachers and taught. Under the guidance of a chairman they will discuss their experiences with one another.

b) The school is not meant to prepare parents for the future but for the present, for the problems they have here and now.

c) We hope to find better solutions to the difficulties that face all parents and educators in such matters as:

— personality development (sex education, intellectual development, emotional maturity);

— personal problems (shyness, anxieties, inability to concentrate);

— social relations (handicapped, aggressive or maladjusted children);

— pedagogical problems (active participation, remedial teaching, home-work, teaching techniques);

— specific learning problems (problems with reading, writing, religion);

— family problems (jealousy; over-protective, possessive or weak parents);

— environmental problems (pocket-money; films; boy-girl relationships);

— problems of public administration.

d) The « school » organization is basically that of group-learning, each group numbering about twenty. It is highly desirable that husband and wife be together in the same group.

e) Group discussions should be guided by a chairman.

f) Practical techniques should be employed, such as case-analyses, open and guided discussions, audio-visual aids, etc.

g) The « school » envisages nine meetings each scholastic year.

2. Province of Bogotá: Retreats « that involve »

The studentate of Bogotá has experimented in a new kind of Retreat that involves the participants in a very special way. A feature of this Retreat is that, in addition to prayer and personal reflection, there is an exchange of practical experiences. We print two excerpts from the lengthy report. (Those interested in Retreat problems may find the whole article in the Newsletter of January 1974, pp. 3-10).

a) *How we present Christ.* Wednesday: film « The Gospel according to Matthew », with written commentary. A study of Pasolini's Christ and the various ways of presenting him. Thursday: examination of how we present Christ in our sermons. True, we announce Christ, but what sort of Christ? Is it a question of mere words, or testimony? A few typical remarks were: « I preach a Christ based on the Liturgy of the Word: Christ, the way, the truth and the light of the world ». « My Christ is a doctrinal Christ as presented in theology books; I should preach a Christ more vital and practical ». « Christ used language all could understand. The humble and the lowly were more learned than the erudite ». « I present a Christ who is at the service of others: a Christ of the Gospels, not of institutionalism ». « There are two ways of preaching: word and example ». « Assuredly we have to preach Christ; but at times I am prevented by the structure of the community ». « I announce a Christ who encourages, urges, is dynamic, non-paternalistic, a Christ who expects much from us ». « It is in the poor that I have found Christ most; and I try to communicate this Christ to my neighbour ». « In Ariari we have preached Christ as saviour, liberator, teaching men how to work, how to direct ».

b) *Assessing the Retreat.* Last day: full assembly and assessment of the Retreat. Some remarks: « I was very impressed with the experiences of my confrères and the contributions they made to the Retreat ». « I think it very important to tackle one single subject together and share the wealth of experience others possess ». « I believe this kind of Retreat is what we need for our anxieties. Enquiry, authenticity, communication, these are necessities for us ».

3. Province of Thailand: Why build the aspirantate at Nong Hin?

Faced with the question of where to build the Salesian aspirantate, the committee responsible, after considerable discussion, has suggested Nong Hin. The practical reasons for the choice are quite interesting. (Newsletter, March 1974, p. 6).

The committee has proposed Nong Hin as the site for our future aspirantate. There are 700 Christians in this locality; and living in a healthy parochial community will help the aspirants in their growing maturity.

The Salesian house will be about a hundred metres from the parish church, and the aspirants will be able to join in the parish liturgical functions.

They will be able to take an active part in the organization of the parish if the parish priest judges it fitting — and he has already expressed his willingness.

As agreed in the Provincial Chapter, the aspirants will attend the Salesian school of Banpong, travelling to and fro daily in the aspirantate bus, a thirty-minute journey.

The school at Banpong ranges from elementary to pre-university standard, comprises day-pupils and boarders, and has an oratory and parish attached, with various other local works. All this will give the aspirants a good idea of the conditions in which the young of today live and will widen their experiences of life.

The daily travelling to and from the school will help the boys understand the difficulties of so many students and workers who do the same each day and have to put up with the same daily bother and loss of time. To share the discomforts and fatigues of one's brothers is a positive training indeed.

The committee has presented the project in detail so that the confrères may offer suggestions and advice. The latter will be examined, a definite scheme decided on and submitted to the architect, so that he may draw up the final plans.

4. Province of Barcelona: Mass for the pupils free and enjoyable

In an open letter to Salesian confrères the Rector of the college in Mataró, Spain, Father Manuel Puyol offers his views and experience regarding the "College Mass".

The word « college » has implications of totalitarianism; it has good and bad overtones; it means something imposed by society. The Mass has nothing in common with all this; yet I have managed to draw the two poles together: College Mass. It is not a question of custom or tradition. Don Bosco's pedagogy and our loyalty require that our educative communities have their eucharistic celebrations. The query arises regarding when, how and why. Some want to defend evangelization to the bitter end; others persist in a dominating sacramental approach as in the good old days.

It is essential to read and ponder the documents of the Council and the Special General Chapter.

The Council speaks of freedom and charity and the right children have to draw inspiration from liturgical functions. I believe these can only go together if we offer our pupils (with charity and loyalty, since it is their right) freedom in the matter of the daily celebration of the educative community.

The Special General Chapter quotes Don Bosco: « Encourage the pupils; give them every opportunity; make it easy for them to have the use of the Sacraments; never force them; arrange things so that young people feel spontaneously drawn to them and use them voluntarily, with pleasure and with good results ». These words make it clear that for Don Bosco preaching the Gospel and the sacramental life went hand in hand (even though in theory the sacramental life presumes evangelization).

I believe that a Salesian house should offer its pupils a daily liturgical service and invite them to be present freely, happily and responsibly. I suggest that every day one of the classes be responsible for preparing the function. It is also most desirable to have a different priest celebrating each day. If there are variations in the number of pupils who attend, this shows there is no pressure on them.

All this means more work for us, more enthusiasm, more creativity — it also means we are on the right track.

5. News in brief

Two Shuar Indians, John Bosco Chau Mazuka and Richard Tan-gamashi are attending university. The former received his early education at the « Colegio Pedro Vicente Maldonado », Riobamba, and is doing medicine at the Central University. The latter studied at the Don Bosco Primary Teachers College and is reading Law at the Catholic University of Quito. (Newsletter, Ecuador, January 1974, p. 6).

Novices meet. All the novices of Caracas (Jesuits, de la Salle, Capuchins and Salesians) foregathered at the Salesian House of San Antonio de los Altos on 9 January last. This was their first get-together and other such meetings are planned. A simple enough affair, perhaps — but still very unusual. (Newsletter, Venezuela, February 1974, p. 13).

“Salesian Missionary Day”. This is a special pamphlet issued by the Southern Province, Naples, Italy. It contains general considerations, a celebration of the Word, a Mass commentary, and a detailed proposal for a « missionary congress » for the boys. A very practical publication.

VII. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

1. Need of unity for an effective pastoral action

Every year before Lent the Holy Father receives in audience those priests in Rome who are engaged in the diocesan apostolate. This year, on 25 February, Pope Paul spoke to them on unity and pastoral action, and invited them to constitute a more united ecclesial communion in order that their pastoral action might be the more effective.

(Translation taken from the English edition of the « Osservatore Romano » dated 7 March 1974).

Let us answer at once, with our intention. The subject is this: union and action. Yes, union and action. As you see, it does not say anything new and original. Is this not the ordinary, traditional programme of the ministerial priesthood? Yes. But pay attention to the intensity we intend to infuse into this reminder. This intensity is derived from the urgency of charity (cf. II Cor. 5, 14), specifically necessary today, both for the great theological meditation that the Council unfolded before us, speaking of the ministry of the Church and our salvation; and for the critical, ambivalent, negative and positive situation of mankind in our days. The ministry of the Church cannot be carried out in the relatively uniform and tranquil way of the past. It must be intense, we repeat, if it wishes to be effective, assiduous, strong, sincere, full of that pastoral sense that Jesus gives us with the immanent spirit of sacrifice: "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep" (Jn. 10, 11).

Union and action, under the impulse of a twofold concurrent force, the grace of the Lord, which we must always cherish jealously and confidently (cf Phil. 1, 20), and our poor, weak, but watchful and new goodwill.

After dilating somewhat on unity, the Holy Father reviewed the

various sections of the diocese, referring to them as the "unifying network of the ecclesial community". He then continued:

Union. But mention of this foundation of ecclesial life, as we all know, calls for a virtue that is not appreciated by everyone today as much as it ought to be. It is and remains in the constitutional canons of the following and imitation of Christ, and of the indispensable stability, historical and social, of the Mystical Body, which is the Church, during its pilgrimage in time. We mean obedience, to the practice of which, stamped with the spirit of the Council and the Gospel, and justified, in the exercise of the authority demanding it, by the spirit of service, not of domination, we must all return, humbly and faithfully, if we really love real Christian life. If we love the possibility of aiming at that supreme aspiration which Christ bequeathed to his disciples before taking leave of them with his passion and death: "that they may all be one" (Jn 17, 21). And let this mere reference take the place of the praise, at once liberating and guiding, that this virtue would require of us all.

And with union, action!...

That action is one of the fundamental chapters in the duties of the Clergy at the present time, is well known to everyone. The recent diocesan Meeting on the responsibility of Christians with regard to the promotion of justice and charity has stressed the necessity that the pastoral ministry should integrate its activity in the field of worship and culture with new forms of charitable and social assistance. We see their urgency and we appreciate their efforts. Charity must be solicitous and inventive. Justice must be courageous and conclusive. There are still many needs, and we, who wish to see Christ in our suffering neighbour, waiting for us to recognize and serve Him, must multiply our dedication and our ability in order not to fail in the current demand for our generous and real concern.

But just for the sake of this human and Christian purpose, allow us to make some remarks, which we consider important and topical at this time .

Primacy of spiritual

Here is the first observation. Let our charitable and social concern not be at the expense of our specifically religious activity,

both in our personal life and in community life. Let the announcement of the Word of God and the ministry of Grace always prevail, both for the reality of their religious values and to avoid the danger that their lack will dry up the real source and the indefatigable moral energy of which Christian social activity cannot be deprived.

Here is the second observation. This "primacy of the spiritual" is necessary for us to remain within the limits of our religious competence (remember: give to God, give to Caesar, cf. Mt. 22, 21; Rom. 13,7), out of respect for the constituted temporal order, to which we owe support and collaboration, but which we must not claim to replace, when our neighbour's need does not call for our Samaritan help. Nor must we allow religious activity to be used only for temporal purpose, or goals of selfishness.

Authentic fidelity

Allow us to continue, and to present to your priestly conscience a double recommendation, to the full observance of which your authentic fidelity to Christ and to the Church is, in some cases, bound today. Be really detached from money and from the economic advantages derived from religious activity by skilful and improper manoeuvres to your advantage. Be severe with yourselves in order to keep your moral life transparently pure, both inwardly and externally (cf. Mt. 5, 28). Do not succumb, in your behaviour, to the inconsistent and perhaps fatal permissiveness, of which, unfortunately, there is so much talk today.

And then we should speak of the spirit of strife, which has become almost an epidemic. Here is an antiecclesial form of acid with preconceived criticism, now conventional, favouring a destroying method. It does not aim either at truth or at charity. How can a positive, harmonious Christian action develop from an ideological pluralism which smacks of excessive query and therefore disintegrates the cohesion of the communion of faith, love, service and evangelical unity? Let us not disperse the forces of the Church. Let us not take as the model of renewed Christianity the pseudoliberating principles which have tried to tear the "seamless tunic of Christ", and which a difficult ecumenism is trying to recompose. "Veritas liberabit vos" (*Jn* 8, 22), the Lord says. The truth, such as the Church preserves

it and teaches it, not the "profanae vocum novitates", the current opinions, often of hostile origin, not at all liberating, which some people obey in a slavish way rather than the real faith.

We would like the Holy Year, into the light of which we have now entered, to help us to overcome this psychological and moral situation, which saddens the Church. We ask God to bestow upon us that renewal and reconciliation which is so desirable also in connection with this painful phenomenon. We trust in the Lord, who will give back the joy of a true, brotherly and united sense to our ecclesial community. And we are confident, so confident, that you will all help us in this really prophetic purpose.

In this way, union and action, that is the Gospel living and operating in the Church of God, would exult and be encouraged in our Church of Rome in the awareness of its mission of service. We could be an example for the whole Catholic Church, for those Christian Churches and communities which, still separated from us, are on the threshold of Christ's one fold, and for the contemporary world which, whether it knows it or not, is awaiting this guiding fatherly direction from us.

2. Let us learn how to speak to God

There are some who are content to pray in the same few formulas repeated again again. There are others who maintain that modern man should remain without personal prayer. But the genuine man must imitate the Good Thief's prayer that won for him salvation. Pope Paul developed these thoughts in a general audience given on 23 January 1974. (Translation taken from the English edition of the "Osservatore Romano" dated 31 January 1974).

The religious meeting of humanity with Christ, with the Word of God made man concerns us personally. It is this aspect of the mystery celebrated that claims our attention now. We must dispose ourselves to talk to Christ, and through Him to God; to that Christ-God who came such a long way to meet us: He came down from heaven. In short, we must learn to speak with the Lord, to speak to the Lord. A direct, sincere talk on our part with the Lord constitutes a kind of special prayer: personal prayer.

The question arises: are we capable of personal prayer? We could certainly say "yes", if by personal prayer we mean the recitation of some formulas of common prayers, which we all know and which we like to think, give voice to our customary religious observance. Who does not recite an "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary"? And do not many of you recite some prayers at the beginning and end of every day? Moreover, many good persons say the Rosary every day, and other usual prayers, which have become part of the day's programme for the good Christian.

Habit of daily prayer

So far, so good; very good. Let us preserve these elementary religious acts, as a daily expression of our Christian character, of our faithfulness to the Christian concept of life; as a sign of our religious tribute to God, whereby we observe the first, most important and essential religious and moral commandment, that of love; as an invocation for divine help, without which our every speculative and practical virtue is insufficient; finally as a solace for the daily toil in the accomplishment of our duties. It is a good thing, we repeat, to maintain scrupulously and earnestly the habit of reciting daily prayers, with childlike simplicity, so that this will serve as a hallmark and characteristic of every stage of our life.

But are these few formulas, always alike, and often more vocal than spiritual, sufficient to give our life its deep religious significance? Its authentic and actual spiritual stamp? Its original and personal conversation with the divine mystery? Anyone who professes his religious sentiments sincerely becomes aware that this short conventional prayer lacks something: it easily becomes a purely exterior act; an appointment between two absent persons: God and the heart.

Modern or authentic

What are we to say about those who even fail to remember this appointment, and become accustomed to forgetting it? In fact, on becoming "mature", as is said, they no longer feel the duty or the need of it. A simple enquiry on the religious habits of the people of our time would yield sad findings on the complete, or almost complete,

absence of personal prayer in a very large number of persons, now alien to, and alienated from, all expression of inner religious feeling: lifeless souls, silent lips, hearts closed to Love, to Faith, to the solicitations or urgings of the spirit! And how many of them there are! There are some who maintain that modern man is like that and should remain like that: without personal prayer. Here there is a confusion of terms, between modern man and authentic man. The authentic man, the true man, and let us add, the really modern man, aware of the value of his advanced cultural, operative and social experience, remains radically religious, essentially orientated towards the quest for God, towards a relationship with Him, and therefore eager for, and capable of, personal prayer.

The Prayer-spark

Let us leave aside the great subject of religious piety, of devotion. We will merely raise the problem, so important in the pastoral and psychological field, so delicate in the pedagogical and spiritual one: how is it possible to restore to the minds of people who are secular, areligious, even atheistic, the impulse, the capacity, the correct expression of a word addressed to God, to Christ, to Our Lady? We leave it to you, experts and pastors, to study and answer this problem, merely pointing out how relevant it is today, particularly with regard to the religious and moral renewal that the Holy Year is intended to produce in people, as well as in those already educated to the spiritual life. We affirm, once more, that it must not be an insoluble problem, as is proved by a certain inner, nay more, religious feeling that is met with among the more serious and thoughtful strata of youth.

Allow us rather to refer to the minimal and momentary expression of the conversation of our soul with God, the prayer-spark, the invocation, almost explosive, which can burst forth from a soul; an ejaculation, pious souls will say. An invocation, a groan, a cry can spring even from a soul not trained to religious conversation. This kind of prayer is a most interesting phenomenon in the chronicles of the kingdom of God, beginning with the socalled "good thief", who with one invocation wrings his salvation from Christ, crucified with him and dying: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy

kingdom. And Jesus said to him, I promise thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise!" (*Lk.* 23, 42-43); and concluding with the extraordinary book of André Frossard, who is still alive, and who gives it the title: "Dieu existe, je l'ai rencontré" (Favard, 1969).

Yes, it must be remembered that at the appointment, of which we were speaking, two are involved; we, lazy, perhaps, slow and restive interlocutors, and God, who precedes and loves, and goes in search of us first (*1 Jn.* 4, 10), and strikes us with his mysterious ray.

A surprise: grace is just that! God grant that, in the intention to establish with him our regular and filial, but often slow and reluctant conversation, this surprise, that of his operating presence, may be in store for us too.

3. How to live the faith in a consumer's society

For some years the Canadian bishops have been conducting a campaign to bring the Gospel to the people of Quebec through radio and television. This year's theme was "How to live the faith in a consumer's society". On 10 March last the Holy Father broadcast an address describing and praising the scheme. Some of the main thoughts are synopsised here.

The Pope explained how the plan over the years was an "Education in the Faith" for adults; how it was conducted through the media of radio and television; how it was intensified during Lent; and how a theme was chosen each year that was in close touch with modern life and its problems. He congratulated the bishops on the choice of this year's theme, "How to live the faith in a consumer's society"; he expressed his pleasure with the whole campaign and offered his congratulations on this "Operation Workshop".

He went on to say that Faith today had so many different, aggressive and seductive ideologies to combat. The modern Christian must be able to distinguish truth from error in the mentality about him. The bishops, use of radio and television was an excellent means to explain correct Christian principles and teach man how to conduct himself in a materialistic world.

In themselves, the conquering of nature, using its riches, creating

work and profit, bringing comforts to mankind, were laudable things. But there were many side-issues and many problems involved, such as faith and wealth; Christian life and over-abundance of creature comforts; working for the common good and working for selfish motives; legal and material justice, and Christian and social justice, etc.

A genuine civilization cannot be based on the triumph of economic life, on mere abundance and well-being that obscure much more superior and necessary things. Man does not live by bread alone. There is no question of contesting the utility of modern economic advancements; but to give them absolute priority and self-sufficiency is wrong. Man has a spiritual hunger that must be satisfied.

From a Christian point of view the good use of the goods is far more important than the goods themselves. Man was built for much higher things than consumer goods: he has a scale of values far superior. Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice. The Gospel speaks of moderation, renunciation and the spirit of poverty. A Christian should be characterized by sobriety, simplicity and modesty in his style of life. He must think of others and practise Christian solidarity; for charity has no place for selfishness. There is more joy in giving than in receiving.

4. A new social outlook

On 3 February last, the Holy Father addressed the people in St. Peter's Square as usual before reciting the Angelus. He referred to the "austerity" conditions that are affecting so many countries these days. (Translation taken from English edition of the Osservatore Romano dated 14 February 1974).

Those who are in the habit of consulting the clock of historical times, in which the life of the world takes place, realize that the hour of prosperity in which we were almost accustomed to hope and enjoy, has changed. The outlook is not comforting for those who were getting used to a programme of life based on creature comforts, ease and pleasure. Not that the age of progress is over; on the contrary, it promises new developments. What has gone is an illusory conception of modern existence, easy-going, happy, centred upon riches

possessed or about to be possessed, exempt from toil, patience, effort, thrift, and above all from pursuit of, and esteem for, interior and spiritual goods.

We have separated from the ideal of freedom, always the primary one, the complementary and intrinsic and no less fundamental ideal of duty.

We have made social life an endless, loveless battlefield. We have become proud and sometimes fierce in demanding personal and particular rights; and we have so often forgotten selfless interest in the common good, for the unity and strength of a true society, which can be defined a People. We have too often attacked our historical and civil institutions in order to free ourselves from troublesome obedience to the law, authority and civil order.

And now delinquency, dreadfully widespread, as competent persons, affirm, seems to have become an organized and profitable art, though, fortunately, still risky and ignoble. Moral licence is presented as an elegant note of modern education. Contestation, a proof of impartial courage. But—who shall guard our keepers?

How can a true and good democratic society persist and hold out, if it is corroded by a systematic absence of absolute principles? If it is weakened by a sterilizing secularization of imperative moral principles?

The young are beginning to become aware of a certain deficiency in the too empirical system of our social philosophy. Some rage. Others reflect.

This interval of austerity — not a short one — may perhaps encourage thought, and prompt, a more united and more positive resolution for concord, industry and social betterment. Our religious spirit, which blends sacrifice with love, should help us to contribute to the effort of a good renewal.

May prayer sustain this confidence of ours.

5. Sport can teach us human virtues

On 30 January last, in an audience granted to a football team, the Holy Father made the following simple but profound observations. They are most suitable for us Salesians and our pupils.

Our pastoral ministry often brings us into contact with crowds of pilgrims in every walk of modern life, and we often have happy experiences such as today; this meeting with athletes and managers of various denominations and specializations brings us much joy. I am delighted that you have shown your affection by your presence here.

We would like to stress the dignity of your profession. Sport is so much a part of leisure time, and is therefore of great importance, especially nowadays. It is also a training in social virtues and respect.

In 1952 our predecessor, Pius XII, said that when the religious and moral content of sport is respected it acts as an element of balance, harmony and perfection and is a genuine aid to man in the fulfilment of his other duties.

Sport is a valuable means for elevating man aesthetically, ethically and religiously. Rightly used, it is a fine training-ground in the human virtues — and these, after all, are the basis of the Christian virtues.

May God bless you and all your dear ones.

VIII. NECROLOGIO

Father Charles van Averbeke

* Schaerbeek (Brabant, Belgium) 2-12-1902; † Tournai (Belgium) 10-8-1973; 70 years of age; 42 prof.; 34 priest.

He had a childlike and warmly human personality, coupled with strong priestly virtues as instanced by his edifying piety and zeal in his work for souls. Many leaned on him during their trials and received from him gentle but firm advice regarding their duties.

Father Julius Babirák

* Ráckeve (Hungary) 30-11-1889; † Pannonhalma (Hungary) 12-1-1974; 84 years of age; 59 prof.; 47 priest.

His priesthood was marked by attachment to the Church, Eucharistic faith, and loyalty to the Holy Father. His thoughts were always centred on heaven. He died in bed, assisting at Mass in the infirmary of the home where he had to pass his last few years.

Father Albert Barbanti

* Pisignano, Cervia (Ravenna, Italy) 15-12-1913; † Modena (Italy) 10-4-1973; 59 years of age; 43 prof.; 33 priest.

He accepted his vocation with eagerness and was enthusiastic for the apostolate of the class-room. He obtained his degree and taught in various houses and also at the University of Modena for some years. His health was poor and he passed the last twenty years of his life confined to his room and in various hospitals, suffering, studying and praying, accepting the fact that his apostolate was to help the young through his sufferings.

Brother Emidius Berni

* S. Romano-Borgo, Mozzano (Lucca, Italy) 15-3-1919; † Maggiano (Lucca, Italy) 12-7-1973; 54 years of age; 26 prof.

He had an open and expansive personality. He worked as sacristan in many Salesian houses, and had a true sense of artistry in decorating the church. He accepted with faith the painful illness that was soon to cause his death.

Bishop Joseph Borgatti

* Buenos Aires (Argentina) 15-9-1891; † Viedma (Argentina) 26-10-1973; 82 years of age; 65 prof.; 57 priest; 6 rector; 20 bishop (Viedma).

He was born into a deeply religious family and did his secondary studies at Bernal under the aegis of that fine educator of Salesians, Mgr. Esandi. Ordained in 1914, he was noted for his goodness and patience, and for his excellent qualities of organization and government. When the diocese of Viedma was erected Mgr. Esandi, its first bishop, chose him as his vicar-general. His human and priestly qualities, his zeal and kindness made him the obvious choice for succeeding Bishop Esandi. He built a seminary and bishop's residence; he had the remains of Cardinal Cagliero brought to Viedma; and he introduced the Cause of the young Indian, the Ven. Zephyrinus Namuncurà. He was a man of order and method and used carefully note down all his plans. For the 26 October he had written: "3.30 p.m., Bishops' meeting". Perhaps this was the one and only time he missed an appointment. A few minutes before the meeting God called him with his rosary in his hands.

Father Mario Borsani

* Castellanza (Varese, Italy) 11-9-1912; † Maroggia (C. Ticino, Switzerland) 27-11-1973; 61 of age; 36 prof.; 28 priest.

Originally a skilled worker in the textile industry, he entered Ivrea in 1935 as an aspirant for the missions, and left for Thailand in 1936, where he was ordained and worked in various capacities. The illness that was to cause his death brought him back to Italy; but the missions were always uppermost in his thoughts, and he was constantly working out new plans to help them.

Father Francis Both

* Györ (Hungary) 19-12-1921; † Turin in hospital (from Folizzo) 21-1-1974; 52 years of age; 35 prof.; 25 priest.

Despite a wearing illness he gave all his priestly energies to the young both in and out of the house, and died in harness. A few days before he had written the following, which seems a presentiment of his death: "The Lord may call me at any moment. Help me, my confrères. I am happy to die a Salesian and a priest".

Brother Lawrence Brogliato

* Vicenza (Italy) 12-2-1918; † Verona (Italy) 26-8-1973; 55 years of age; 38 prof.

Much of his life was spent at the house where he was a pupil in the thirties and where his vocation was developed. He left us his heritage: loyalty to Don Bosco (whom he loved in the Congregation, in his confrères and in the young and past pupils); love of work (which he generously put at the service of all); zeal in helping the missions in all sorts of original ways; and an unflagging apostolate with the past pupils.

Father Felix Caon

* Arsego, S. Giorgio delle Pertiche (Padua, Italy) 5-11-1891; † Albarè di Costonero (Verona, Italy) 5-10-1973; 81 years of age; 52 prof.; 46 priest.

A simple man, patient in his continual suffering, and always able to smile. He had an expansive faith that always brought comfort to the oppressed, and a deep interest in vocations, for which he offered his prayers and sufferings. He was untiring in his zeal for the Co-operators. His words showed the warmth of his human, Christian, priestly and Salesian soul. His constant prayer to Don Bosco was to be allowed die in a Salesian house, and his prayer was answered.

Father Bronislaus Chodanionek

* Premiany (Poland) 17-11-1910; † Kisziniew, Moldavia (Russia) 25-11-1973; 63 years of age; 40 prof.; 32 priest.

He worked many years in the parish apostolate and also taught in the schools in Lithuania. He moved to the capital of Moldavia in 1949 and remained there the rest of his life, the only priest for 4,000,000 souls, for whom he gave all his priestly energies. He was always deeply attached to the Congregation and missed the community life he was deprived of. He was called by God on the Feast of Christ the King.

Father Rocco Cillis

* Pietragalla (Potenza, Italy) 14-3-1911; † Naples (Italy) 5-11-1973; 62 years of age; 41 prof.; 33 priest.

His Salesian life was spent in Colombia, and he was an outstanding example of missionary zeal, untiring work and genuine kindness.

Father John Colombo

* Sacconago di Busto Arsizio (Varese, Italy) 13-2-1904; † Milan (Italy) 1-11-1973; 69 years of age; 45 prof.; 36 priest.

He spent most of his Salesian life in the Middle East, where, in his optimistic and calm way, he helped Italian migrants. Gradually becoming blind, he left his missionary work and gave himself to the ministry of the confessional. His sufferings strengthened and purified this apostolate, giving it a genuine "Paschal" quality.

Father Wenceslaus Dolezal

* Ostrava (Czechoslovakia) 23-7-1907; † S. Salvador (El Salvador, C.A.) 13-11-1973; 66 year of age; 46 prof.; 36 priest; 7 rector.

He had a great spirit of mortification, a total dedication to work, welcomed all with brotherly affection, and showed calmness and fortitude in suffering. He was Master of Novices and Rector of the theologate. In the eve of his life he gave his solicitous care to the ministry of the confessional in various Salesian communities.

Father Maximilian Francoy

* Arascués (Huesca, Spain) 29-10-1904; † Madrid (Spain) 20-1-1974; 69 years of age; 49 prof.; 43 priest; 20 rector; 6 provincial.

He served the Congregation with all the force of a vital and genuine personality and never swerved from his Salesian principles. His poverty was strict, he eschewed worldly vanities, was a model of obedience, was always present among the young after the manner of Don Bosco, and in the classroom was always clear and orderly. He made a deep study of Don Bosco, was convinced of his principles, and defended these values with firmness and sacrifice.

Father Isidore Gabino Fueyo

* Gijón (Oviedo, Spain) 15-5-1902; † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 4-12-1973; 71 years of age; 52 prof.; 44 priest; 6 rector.

He was a true son of Don Bosco and dedicated most of his fiftytwo years of priesthood to educating and assisting the pupils in our boarding schools, joining in their games and living their life. When illness rendered him less active, he still attended the recreations with the vigilance of a good Salesian assistant. This was much appreciated by the boys and they were generous in their gratitude.

Father Peter Garbin

* Saletto di Montagnana (Padua, Italy) 7-3-1907; † Forlì (Italy) 9-10-1973; 67 years of age; 46 prof.; 39 priest; 12 rector.

He came to the Salesians from the seminary, fascinated by reading the life of Don Bosco. At Forlì his priestly zeal showed forth in the founding of the Salesian work in that city and directing it for many years. He earned the affection and esteem of the whole population, especially during the difficult years of the Second World War. After being parish priest in various places, he finally returned to Forlì, near the church he had worked so hard to rebuild after its destruction during the war.

Father Philip Garegnani

* Somma Lombardo (Varese, Italy) 24-8-1903; † there 21-9-1973; 70 years of age; 41 prof.; 33 priest.

He spent his Salesian life in the Middle East and was of great help to the children of the Italians abroad there. He had a simple nature, a ready smile, and was ever faithful to his duties as teacher and educator. His last years were passed at Vendrogno, Como, where he kept up a faithful correspondence with past pupils, friends, and distinguished persons he had known on the mission, continuing his effective apostolic work to the end.

Father Mario Ghiglieno

* Saluzzo (Cuneo, Italy) 18-6-1885; † Cuneo 3-1-1974; 88 years of age; 48 prof.; 44 priest.

He was highly intelligent, gaining a degree with first class honours in chemistry and helping for many years on the University Faculty. His career then took him into industry as a technician. He helped his blind and paralysed mother with wonderful care till she died; then he left everything to enter the Congregation at thirty-eight years of age. He was recognized as a teacher noted for precision and enthusiasm, and was highly esteemed by all. As a Salesian and priest he was zealous, understanding and full of fine human qualities.

Brother Constantine Gil

* Fancewicze (Poland) 1-10-1897; † Lodz (in hospital), Poland, 20-10-1973; 76 years of age; 43 prof.

He entered the Congregation at thirty years of age, a qualified technician and mechanic, and worked in many houses in a great spirit of sacrifice, distinguished by his sense of responsibility and conscientiousness. He was humble and simple, without pretensions, and readily available for all who needed him. He was an exemplary worker, even when his health began to fail, and died cheerfully, saying he was returning to his Father's house.

Father Francis Godard

* Grezolles (Loire, France) 7-5-1917; † Geneva (Switzerland) 15-11-1973; 56 years of age; 36 prof.; 12 priest.

He suffered thirty years of illness, but those who lived with him saw his unshakeable faith as a beacon of encouragement and a clear sign of God's action among men. He restored to many the hope and courage to live; and having lived so close to the suffering Christ, he met death well prepared.

Brother Benjamin Gubitta

* Vallenoncello (Pordenone, Italy) 29-5-1914; † Legnago (Verona, Italy) 27-2-1973; 58 years of age; 39 prof.

His talents and spirit of work found excellent expression in his job of cooking. He was open and serene, with a welcoming smile and a ready wit and was ever available and ready to help all. His free time

was spent in preparing stage presentations — he was a talented and much appreciated actor.

Father Voitecho (Adalbert) Krzyzanowski

* Nienadowa (Poland) 17-10-1903; † Sokółw Podlaski (Poland) 11-7-1973; 69 years of age; 49 prof.; 39 priest.

Much of his life was spent in our aspirantates teaching Latin. He was also parish priest and chaplain to the Sisters. Though in indifferent health he never refused any task. As a teacher he was demanding but always very patient and kind. He was quick to forgive his pupil's faults and gave ready encouragment to the lesser gifted boys. His pupils loved him and, because of his fatherliness, used call him "Grand-daddy".

Father Attilius Lazzaroni

* La Spezia (Italy) 2-4-1886; † Loreto (Ancona, Italy) 27-6-1973; 87 years of age; 70 prof.; 59 priest; 1 rector.

In the arms of his mother he was privileged to receive Don Bosco's blessing. He was a strong personality with an open, priestly, Salesian heart. His motto was, "A friend in need...", and he carried it out by making his numerous qualified and affectionate past pupils friends with a commitment; he also assisted quite a number to the Salesian and diocesan priesthood. Clear-minded to the end, he asked that the conversation should be only on spiritual things.

Father Edmund Lucioni

* Castiglione Olona (Varese, Italy) 2-9-1897; † Varese 16-12-1973; 76 years of age; 51 prof.; 45 priest; 6 rector.

He began his studies in the seminary and entered the Congregation after the First World War. After ordination he went to Japan for nine years, and returned there after the Second World War; but his poor health obliged him to leave after a short time. He then devoted his life to helping the sick, seting up at Varese a centre for those who would "offer up" their sufferings. He died suddenly after a busy day with his patients.

Brother Santo Marogna

* Grezzana (Verona, Italy) 4-7-1930; † Verona (Italy) 15-10-1973; 43 years of age; 26 prof.;

A retiring person, his unobtrusive work was like the Gospel leaven in the dough. A true Salesian, he never refused any work, had no time for useless discussion and criticisms or self-pity. His quiet endurance of suffering was so natural that it was hard to know whether a task was burdensome to him or not.

Cleric Germain Martinez

* Bogotá (Colombia) 11-4-1948; † Ipswich (USA) 30-6-1973; 25 years of age; 5 prof.

He lived to the full the lively faith his parents had instilled into him, always generous in helping others. He enjoyed attending prayer-meetings, and always returned from them with renewed enthusiasm. He was a man of piety and cheerfulness and friendly to everyone. He met his death in a road accident. May he obtain for us many vocations like his own — strong, sincere, enlightened and constant.

Father Joseph Mascalino

* Trezzo (Alessandria, Italy) 18-3-1889; † Turin (Italy) 23-11-1973; 84 years of age; 65 prof.; 53 priest.

He died just before the Feast of Christ the King. This humble and generous man taught in the primary schools for thirty years and also worked in parishes and various administrative capacities. Many houses had the benefit of his untiring work — especially at Cuorgnè. He offered the sufferings of the eve of his life for the growth of the Congregation.

Father James Musante

* Buenos Aires (Argentina) 18-12-1898; † S. Luis (Argentina) 31-12-1973; 75 years of age; 58 prof.; 49 priest; 36 rector.

As a young man he was given tasks of great responsibility in the Province and was for many years Rector of various houses, including

houses of formation. He studied and spread his Salesian principles without ceasing. He was noted for his spirit of work, readiness to help others without sparing himself, and a deep devotion to Mary Help of Christians. He was a model in his practice of the evangelical counsels — always and everywhere a priest according to the heart of Don Bosco, giving his utmost in zeal and perseverance in the ministry.

Father Louis Oldano

* Viarigi (Asti, Italy) 22-7-1883; † Alassio (Savona, Italy) 11-7-1973; 90 years of age; 72 prof.; 59 priest; 17 rector.

Most of his life was spent at Alassio as teacher and catechist; and his pupils recognized his efficiency in the classroom. He was a Salesian of the early days, faithful to the Rule, upright, zealous, hard-working, strong and understanding. He was the patriarch of the house at Alassio.

Father Joseph Pentore

* Viarigi (Asti, Italy) 10-8-1877; † Pinerolo (Turin) 9-9-1973; 96 years of age; 79 prof.; 71 priest; 10 rector.

He met Don Bosco when eight years of age and was won to the Salesian cause in that far-off 1886. He was to spend seventy-one years of priestly life in the Congregation. He was ordained at Parma and gave himself with conviction to the apostolate of the school, teaching and educating in various houses. His last years were spent with the novices, to whom he was a young-hearted friend and confessor. He loved life and lived it joyously, with Piedmontese tenacity and in a deep supernatural spirit. He had the gift of words and spoke with great persuasion. He had the gift of words and spoke with great persuasion. He had Don Bosco's youngness of spirit, devotion to Mary, love of the Blessed Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confession.

Cleric Sbigniev Pranczk

* Kartuby (Poland) 14-1-1951; † Palowo (Poland) 23-12-1973; 22 years of age; 4 prof.

A zealous worker for the young, especially the altar-servers and oratory boys — and they responded with enthusiasm. He was killed in a road

accident returning from a church where he had been attending to the Christmas preparations. He had given great hopes for the future, but the Lord judged him ready for heaven.

Father Julian Prieto (Rodríguez)

* Barruecopardo (Ciudad Rodrigo, Spain) 9-1-1906; † Málaga (Spain) 17-9-1973; 67 years of age; 51 prof.; 41 priest.

A capable economer, he took pleasure in supplying the needs of his confrères. For many years he was a zealous worker for vocations, especially in Salamanca. He was exemplary in obedience, was always ready to accept the will of God, and was a sincere devotee of Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco.

Father Michael Redmond

* Liverpool (England) 26-11-1904; † Cheam (England) 14-1-1974; 69 years of age; 47 prof.; 38 priest.

He went to Argentina as an aspirant and spent ten years there. Health problems obliged him to return home, and for more than thirty years his illness reduced him to inactivity. He was a sincerely devout man and of a gentle disposition, and during the last two years of his life his greatest comfort was to be able to concelebrate daily with his confrères.

Brother Santo C. Resmini

* Castel Rozzone (Bergamo, Italy) 2-11-1890; † Catania (Italy) 24-1-1974; 83 years of age; 61 prof.

His apostolate was spent in the orphanages of Marsala and Palermo-Santa Chiara; then for forty-five years at Catania Barriera as tailor and helping in administration. In his later years he was Delegate of the flourishing local Union of Past Pupils. His refined manner, persuasive words and obvious Salesian joyousness made him a true spiritual friend of pupils present and past.

Father C. John Riva

* Galbiate (Como, Italy) 24-11-1903; † Carate (Italy) 26-9-1973; 69 years of age; 41 prof.; 33 priest.

After some years of active lay participation in his parish of Galbiate, he entered the Congregation at the age of twenty-eight and worked in various capacities. A long illness borne with Christian fortitude was his preparation for death.

Father Leopold Rizzi

* Canuelas (Buenos Aires, Argentina) 15-11-1883; † there 15-11-1973; 90 years of age; 70 prof.; 63 priest; 25 rector.

He died on his 90th birthday after giving his life's activities to the young, especially in the country areas. For the latter he founded an agricultural school at Del Valle, and re-launched that of Uribelarrea under very difficult circumstances. His optimism and courage in these initiatives were based on solid faith. Many country people owe their faith and well-being to his efforts.

Father Andrew Russell

* London (England) 19-11-1907; † Farnborough (England) 10-12-1973; 66 years of age; 47 prof.; 33 priest.

He spent his whole Salesian life in the classroom and believed firmly in Don Bosco's Preventive System. He worked tirelessly and with apostolic zeal and was always found regularly and punctually with his pupils — right up to a fortnight before his death.

Father John Rutkowski

* Du Bois (Pa, USA) 15-10-1907; † Richmond (NSW, Australia) 2-12-1973; 66 years of age; 38 prof.; 29 priest.

He first met the Salesians at Ramsey, NJ, USA, in 1932, entered the Newton novitiate two years later, and was ordained in 1944. In 1951 he transferred to the Philippines, and in 1953 to Australia, where he worked zealously for the Polish migrants. After a number strokes he was moved to the intensive care hospital of St. John of God where the Brothers gave him excellent treatment for two years; and where he died peacefully, comforted by the sacraments and the presence of his Salesian confrères. He was buried in the Salesian cemetery at Sunbury after a concelebration by

Salesian priests and Polish chaplains. Some of the Poles he had helped travelled some thousand kilometres from Adelaide to be present.

Father Guy Sbernini

* Sabbioneta (Mantova, Italy) 9-7-1890; † Chiari (Brescia, Italy) 6-1-1973; 82 years of age; 65 prof.; 52 priest; 27 rector.

He wore himself out in work for his pupils. He was an open and cordial personality and was able to hold their attention with an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes of the early Salesians, presenting their attractive and positive values. During World War II he worked hard at Moderna, helping and saving the victims of the bombing raids. Many owe their lives to his care.

Father Michael Scheid

* Mitterkreuth (Germany) 10-4-1914; † Schwandorf (Germany) 7-12-1973; 59 years of age; 39 prof.; 25 priest.

He spent many years in the army and in prison. Later he was catechist and teacher in our professional schools where he worked at great sacrifice. He had a talent for the liberal arts in which he was a specialist, and is remembered with profound respect.

Father Thomas Selvam

* Poomanur-Salem (Madras, India) 4-7-1920; † Pannur (Tamil Nadu, India) 8-11-1973; 53 years of age; 19 prof.; 28 priest; 6 rector.

He was educated and ordained for the diocese and first worked as assistant parish priest; then, to labour more effectively for youth, he entered the Salesian Congregation where he earned the affection of the faithful and the pupils. His death was sudden. He had preached a Retreat and had returned next day to teach. He died at table during lunch, well-prepared to meet his Maker.

Brother Italo Signorini

* Cávriglia (Arezzo, Italy) 26-3-1904; † Alassio (Savona, Italy) 8-3-1973; 68 years of age; 43 prof.

He worked tirelessly all his life in the apostolate of the Christian press. Humble, persevering, faithful to Don Bosco, he was a shining example of a life spent in generous service of God and neighbour.

Father Joseph Spigo

* Verona (Italy) 18-3-1929; † Turin (Italy) 1-2-1974; 44 years of age; 27 prof.; 17 priest.

He came from a deeply religious family, and began to love Don Bosco and the Salesian way of life through the influence of the nearby Salesian community. He worked among the young in a spirit of youthfulness and kindness; and was called to the Leumann catechetical centre to help in the audio-visual section. All his free time and holidays were devoted to the young, helping them with their musical, recreative and athletic activities. He went to his Maker calmly and courageously, offering his early death as a sacrifice to God.

Father Miecislaus Szczesny

* Aleksandrowkujawski (Poland) 11-10-1909; † Gdańsk (Poland) 26-12-1973; 64 years of age; 48 prof.; 39 priest; 22 rector.

He was sincerely devout, cheerful, highly intelligent and readily obedient for any tasks. As Rector he had the gift of creating in his community a happy family spirit, enthusiasm, and commitment in work. He used to good effect his talent as a preacher, not sparing himself in giving Retreats for confrères, laity and diocesan clergy.

Father Francis Wypler

* Kochlowice (Poland) 20-9-1895; † Rumia (Poland) 10-7-1973; 77 years of age; 48 prof.; 40 priest.

He spent his priesthood in the service of souls, catechizing in the elementary schools, and later as parish priest and much-sought-after confessor. His perfect religious observance, his healthy optimism, his understanding way with human frailty, and his constant self-sacrifice in work showed him forth as a true son of Don Bosco.

Father William Zanuso

* Ronco all'Adige (Verona, Italy) 25-6-1915; † Cison di Valmarino (Treviso, Italy) 15-11-1973; 58 years of age; 38 prof.; 29 priest.

He was parish priest in Venice for sixteen years and preacher and spiritual director at Cison, and distinguished himself by his fraternal love (a heritage from his family) and his striving for unity in the community. It was his joy to be friends with all and his affection was reciprocated. The sufferings of his last days were a true witness of his faith and spiritual oblation.

Father Louis Zeitler

* Lohr am Main (Germany) 21-6-1914; † Augsburg (Germany) 31-10-1973; 59 years of age; 39 prof.; 32 priest.

His priestly and Salesian life was noted for good humour, love of singing, and dedication to the young. Death was a happy release for him, for he suffered much from kidney disease and diabetes; and it came in a very unusual way. He was walking with his sister near the Salesian Institute when both suffered apoplectic seizures and died within a few minutes.

1° elenco 1974

- 1 Sac. AVERBEKE Van Carlo † Tournai (Belgio) 1973 a 70 a.
- 2 Sac. BABIRAK Giulio † Pannonhalma (Ungheria) 1974 a 84 a.
- 3 Sac. BARBANTI Alberto † Modena (Italia) 1973 a 59 a.
- 4 Coad. BERNI Emidio † Maggiano (Lucca - Italia) 1973 a 54 a.
- 5 Mons. BORGATTI Giuseppe † Viedma (Argentina) 1973 a 82 a., fu per 20 a. Vescovo di Viedma
- 6 Sac. BORSANI Mario † Maroggia (Tic. - Svizzera) 1973 a 61 a.
- 7 Sac. BOTH Francesco † Torino (Italia) 1974 a 52 a.
- 8 Coad. BROGLIATO Lorenzo † Verona (Italia) 1973 a 55 a.
- 9 Sac. CAON Felice † Albare di Costermano (Verona - Italia) 1973 a 81 a.
- 10 Sac. CHODANIONEK Bronislao † Kisziniew-Moldavia (URSS) 1973 a 63 a.
- 11 Sac. CILLIS Rocco † Napoli (Italia) 1973 a 62 a.
- 12 Sac. COLOMBO Giovanni † Milano (Italia) 1973 a 69 a.
- 13 Sac. DOLEZAL Venceslao † a San Salvador (El Salvador, C.A.) 1973 a 66 a.
- 14 Sac. FRANCOY Massimiliano † Madrid (Spagna) 1974 a 69 a.
- 15 Sac. FUEYO Isidro † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 1973 a 71 a.
- 16 Sac. GARBIN Pietro † Forlì (Italia) 1973 a 67 a.
- 17 Sac. GAREGNANI Filippo † Somma Lombardo (Varese - Italia) 1973 a 70 a.
- 18 Sac. GHIGLIENO Mario † Cuneo (Italia) 1974 a 88 a.
- 19 Coad. GIL Costantino † Lodz (Polonia) 1973 a 76 a.
- 20 Sac. GODARD Francesco † Ginevra (Svizzera) 1973 a 56 a.
- 21 Coad. GUBITTA Beniamino † Legnago (Verona - Italia) 1973 a 58 a.
- 22 Sac. KRZYZANOWSKI Wojciech † Sokolow Podlaski (Polonia) 1973 a 39 a.
- 23 Sac. LAZZARONI Attilio † Loreto (Ancona - Italia) 1973 a 87 a.
- 24 Sac. LUCIONI Edmondo † Varese (Italia) 1973 a 76 a.
- 25 Coad. MAROGNA Santo † Verona (Italia) 1973 a 43 a.
- 26 Ch. MARTINEZ Germano † Ipswich (USA) 1973 a 25 a.
- 27 Sac. MASCARINO Giuseppe † Torino (Italia) 1973 a 84 a.
- 28 Sac. MUSANTE Giacomo (Santiago) † San Luis (Argentina) 1973 a 75 a.
- 29 Sac. OLDANO Luigi † Alassio (Savona - Italia) 1973 a 90 a.
- 30 Sac. PENTORE Giuseppe † Pinerolo (Torino - Italia) 1973 a 96 a.
- 31 Ch. PRANCZK Sbignevo † Palowo (Polonia) 1973 a 22 a.
- 32 Sac. PRIETO Giuliano † Malaga (Spagna) 1973 a 67 a.
- 33 Sac. REDMOND Michele † Cheam (Inghilterra) 1974 a 69 a.
- 34 Coad. RESMINI Santo C. † Catania (Italia) 1974 a 83 a.
- 35 Sac. RIVA Giovanni † Carate (Milano - Italia) 1973 a 69 a.
- 36 Sac. RIZZI Leopoldo † Buenos Aires (Argentina) 1973 a 90 a.
- 37 Sac. RUSSEL Andrea † Farnborough (Inghilterra) 1973 a 66 a.
- 38 Sac. RUTKOWSKI Giovanni † Richmond (NSW - Australia) 1973 a 66 a.
- 39 Sac. SALZANO Vincenzo † San Justo (Argentina) 29.9.1973 a 74 a.
- 40 Sac. SBERNINI Guido † Chiari (Brescia - Italia) 1973 a 82 a.
- 41 Sac. SCHEID Michele † Schwandorf (Germania) 1973 a 59 a.
- 42 Sac. SELVAM Tomaso † Pannur (Tamil Nadu - India) 1973 a 53 a.

- 43 Coad. SIGNORINI Italo † Alassio (Savona - Italia) 1973 a 68 a.
- 44 Sac. SPIGO Giuseppe † Torino (Italia) 1974 a 44 a.
- 45 Sac. SZCZESNY Mieczslao † Gdansk (Polonia) 1973 a 64 a.
- 46 Sac. WYPLER Francesco † Rumia (Polonia) 1973 a 77 a.
- 47 Sac. ZANUSO Guglielmo † Cison di Valmarino (Treviso - Italia) 1973 a 58 a.
- 48 Sac. ZEITLER Luigi † Augsburg (Germania) 1973 a 59 a.





