

**CONSTITUTIONS**  
**of the Society of St Francis de Sales**

Third Edition 2015  
Translation revised 2023

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NOTE TO THE REVISED ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE  
*CONSTITUTIONS AND REGULATIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES*

With the encouragement of the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, a small team of native English speakers from across the English-speaking world and one native Italian speaker, all with considerable Salesian and administrative experience and language competence, was assembled to revise the translation of the 2015 Third Edition of our Constitutions and Regulations. The team focused on accuracy of translation, fluency of language, and consistency with regard to the use of British English conventions, since the original translation has used that ‘flavour’ of English.

This text also contains the modifications introduced by GC28.

31 January 2023

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# Contents

## CONSTITUTIONS

of the Society of St Francis de Sales

- Presentation ..... 5
- Presentation of the Third Edition ..... 7
- Abbreviations ..... 8
- Foreword ..... 11
  
- Part One
- THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO IN THE CHURCH ..... 12

  - 1. The Society of St Francis de Sales ..... 13
  - 2. The Salesian spirit ..... 16
  - 3. The profession of the Salesian ..... 19

  
- Part Two
- SENT TO THE YOUNG – IN COMMUNITIES – FOLLOWING CHRIST ..... 21

  - 4. Sent to the young ..... 22
    - Those to whom our mission is directed* ..... 22
    - Our educational and pastoral service* ..... 23
    - Criteria for Salesian activity* ..... 25
    - Those who share responsibility for the mission* ..... 27
  - 5. In fraternal and apostolic communities ..... 29
  - 6. Following the obedient, poor and chaste Christ ..... 32
    - Our obedience* ..... 33
    - Our poverty* ..... 35
    - Our chastity* ..... 37
  - 7. In dialogue with the Lord ..... 39

  
- Part Three
- FORMED FOR THE MISSION OF PASTORS AND EDUCATORS ..... 43

  - 8. General aspects of our formation ..... 44
    - Salesian formation* ..... 44
    - Initial formation* ..... 45
  - 9. The formation process ..... 47

  
- Part Four
- THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN OUR SOCIETY ..... 50

  - 10. General principles and criteria ..... 51
  - 11. Service of authority in the world community ..... 53
  - 12. Service of authority in the provincial community ..... 59
  - 13. Service of authority in the local community ..... 63
  - 14. Administration of temporal goods ..... 65

  
- CONCLUSION ..... 66

## GENERAL REGULATIONS

### Part One

#### SENT TO THE YOUNG – IN COMMUNITIES – FOLLOWING CHRIST ..... 70

1. Those to whom our mission is directed ..... 71
2. Our pastoral and educational service ..... 72
3. Activities and works ..... 73
  - The Oratory and the Youth Centre* ..... 73
  - The school, vocational training centres and institutions of higher education* ..... 73
  - Hostels and boarding schools* ..... 74
  - Initiatives at the service of vocations* ..... 74
  - The missions* ..... 74
  - Parishes* ..... 75
  - Social communication* ..... 76
  - Service in non-Salesian structures* ..... 77
4. Service to the Salesian Family ..... 78
5. Fraternal and apostolic communities ..... 79
6. Following the obedient, poor and chaste Christ ..... 80
  - Our obedience* ..... 80
  - Our poverty* ..... 80
  - Our chastity* ..... 82
7. In dialogue with the Lord ..... 83

### Part Two

#### FORMED FOR THE MISSION OF PASTORS AND EDUCATORS ..... 85

8. General aspects of formation ..... 86
  - Formation communities.* ..... 86
  - Intellectual formation* ..... 86
  - Pastoral experiences* ..... 87
  - Practical guide for formation* ..... 87
9. The formation process ..... 88
  - Immediate preparation for the novitiate* ..... 88
  - The novitiate* ..... 88
  - Formation after the novitiate* ..... 89
  - Ongoing Formation* ..... 89

### Part Three

#### THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN OUR SOCIETY ..... 91

10. The Rector Major and his Council ..... 92
  - The General Chapter* ..... 93
  - Regional structures* ..... 97
11. The service of authority in the provincial community ..... 99
  - The provincial and his council* ..... 99
  - The provincial chapter* ..... 101
12. The service of authority in the local community ..... 104
  - The rector and his council* ..... 104
  - The assembly of the confreres* ..... 106
13. The administration of temporal goods ..... 107
  - General norms* ..... 107
  - At world level* ..... 108
  - The provinces* ..... 108
  - The houses* ..... 109

# PRESENTATION

*Here at last, dear confreres, is our renewed and approved Rule of Life. It is offered to you in a manual which every Salesian should keep with him as his identity card.*

*It contains the Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales, our “basic code”, revised and re-written in accordance with the requirements of Vatican II (“Ecclesiae Sanctae” II, 1,12-14).*

*In addition, it contains the updated version of the General Regulations, which form an integral part of the particular law of our Society.*

*In the manual you will also find some of the writings of our father, St John Bosco, which are enriched with his spiritual experience.*

*The serious and wide-ranging revision of the text was carried out by the whole Congregation over a period of many years and is the fruit of the work of no fewer than three General Chapters (20th, 21st and 22nd); it ensures continuity with our origins, the ecclesial character of the Salesian apostolic consecration and the natural tendency of Don Bosco’s mission to reach out to the whole world.*

*On 25 November 1984, Solemnity of Christ the King, the Apostolic See approved the present Constitutions, once again declaring authoritatively “the authenticity of the gospel way of life traced out by the founder.” They set out the spiritual riches of our Salesian tradition; they define its apostolic project; they trace out our path of holiness and invite us to witness to it as the most precious gift we can offer the young.*

*On 8 December 1984, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the date “on which all our greatest enterprises and events began and reached fulfilment”, the Rector Major promulgated this precious rewritten text. We welcome our rule of life with gratitude and trust as being the “living testament of Don Bosco” coming from the hands of the Virgin Help of Christians herself, and we open our hearts in thanksgiving as we pray:*

We thank you Father  
because you have called us individually by name  
from every continent  
to be in the Church signs and bearers of your love.

For us too, Father, you have made to rise up  
from the very heart of Christ, your apostle,  
that pastoral love  
which marks our ecclesial fervour  
with the gift of predilection for young people.

We adore you with filial gratitude  
because your Paraclete, the Spirit of the Lord,  
is always with us by the grace of his consecration  
as we live day by day the fullness of our gift,  
renewing the mystery of the baptismal Covenant  
through its more intimate and complete expression.

Grant, merciful Father,  
that with Mary’s guidance,  
we may persevere to the end  
on this way that leads to Love.  
In our religious profession  
You have made to blossom in us a new and exhilarating reality  
which is the offering of ourselves  
in the work of salvation and the liturgy of life.  
Teach us to see and contemplate

through the indications of this Rule,  
the undivided heart of your only Son;  
permeate our freedom with the power of your Spirit,  
so that all of us who adhere to Don Bosco  
may faithfully fulfil with your help  
all that by your gift we have promised.

Fr Egidio Viganò  
Rector Major

Rome, 8 December 1984  
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

# PRESENTATION OF THE THIRD EDITION

My dear confreres,

31 years have passed since the promulgation of the renewed and approved text of our Rule of Life, the fruit of the work of no fewer than three General Chapters in accordance with the requirements of Vatican II.

As the then Rector Major, Fr. Egidio Viganò said in presenting the Constitutions and Regulations these “set out the spiritual riches of our Salesian tradition; they define its apostolic project; they trace out our path of holiness and invite us to witness to it as the most precious gift we can offer the young.” As such, the text retains all its validity and its richness, and therefore should be known, reflected on, prayed about and brought to life. Nevertheless, seeking to bring the Rule of Life into harmony with the new requirements of the Congregation, during the last General Chapters (23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th) some modifications considered appropriate were made and later approved by the Holy See.

In relation to our Rule of Life renewed in 1984, in this third edition changes have been introduced in the Constitutions in articles 5, 95, 128, 132(14), 133, 134, 137, 142, 151(8), in the General Regulations in articles 3, 13, 24, 38, 76, 107, 114, 127 and 128 and consequently in the Analytical Index in the words *Centre(s)*, *Directory*, *Past Pupils*, *Salesian Family*, *Salesian Cooperators*, *Vicar of the Rector Major*. I think it would be therefore appropriate to publish a third edition containing these modifications. I hope that it will provide the opportunity once again for us to welcome the text of the Constitutions “as a precious treasure” entrusted to us by Don Bosco. Again he is saying to us: “If you have loved me in the past, continue to love me in the future by the exact observance of our Constitutions.” May Mary Help of Christians make us docile to the transforming action of the Holy Spirit so that following the example of the first Salesians, we may model our lives on that of Don Bosco especially in this bicentenary year of his birth.

Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime  
Rector Major

Rome, 16 August 2015  
The Bicentenary of Don Bosco’s birth

# ABBREVIATIONS

## *Sacred Scripture*

<b>Acts</b>	Acts of the Apostles
<b>Col</b>	Letter of St Paul to the Colossians
<b>1 Cor</b>	First letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
<b>2 Cor</b>	Second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
<b>Eph</b>	Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians
<b>Ezek</b>	Ezekiel
<b>Gal</b>	Letter of St Paul to the Galatians
<b>Gen</b>	Genesis
<b>Heb</b>	Letter to the Hebrews
<b>Is</b>	Isaiah
<b>Jn</b>	Gospel of St John
<b>1 Jn</b>	First letter of St John
<b>Lk</b>	Gospel of St Luke
<b>Mk</b>	Gospel of St Mark
<b>Mt</b>	Gospel of St Matthew
<b>1 Pet</b>	First letter of St Peter
<b>Phil</b>	Letter of St Paul to the Philippians
<b>Prov</b>	Proverbs
<b>Ps</b>	Psalms
<b>Qo</b>	Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)
<b>Rev</b>	Revelation (Apocalypse)
<b>Rom</b>	Letter of St Paul to the Romans
<b>1 Sam</b>	First book of Samuel
<b>Sir</b>	Sirach
<b>1 Thess</b>	First letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians
<b>1 Tim</b>	First letter of St Paul to Timothy
<b>Wis</b>	Wisdom



*Documents of the Church*

<b>AA</b>	Apostolicam Actuositatem, Decree of Vatican II
<b>AG</b>	Ad Gentes, Decree of Vatican II
<b>CIC</b>	Codex Iuris Canonici
<b>EN</b>	Evangelii Nuntiandi, Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, 1975
<b>ET</b>	Evangelica Testificatio, Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, 1971
<b>GS</b>	Gaudium et Spes, Constitution of Vatican II
<b>IGLH</b>	Institutio Generalis de Liturgia Horarum
<b>IM</b>	Inter Mirifica, Decree of Vatican II
<b>LG</b>	Lumen Gentium, Constitution of Vatican II
<b>MR</b>	Mutuae Relationes, Directives, SCRIS – S. Congreg. for Bishops, 1978
<b>PC</b>	Perfectae Caritatis, Decree of Vatican II
<b>PO</b>	Presbyterorum Ordinis, Decree of Vatican II
<b>RD</b>	Redemptionis Donum, Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, 1984
<b>SC</b>	Sacrosanctum Concilium, Constitution of Vatican II

*Salesian sources*

<b>ASC</b>	Salesian Central Archives
<b>BM</b>	Biographical Memoirs (English translation)
<b>C</b>	Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales
<b>C 1875</b>	Rules or Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales, Turin 1875 (OE XXVII, 10-99)
<b>DB</b>	Don Bosco
<b>MB</b>	Memorie biografiche (19 volumes)
<b>MO</b>	Memoirs of the Oratory of St Francis de Sales (New Rochelle, 2010)
<b>OE</b>	Opere edite (published works)
<b>R</b>	General Regulations
<b>Don Rua</b>	Circular letters of Don Rua

Note: The Scriptural texts in English are from the New Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition).



# FOREWORD

For us Salesians, our Rule Book is Don Bosco's living testament. "If you have loved me in the past," he tells us, "continue to love me in the future by the exact observance of our Constitutions."<sup>1</sup>

Fr Michael Rua, Don Bosco's first successor, reminds us: "When Don Bosco sent his first sons to America he had himself photographed in the act of handing to Fr John Cagliero, who headed the expedition, the book of the Constitutions as though to say: 'I would like to go with you myself, but since I cannot do so these Constitutions will take my place. Keep them as you would a precious treasure!'"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BM XVII, 232.

<sup>2</sup> Don Rua, 1 Dec. 1909.

Part One

**THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO  
IN THE CHURCH**

[Contents](#)

# 1. THE SOCIETY OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

*“I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out... I will set up over them one shepherd... He shall feed them and be their shepherd.” (Ezek 34:11,23)*

## **God’s action in the foundation and life of our Society**

1. With a feeling of humble gratitude we believe that the Society of St Francis de Sales came into being not as a merely human venture but by the initiative of God.<sup>1</sup> Through the motherly intervention of Mary, the Holy Spirit raised up St John Bosco to contribute to the salvation of youth, “that part of human society which is so exposed and yet so rich in promise.”<sup>2</sup>

The Spirit formed within him the heart of a father and teacher, capable of total self-giving. “I have promised God that until my dying breath I would dedicate myself entirely to my poor boys.”<sup>3</sup>

To ensure the continuation of this mission, the Spirit inspired him to initiate various apostolic endeavours, first among them our Society.

The Church has acknowledged God’s hand in this, especially by approving our Constitutions and by proclaiming our Founder a saint.

From this active presence of the Holy Spirit we draw strength for our fidelity and support for our hope.

<sup>1</sup> MO, 30.

<sup>2</sup> BM II, 35.

<sup>3</sup> BM XVIII, 216.

## **Nature and mission of our Society**

2. We, the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), form a community of the baptized. Submissive to the bidding of the Spirit we are resolved to carry out the Founder’s apostolic plan in a specific form of religious life: to be in the Church signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially the poorest of them.

By carrying out this mission we find our own way to holiness.

## **Our apostolic consecration**

3. We live as disciples of the Lord by the grace of the Father, who consecrates us<sup>1</sup> through the gift of his Spirit and sends us out to be apostles of the young.

Through our religious profession we offer ourselves to God in order to follow Christ and work with him in building up the Kingdom. Our apostolic mission, our fraternal community and the practice of the evangelical counsels are the inseparable elements of our consecration which we live in a single movement of love towards God and towards our brothers and sisters.

Our mission sets the tenor of our whole life; it specifies the task we have in the Church and our place among other religious families.

<sup>1</sup> LG 44.

**Form of our Society**

4. Our Society is made up of clerics and laymen who complement one another as brothers in living out the same vocation.

We are recognized in the Church as a clerical religious institute of pontifical right, “dedicated to apostolic works.”<sup>1</sup> Inspired by the goodness and zeal of St Francis de Sales, Don Bosco called us Salesians<sup>2</sup> and gave us a programme of life in the motto: “Da mihi animas, cetera tolle.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PC 8; CIC, can 675 §1.

<sup>2</sup> BM V, 8.

<sup>3</sup> BM XVII 337, 338, 257.

**Our Society in the Salesian Family**

5. Don Bosco inspired the start of a vast movement of persons who in different ways work for the salvation of the young.

He himself founded not only the Society of St Francis de Sales but also the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Association of Salesian Cooperators. These live in communion with each other, share the same spirit and, with specifically distinct vocations, continue the mission he began. Together with these groups and with others born later we make up the Salesian Family.<sup>1</sup>

Within this family, by the will of the Founder, we have particular responsibilities: to preserve unity of spirit and to foster dialogue and fraternal collaboration for our mutual enrichment and greater apostolic effectiveness.

Our past pupils are also members by reason of the education they have received, and the bonds are closer when they commit themselves to take part in the Salesian mission in the world.

R 36, 41, 147

<sup>1</sup> ASC, Progetto CG1, ms DB; BM XVII, 10-11.

**Our Society in the Church**

6. The Salesian vocation places us at the heart of the Church and puts us entirely at the service of her mission.

Faithful to the commitments Don Bosco has passed on to us, we are evangelizers of the young, especially the poorest of them; we pay special attention to apostolic vocations; we are educators of the faith in low-income areas, particularly by means of social communication; we proclaim the gospel to those who have not yet received it.

In this way we contribute to building up the Church as the Body of Christ, so that also through us she may appear to the world as the “universal sacrament of salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LG 48; GS 45.

**Our Society in the contemporary world**

7. Our vocation calls us to be deeply united with the world and its history.<sup>1</sup> Open to the cultural values of the lands in which we work, we try to understand them and make them our own, so as to incarnate in them the message of the gospel.

The needs of the young and of low-income groups, the desire to work with the Church and in her name, inspire and shape our pastoral activity so as to bring about a more just world and one of greater fellowship in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> GS 1.

**The presence of Mary  
in our Society**

**8.** The Virgin Mary showed Don Bosco his field of labour among the young and was the constant guide and support of his work,<sup>1</sup> especially in the foundation of our Society.

We believe that Mary is present among us and continues her “mission as Mother of the Church and Help of Christians.”<sup>2</sup>

We entrust ourselves to her, the lowly servant in whom the Lord has done great things,<sup>3</sup> that we may become witnesses to the young of her Son’s boundless love.

<sup>1</sup> BM VII, 197; XVII, 232; XVIII, 373.

<sup>2</sup> DB, *Maraviglie della Madre di Dio*, Turin 1868, p. 45 (OE XX, 237).

<sup>3</sup> Lk 1:48-49.

**Patrons and Protectors  
of our Society**

**9.** As members of the pilgrim Church, we are conscious of our communion in the heavenly kingdom with our brethren and feel the need of their help.<sup>1</sup>

Don Bosco entrusted our Society in a special way to Mary, whom he made its principal patroness,<sup>2</sup> as well as to St Joseph and to St Francis de Sales, the zealous pastor and doctor of charity.

We hold in veneration as special protectors St Dominic Savio, a sign of the wonders that grace can achieve in adolescents, and the other glorified members of our family.

<sup>1</sup> LG 49.

<sup>2</sup> C 1875, V, 6.

## 2. THE SALESIAN SPIRIT

*“Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:9)*

### **Pastoral charity the centre of our spirit**

**10.** Under the inspiration of God, Don Bosco lived and handed on to us an original style of life and action: the Salesian spirit.

It is summed up in and focused on pastoral charity, characterized by the youthful dynamism which was revealed so strongly in our Founder and at the beginnings of our Society. It is an apostolic impetus that makes us seek souls and serve God alone.

### **Christ of the Gospel the source of our spirit**

**11.** The Salesian spirit finds its model and source in the very heart of Christ, apostle of the Father.<sup>1</sup>

Reading the gospel, we become more aware of certain aspects of the figure of the Lord: gratitude to the Father for the gift of a divine vocation offered to everyone; predilection for the little ones and the poor; zeal in preaching, healing and saving because of the urgency of the coming of the Kingdom; the preoccupation of the Good Shepherd who wins hearts by gentleness and self-giving; the desire to gather his disciples into the unity of brotherly communion.

<sup>1</sup> LG 3; AG 3.

### **Union with God**

**12.** As he works for the salvation of the young, the Salesian experiences the fatherhood of God and continually reminds himself of the divine dimension of his work: “Apart from me you can do nothing.”<sup>1</sup>

He cultivates union with God, aware of the need to pray without ceasing in a simple heart-to-heart colloquy with the living Christ and with the Father, whom he feels close at hand. Attentive to the presence of the Spirit and doing everything for God’s love he becomes, like Don Bosco, a contemplative in action.

<sup>1</sup> Jn 15:5.

### **Sense of the Church**

**13.** Our love for Christ necessarily gives rise to our love for his Church, the People of God, the centre of unity and communion of all the forces working for the Kingdom.

We feel ourselves a living part of the Church, and we cultivate in ourselves and in our communities a renewed ecclesial awareness. This we express in an attitude of filial loyalty to Peter’s successor and to his teaching, and in our efforts to live in communion and collaboration with the bishops, clergy, religious and laity.

We educate young Christians to an authentic understanding of the Church and to work assiduously for its growth. Don Bosco tells us: “No effort should be spared when the Church and the Pope are at stake.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BM V, 383.



**Predilection for the young**

**14.** Our vocation is graced by a special gift of God – predilection for the young: “That you are young is enough to make me love you very much.”<sup>1</sup> This love is an expression of pastoral charity and gives meaning to our whole life.

For their welfare we give generously of our time, talents and health: “For you I study, for you I work, for you I live, for you I am ready even to give my life.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DB, *Il Giovane provveduto*, Turin 1847, p. 7 (OE II, 187).

<sup>2</sup> Don Ruffino, *Cronaca dell’oratorio*, ASC 110, quaderno 5, p. 10.

**Salesian loving-kindness**

**15.** Sent to young people by the God who is all charity,<sup>1</sup> the Salesian is open and friendly, ready to make the first approach and to welcome others with unfailing kindness, respect and patience.

His love is that of a father, brother and friend, able to draw out friendship in return: this is the loving-kindness so much recommended by Don Bosco.

His chastity and well-balanced attitude open his heart to spiritual fatherhood and give transparent witness to God’s anticipating love.

<sup>1</sup> DB, *Esercizio di divozione alla misericordia di Dio*, Turin 1847 p. 81 (OE II, 151).

**Family spirit**

**16.** Don Bosco wanted everyone to feel at home in his establishments. The Salesian house becomes a family when affection is mutual and when all, both confreres and young people, feel welcome and responsible for the common good.

In an atmosphere of mutual trust and daily forgiveness, the need and joy of sharing everything is experienced, and relationships are governed not so much by recourse to rules as by faith and the promptings of the heart.<sup>1</sup>

This is a witness that enkindles in the young the desire to get to know and to follow the Salesian vocation.

<sup>1</sup> BM XVII, 88-89.

**Optimism and joy**

**17.** The Salesian does not give way to discouragement in face of difficulties, because he has complete trust in the Father. “Let nothing upset you”, Don Bosco used to say.<sup>1</sup>

Inspired by the humanism of St Francis de Sales, he believes in man’s natural and supernatural resources without losing sight of his weakness.

He is able to make his own what is good in the world and does not bewail his own times; he accepts all that is good,<sup>2</sup> especially if it appeals to the young.

Because he is a herald of the Good News he is always cheerful.<sup>3</sup> He radiates this joy and is able to educate to the happiness of Christian life and a sense of celebration: “Let us serve the Lord in holy joy.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BM VII 317.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess 5:21.

<sup>3</sup> Phil 3:1.

<sup>4</sup> DB, *Il Giovane provveduto*, Turin 1847, p. 6 (OE II, 186).

**Work and temperance** **18.** “Work and temperance will make the Congregation flourish”,<sup>1</sup> whereas the seeking of an easy and comfortable life will instead bring about its death.<sup>2</sup>

The Salesian gives himself to his mission with tireless energy, taking care to do everything with simplicity and moderation. He knows that by his work he is participating in the creative action of God and cooperating with Christ in building the Kingdom.

Temperance gives him the strength to control his heart, to master himself and remain even-tempered.

He does not look for unusual penances but accepts the daily demands and renunciations of the apostolic life. He is ready to suffer cold and heat, hunger and thirst, weariness and disdain whenever God’s glory and the salvation of souls require it.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BM XII, 338.

<sup>2</sup> BM XVII, 250.

<sup>3</sup> C 1875, XIII, 13.

**Initiative and flexibility**

**19.** The Salesian is called to be a realist and to be attentive to the signs of the times, convinced that the Lord manifests his will also through the demands of time and place.

Hence his spirit of initiative: “in those things which are for the benefit of young people in danger or which serve to win souls for God, I push ahead even to the extent of recklessness.”<sup>1</sup>

Timely response to these needs requires him to keep abreast of new trends and meet them with the well-balanced creativity of the Founder; periodically he evaluates his work.

<sup>1</sup> BM XIV, 662.

**The Preventive System and Salesian spirit**

**20.** Under the guidance of Mary his teacher, Don Bosco lived a spiritual and educational experience with the boys of the first Oratory, which he called the “Preventive System”. For him this was a freely-given expression of love, inspired by the love of a God who provides in advance for all his creatures, is ever present at their side, and gives his life to save them.

Don Bosco passes this on to us as a way of living and handing on the gospel message, and of working with and through the young for their salvation. It permeates our approach to God, our personal relationships and our manner of living in community through the exercise of a charity that knows how to make itself loved.

**Don Bosco our model**

**21.** The Lord has given us Don Bosco as father and teacher.

We study and imitate him, admiring in him a splendid blending of nature and grace. He was deeply human, rich in the qualities of his people, open to the realities of this earth; and he was just as deeply the man of God, filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and living “as though he saw him who is invisible.”<sup>1</sup> These two aspects combined to create a closely-knit life project, the service of the young. He realized his aim with firmness, constancy and the sensitivity of a generous heart, in the midst of difficulties and fatigue. “He took no step, he said no word, he took up no task that was not directed to the saving of the young... Truly the only concern of his heart was for souls.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heb 11:27.

<sup>2</sup> Don Rua, 24 Aug. 1894.

### 3. THE PROFESSION OF THE SALESIAN

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.” (Mk 1:17-18)*

#### **Personal vocation of the Salesian**

**22.** Each one of us is called by God to form part of the Salesian Society. Because of this God gives him personal gifts, and by faithful correspondence he finds his way to complete fulfilment in Christ.

The Society recognizes his vocation and helps him to develop it; as a responsible member he puts himself and his gifts at the service of the community and of its common tasks.

Every call is an indication that the Lord loves the Congregation, wants to see it vibrant for the good of the Church and never ceases to enrich it with new apostolic energy.

#### **Meaning of our profession**

**23.** Religious profession is a sign of a loving encounter between the Lord who calls and the disciple who responds by giving himself totally to God and to his brothers and sisters.

It is one of the most lofty choices a believer can consciously make, an act which recalls and endorses the mystery of his baptismal covenant by giving it a deeper and fuller expression.

By publicly binding himself in the eyes of the Church, through whose ministry he is more intimately consecrated to the service of God,<sup>1</sup> the Salesian begins a new life which is lived out in a service of permanent dedication to the young.

Profession is also the expression of a mutual commitment between the professed member who enters the Society and the Society which receives him with joy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MR 8; LG 44.

<sup>2</sup> LG 44; PC 5; CIC, can. 654.

**Formula of profession**

**24.** Our formula of profession is the following:

“God my Father, you consecrated me to yourself on the day of my baptism.  
In response to the love of the Lord Jesus your Son, who calls me to follow him more closely,  
and led by the Holy Spirit who is light and strength, with complete freedom I, N.N.,  
offer myself totally to you.  
I pledge myself  
to devote all my strength to those to whom you will send me, especially to young  
people who are poorest; to live in the Salesian Society in communion of spirit and  
action with my brothers;  
and in this way to share in the life and mission of your Church.  
And so, in the presence of my brothers, and before Fr N. N. (*who takes the place of the*)  
Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales,  
I make the vow for ever to live obedient, poor and chaste  
according to the way of the gospel set out in the Salesian Constitutions.  
Father, may your grace, the intercession of Mary Help of Christians, of St Joseph, of  
St Francis de Sales, and of St John Bosco, together with the assistance of my brother  
Salesians keep me faithful day by day.”

*(for those making temporary profession):*

“And so, in the presence of my brothers, and before Fr N. N. (*who takes the place of the*)  
Rector Major of the Society of St Francis de Sales,  
although it is my intention to offer myself to you for all my life, in accordance with  
the Church’s dispositions  
I make the vow for ... year(s) to live obedient, poor and chaste according to the way of  
the gospel set out in the Salesian Constitutions.  
Father, may your grace, the intercession of Mary Help of Christians, of St Joseph, of  
St Francis de Sales, and of St John Bosco, together with the assistance of my brother  
Salesians keep me faithful day by day.”

*The Superior responds:*

“In the name of the Church  
and of the Salesian Society  
I welcome you among the Salesians of Don Bosco as a confrere committed by perpetual  
(temporary) vows.”

**Profession a source of sanctification**

**25.** The action of the Spirit is for the professed member a lasting source of grace and a support for his daily efforts to grow towards the perfect love<sup>1</sup> of God and human beings.

The confreres who are living or have lived to the full the gospel project of the Constitutions are a stimulus and help for us on the path to holiness.

The witness of such holiness, achieved within the Salesian mission, reveals the unique worth of the beatitudes and is the most precious gift we can offer to the young.

<sup>1</sup> PC 1.

Part Two

**SENT TO THE YOUNG  
IN COMMUNITIES  
FOLLOWING CHRIST**

[Contents](#)

## 4. SENT TO THE YOUNG

### THOSE TO WHOM OUR MISSION IS DIRECTED

*“As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.” (Mk 1:17-18)*

**The young to whom we are sent**     **26.** The Lord made clear to Don Bosco that he was to direct his mission first and foremost to the young, especially to the poorest of them.

We are called to the same mission and are aware of its supreme importance: young people are at the age when they must make basic life-choices which affect the future of society and of the Church.

R 1, 3, 11, 15, 26

With Don Bosco we reaffirm our preference for the young who are poor, abandoned and at risk,<sup>1</sup> those who have greater need of love and evangelisation, and we work especially in areas of greatest poverty.

<sup>1</sup> BM XIV, 536.

**Young workers**

**27.** Young people from poor areas who are looking for work, and young workers in general, often encounter difficulties and easily become victims of injustice.

R 2

Making the concern of Don Bosco our own, we go to them to prepare them to take their place with dignity in society and in the Church and to alert them to the role they can play in the Christian transformation of social life.

**Young people called to serve the Church**

**28.** To meet the needs of his people the Lord continually calls some to follow him, and enriches them with a variety of gifts in the service of the Kingdom.

We are convinced that many young people are rich in spiritual potential and give indications of an apostolic vocation.

We help them discover, accept and develop the gift of a lay, consecrated or priestly vocation, for the benefit of the whole Church and of the Salesian Family.

R 9, 16, 17

With equal zeal we nurture adult vocations.

**In poorer areas**

**29.** Our priority commitment to young people who are poor fits in well with pastoral involvement among poor people in general.

We recognise the gospel values which they stand for, and the need they have of support in their efforts at human advancement and growth in the faith. Hence we support them by “all the means that Christian charity suggests.”<sup>1</sup>

R 14, 25, 26

We also give our attention to the lay people responsible for evangelization of their local area, and to the family where different generations come together<sup>2</sup> and build the future of humankind.

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, 1, 7.

<sup>2</sup> GS 52.

**People not yet evangelized**

**30.** People still awaiting the gospel message were the special object of Don Bosco's concern and apostolic effort. They continue to stimulate our zeal and keep it alive. We look upon missionary work as an essential feature of our Congregation.

Through our missionary activity we carry out a patient work of evangelisation by founding the Church within a group of people.<sup>1</sup> This work mobilizes all the educational and pastoral commitments proper to our charism.

Following the example of the Son of God, who made himself in all things like us, the Salesian missionary makes his own the values of these people and shares their hopes and anxieties.<sup>2</sup>

R 18-24

<sup>1</sup> AG 6.<sup>2</sup> AG 3, 12, 26.**OUR EDUCATIONAL AND PASTORAL SERVICE**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Lk 4:18-19)*

**Total development**

**31.** Ours is a sharing in the mission of the Church, which brings about the saving design of God, the coming of His Kingdom, by bringing people the message of the gospel which is closely tied in with the development of the temporal order.<sup>1</sup>

We educate and evangelise according to a plan for total human well-being directed to Christ, the perfect Man.<sup>2</sup> Faithful to the intentions of our Founder, our purpose is to form “upright citizens and good Christians.”<sup>3</sup>

R 4, 5, 22

<sup>1</sup> EN 31.<sup>2</sup> GS 41.<sup>3</sup> *Plan of Regulations of the Oratory*, 1854 (BM II, 36).**Personal development**

**32.** As educators we work together with our young people to bring all their talents and aptitudes to full maturity.

According to circumstances we share our food with them, further their technical skills and give them an all-round education.

Always and in every case we help them to be open to truth and to develop in themselves a responsible freedom. To this end we commit ourselves to inculcating in them a convinced appreciation of true values which will lead them to a life of dialogue and service.

R 4, 6

**Social and collective development**

**33.** Don Bosco clearly saw the social implications of his work.

We work in poor areas and for poor young people. We work with them, educating them to assume their moral, professional and social responsibilities, and favouring their involvement in groups and in the larger community.

In a way appropriate to religious, we share in the witness and commitment of the Church to justice and peace. While not getting involved in ideologies or party politics, we reject everything that encourages deprivation, injustice and violence. We cooperate with all who are trying to build a society more worthy of human dignity.

The advancement to which we dedicate ourselves in the spirit of the gospel makes tangible the love of Christ which sets us free, and is a sign that the Kingdom of God is among us.

R 6, 26

**Evangelization and catechesis**

**34.** “This Society had its beginning in a simple catechism lesson.”<sup>1</sup> For us too, evangelizing and catechizing are the fundamental characteristics of our mission.

Like Don Bosco, we are all called to be educators to the faith at every opportunity. Our highest knowledge therefore is to know Jesus Christ, and our greatest delight is to reveal to all people the unfathomable riches of his mystery.<sup>2</sup>

We walk side by side with the young so as to lead them to the risen Lord, and so discover in him and in his gospel the deepest meaning of their own existence, and thus grow into new creatures in Christ.

The Virgin Mary is present in this process as a mother. We make her known and loved as the one who believed,<sup>3</sup> who helps and who infuses hope.

R 7

<sup>1</sup> BM IX, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Eph 3:8-19.

<sup>3</sup> Lk 1:45.

**Introduction to ecclesial life**

**35.** We introduce the young to the experience of ecclesial life by bringing them into a faith community and helping them take part in it.

To this end we promote and animate groups and movements for formation and apostolic and social action. In these the young people grow in the awareness of their own responsibilities and learn to give their irreplaceable contribution to the transformation of the world and to the life of the Church, and so become themselves the “first apostles of the young, in direct contact with them.”<sup>1</sup>

R 8

<sup>1</sup> AA 12.

**Introduction to liturgical life**

**36.** We introduce the young to a conscious and active participation in the Church’s liturgy, the summit and source of all Christian life.<sup>1</sup>

With them we celebrate the encounter with Christ, by listening to his Word, in prayer and in the sacraments.

The Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation celebrated with care are means of exceptional value for education to Christian liberty, to conversion of heart and to a spirit of sharing and service in the ecclesial community.

R 7

<sup>1</sup> SC 10.



**Vocational guidance** 37. We educate the young to develop their own human and baptismal vocation by a daily life progressively inspired and unified by the gospel.

The family atmosphere of welcome and faith, created by the witness of a community which gives of itself with joy, is the most efficacious setting for the discovery and guidance of vocations.

R 9, 16, 17

This work of collaboration with God's design, the crown of all our educational and pastoral activity, is sustained by prayer and personal contact, above all in spiritual direction.

**The Preventive System in our mission**

38. Don Bosco has handed on to us his Preventive System as a means for carrying out our educational and pastoral service.

“This system is based entirely on reason, religion and loving kindness.”<sup>1</sup> Instead of constraint, it appeals to the resources of intelligence, love and the desire for God which everyone has in the depths of his being.

It brings educators and youngsters together in a unique experience of life, marked by a spirit of family, trust and dialogue.

R 4, 5, 13, 15

Imitating God's patience, we encounter the young at their present stage of freedom. We accompany them, so that they develop solid convictions and gradually assume responsibility for the delicate process of their growth as human beings and in the faith.

<sup>1</sup> MB XIII, 919, but cf. also BM IV, 382.

**Assistance as an attitude and method**

39. The practice of the Preventive System demands a fundamental disposition on our part: an empathy with the young and a willingness to be with them: “Here in your midst I feel completely at home; for me, living means being here with you.”<sup>1</sup>

We are present as brothers among the young in an active and friendly way, helping them in their efforts to grow in what is good, and encouraging them to cast off every form of slavery, so that their weakness may not be overcome by evil.

This presence affords us a true understanding of the world of the young and unites us with them in all the healthy aspects of their restless energy.

<sup>1</sup> BM IV, 455.

## CRITERIA FOR SALESIAN ACTIVITY

*“For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them... To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some.” (1 Cor 9:19,22)*

**Don Bosco's Oratory a permanent criterion**

40. Don Bosco lived a pastoral experience in his first Oratory which serves as a model; it was for the youngsters a home that welcomed, a parish that evangelized, a school that prepared them for life, and a playground where friends could meet and enjoy themselves.

As we carry out our mission today, the Valdocco experience is still the lasting criterion for discernment and renewal in all our activities and works.

<b>Inspirational criteria for our activity and works</b>	<p><b>41.</b> Our apostolic activity is carried out in a variety of ways, which depend in the first place upon the actual needs of those for whom we are working.</p> <p>We give practical expression to the redeeming love of Christ by organizing activities and works of an educational and pastoral nature designed to meet the needs of the neighbourhood and of the Church. Sensitive to the signs of the times and with initiative and continual flexibility we evaluate these activities, renew them and create new ones.</p> <p>The education and evangelization of many young people, especially among the very poor, means that we have to go to them where they are to be found, and provide adequate forms of service in the context of their own lifestyle.</p>
<b>R 1</b>	
<b>Activities and works</b>	<p><b>42.</b> We carry out our mission chiefly in works that make possible the human and Christian education of the young, such as oratories and youth centres, schools and vocational training centres, boarding establishments and houses for young people in difficulty.</p> <p>In parishes and mission residences we contribute to the spreading of the gospel and to the advancement of the people. We collaborate in the pastoral programme of the particular Church out of the riches of our specific vocation.</p> <p>In specialized centres we make available our pedagogical and catechetical expertise in the service of the young.</p> <p>In retreat houses we provide for the Christian formation of groups, especially of young people.</p> <p>We dedicate ourselves also to every other kind of work which has as its scope the salvation of the young.</p>
<b>R 11-30, 35</b>	
<b>Social communication</b>	<p><b>43.</b> We work in the social communication sector. This is a significant field of activity<sup>1</sup> which constitutes one of the apostolic priorities of the Salesian mission.</p> <p>Our Founder had an instinctive grasp of the value of this means of mass education which creates culture and spreads patterns of life; he showed great originality in the apostolic undertakings which he initiated to defend and sustain the faith of the people.</p> <p>Following his example we utilize as God's gift the great possibilities which social communication offers us for education and evangelization.</p>
<b>R 31-34, 41</b>	

<sup>1</sup> IM 1.

## THOSE WHO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISSION

*“The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose and each will receive his wages according to the labour of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”*  
(1 Cor 3:8-9)

### **The mission is given to the community**

**44.** The apostolic mandate which the Church entrusts to us is taken up and put into effect in the first place by the provincial and local communities. The members have complementary functions and each one of their tasks is important. They are aware that pastoral objectives are achieved through unity and joint brotherly responsibility.

The provincial and the rector, as animators of dialogue and teamwork, guide the community in pastoral discernment, so that it may accomplish its apostolic plan in unity and fidelity.

### **Common and complementary responsibilities**

**45.** Each of us is responsible for the common mission, and participates in it with the richness of his own personal gifts and with the lay and priestly characteristics of the one Salesian vocation.

The Salesian coadjutor brother brings to every field of education and pastoral activity the specific qualities of his lay status, which make him in a particular way a witness to God’s Kingdom in the world, close as he is to the young and to the realities of working life.

The Salesian priest or deacon brings to the common work of promoting human development and of educating in the faith the specific quality of his ministry, which makes him a sign of Christ the Good Shepherd, especially by preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments.

The significant and complementary presence of clerical and lay Salesians in the community constitutes an essential element of its make up and of its apostolic completeness.

### **Young Salesians**

**46.** The family spirit and the dynamic drive which is characteristic of our mission among young people make the contribution of young Salesians in the apostolate particularly important.

They are closer to the rising generations; they can provide inspiration and enthusiasm; they are ready to try new solutions.

The community, by encouraging and guiding this generosity, helps them to mature as religious and apostles.

### **The educative community and lay people associated with our work**

**47.** We bring about in our works the Educative and Pastoral Community which involves young people and adults, parents and educators, in a family atmosphere, so that it can become a living experience of Church and a revelation of God’s plan for us.

Lay people associated with our work make a contribution all their own in this community because of their experience and pattern of life.

We welcome and encourage their collaboration, and we give them the opportunity to get a deeper knowledge of the Salesian spirit and the practice of the Preventive System.

We foster the spiritual growth of each of them, and to those who may be so inclined we suggest a closer sharing of our mission in the Salesian Family.

**Solidarity with the particular Church**

**48.** The community lives and expresses its apostolic commitment within the particular Church. We become part of its pastoral action which has the Bishop at its head<sup>1</sup> and the directives of the Bishops' Conference as a springboard for action on a wider scale.

We offer the particular Church the contribution of our work and Salesian pedagogy, and we receive from it direction and support.

To forge more systematic links we share initiatives with other groups belonging to the Salesian Family and with other religious institutes.

R **2, 13, 25, 35**

We are ready to cooperate with civil organisations working in the fields of education and social development.

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 678 §1.

## 5. IN FRATERNAL AND APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES

*“Let love be genuine... love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour... Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers... Live in harmony with one another.”*  
(Rom 12:9-10,13,16)

### **Importance of life in community**

**49.** To live and work together is for us Salesians a fundamental requirement and a sure way of fulfilling our vocation.

This is why we come together in communities,<sup>1</sup> where our love for each other leads us to share all we have in a family spirit, and so create communion between person and person.

R 20

The community is a reflection of the mystery of the Trinity: there we find a response to the deep aspirations of the heart, and we become signs of love and unity for the young.

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 608.

### **The bonds of unity**

**50.** God calls us to live in community and entrusts us with brothers to love.

Brotherly love, our apostolic mission and the practice of the evangelical counsels are the bonds which form us into one and constantly reinforce our communion.

R 42

We thus become one heart and one soul to love and serve God,<sup>1</sup> and to help one another.

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, II, 1.

### **Relationships of fraternal friendship**

**51.** St Paul exhorts us: “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other.”<sup>1</sup>

The family spirit is the hallmark of the Salesian community and inspires every moment of its life: work and prayer, meals and recreation, meetings and other encounters.

In an atmosphere of brotherly friendship we share our joys and sorrows, and we are partners in our apostolic plans and experiences.

<sup>1</sup> Col 3:12-13.

**The confrere in the community**

**52.** The community receives each confrere with an open heart. It accepts him as he is and fosters his growth to maturity. It offers him the opportunity to use and develop his gifts of nature and of grace. It provides for his needs and sustains him in moments of doubt and difficulty, weariness and ill health.

Don Bosco used to say to those who asked to remain with him: “Bread, work and paradise: I can offer you these three things in the Lord’s name.”<sup>1</sup>

The confrere pledges himself to build up the community in which he lives. He loves it, despite its imperfections, and knows that in it he finds the presence of Christ.

He accepts fraternal correction, fights whatever he discovers in himself which militates against the community and gives his own generous contribution to the community life and work. He thanks God that he is among brothers who encourage him and help him.

R 43

<sup>1</sup> BM XVIII, 357.

**Sick and aging confreres**

**53.** The community surrounds its sick and aged confreres with care and affection.

They in their turn, accepting their condition and serving the community in whatever way they can, are a source of blessing for it; they enrich its family spirit and deepen its unity.

Their life takes on a new apostolic significance. As they offer their limitations and sufferings in a spirit of faith for their brothers and for the young, they are united with the redeeming passion of the Lord, and continue to share in the Salesian mission.

**Death of the confrere**

**54.** The community supports with greater love and prayer the confrere who is gravely ill. When the hour comes for him to bring his consecrated life to its highest fulfilment, his brothers help him to enter fully into Christ’s paschal mystery.

Death for the Salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of his Lord,<sup>1</sup> and when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great triumph.<sup>2</sup>

R 47

The memory of departed confreres unites, in a love that will not pass away,<sup>3</sup> those who are still pilgrims with those who are already resting in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Mt 25:21.

<sup>2</sup> BM XVII, 250.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 13:8.

**The rector in the community**

**55.** The rector represents Christ who unites his followers in the service of the Father. He is at the centre of the community, a brother among brothers, who recognises his responsibility and authority.

His first task is to animate the community so that it may live faithful to the Constitutions and grow in unity. He coordinates the efforts of all, bearing in mind the rights, duties and capabilities of every member.

He also has a direct responsibility toward each confrere; he helps him realise his own personal vocation and carry out the work entrusted to him.

He extends his concern to the young and to our colleagues, so that they may share in the community's mission with increasing responsibility.

In his words, frequent contacts and opportune decisions he is a father, teacher and spiritual guide.

R 42, 48

**A welcoming community**

**56.** With simplicity the confreres lead a life of self-giving and sharing, by welcoming others and offering them hospitality. By their kindness and cheerfulness they are able to draw everyone into the Salesian family spirit.

Nevertheless, to foster mutual respect and expressions of brotherly communion, every community should reserve certain parts of the religious house for the confreres alone.<sup>1</sup>

R 21, 45

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can 667 §1.

**An open community**

**57.** The Salesian community works in communion with the particular Church.

It is open to the world's values and attentive to the cultural milieu in which it carries out its apostolic work. At one with those among whom it lives, it cultivates good relations with all.

Thus it becomes a sign revealing Christ and his saving presence among us, and becomes a haven giving rise to new vocations after the example of the first community of Valdocco.

**The provincial community**

**58.** Local communities are a living part of the provincial community. The latter fosters fraternal communion among them and supports them in their mission.

It shows a loving concern for new confreres; it is solicitous for the formation of every member, rejoices in their success and the happy occasions in their lives, grieves over their loss and keeps alive their memory.

Attentive to the youth situation, it coordinates and evaluates our apostolic work through its various services; it encourages collaboration, stimulates pastoral work for vocations, provides for the continuity of our works, and is open to new activities.

It cultivates the spirit of brotherhood and expresses it concretely through solidarity with other provinces, with the Congregation and with the Salesian Family.

**The world community**

**59.** Religious profession incorporates the Salesian in the Society, making him a participant in the communion of spirit, witness and service that is its life within the Universal Church.

Union with the Rector Major and his Council, solidarity in apostolic initiatives, communication and exchange of information about the work of the confreres, all increase this communion, deepen the sense of belonging and dispose us to give our service to the world community.

R 103

## 6. FOLLOWING THE OBEDIENT, POOR AND CHASTE CHRIST

*“I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ ... because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” (Phil 3:8,12)*

### **Following Christ**

**60.** By religious profession we mean to live the grace of our baptism radically and more fully.

We follow Jesus Christ, who “chaste and poor, redeemed and sanctified men through obedience,”<sup>1</sup> and we share more closely in his paschal mystery, his self-emptying and his life in the Spirit.

Surrendering ourselves totally to God whom we love above all else, we commit ourselves to a form of life based entirely on gospel values.

<sup>1</sup> PC 1.

### **Fraternal and apostolic love**

**61.** Don Bosco frequently points out how the sincere practice of the vows strengthens the bonds of brotherly love and makes our apostolic work coherent.

The profession of the counsels helps us to live a life of communion with our brothers in the religious community as in a family which enjoys the presence of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

The evangelical counsels render our pastoral charity solicitous and fruitful by fostering purification of the heart and spiritual freedom:<sup>2</sup> the obedient, poor and chaste Salesian is quick to love and serve those to whom the Lord sends him, especially poor youth.

<sup>1</sup> PC 15.

<sup>2</sup> LG 46.

### **A particular sign of God's presence**

**62.** The practice of the counsels, lived in the spirit of the beatitudes, makes our proclamation of the gospel more convincing.

In a world tempted by atheism and the idolatry of pleasure, possessions and power, our way of life bears witness, especially to the young, that God exists, that his love can fill a life completely, and that the need to love, the urge to possess, and the freedom to control one's whole existence, find their fullest meaning in Christ the Saviour.

Our way of life also affects our manner of dressing, which is meant to be an external sign of this witness and service. The clerics follow the dispositions of the particular Churches in the countries in which they reside,<sup>1</sup> and the lay members adopt the simple style which Don Bosco recommended.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 669.

<sup>2</sup> C 1875, XV, 1-3.



**Witness of the world  
to come**

**63.** The offering of his own freedom through obedience, the spirit of evangelical poverty and the love which becomes a gift in chastity, make the Salesian a sign of the power of the resurrection.

The evangelical counsels, fashioning his heart entirely for the Kingdom, help him discern and welcome God's action in history; in the simplicity and hard work of daily life they transform him into an educator who proclaims to the young "a new heaven and a new earth,"<sup>1</sup> awakening in them hope and the dedication and joy to which it gives rise.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev 21:1.

<sup>2</sup> Rom 12:12.

## OUR OBEDIENCE

*"Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him." (Heb 5:8-9)*

**Gospel significance of  
our obedience**

**64.** Our Saviour assured us that he came on earth to do not his own will but that of his Father in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

By professing obedience we offer our will to God and by carrying out the mission entrusted to us we relive Christ's own obedience in the Church and in the Congregation.

Docile to the Spirit and attentive to the signs he gives us in the events of each day, we take the gospel as our supreme rule of life,<sup>2</sup> the Constitutions as a sure path to follow, and the superiors and the community as day by day interpreters of God's will.

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, III, 1.

<sup>2</sup> PC 2.

**Salesian style of  
obedience and  
authority**

**65.** In Salesian tradition, obedience and authority are practised in a family spirit of love which inspires relationships of mutual esteem and trust.

The superior directs, guides and encourages, making discreet use of his authority. All the confreres collaborate by obeying readily and sincerely, "with cheerfulness and humility."<sup>1</sup>

The service of authority and the willingness to obey are the principles of cohesion in the Congregation, and guarantee its permanence; for the Salesian they are the path to holiness and the source of energy in his work, of joy and of peace.

R 50

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, III, 2.

**Shared responsibility  
in obedience**

**66.** In the community, in view of the mission entrusted to us, we all obey even though we have different tasks to perform.

In listening to the Word of God and celebrating the Eucharist, we express and renew our common dedication to the divine will.

In matters of importance we seek the will of the Lord together in patient brotherly dialogue, with a deep awareness of shared responsibility.

The superior exercises his authority by listening to the confreres, encouraging all to make their contribution and promoting a union of wills in faith and charity. He concludes this phase of searching in common by making appropriate decisions. These will normally emerge from a convergence of the views expressed.

We all then set to work to carry out these decisions by our sincere collaboration, even when our own views have not prevailed.

**Personal obedience and  
freedom**

**67.** The Salesian is expected to obey in freedom of spirit and with an awareness of his personal responsibility, pledging his “powers of intellect and will, and his gifts of nature and grace.”<sup>1</sup>

He obeys with faith and sees in the superior an aid and a sign which God uses to manifest his will.

Obedience like this “leads to maturity by extending the freedom of the sons of God.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PC 14.

<sup>2</sup> PC 14.

**Requirements of the  
vow of obedience**

**68.** By vowing obedience the Salesian pledges himself to obey lawful superiors in matters concerning the observance of the Constitutions.<sup>1</sup>

When an order is given expressly by virtue of the vow of obedience, the obligation to obey is a grave one. Only major superiors and rectors can command in this way, but they should do so rarely, in writing or before two witnesses, and only when some serious reason requires it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can 601.

<sup>2</sup> CIC, can 49ff.

**Personal gifts and  
obedience**

**69.** Each one places his abilities and talents at the service of the common mission.

The superior, with the help of the community, has a special responsibility for the discernment of these gifts, and for promoting their development and right use.

If the concrete demands of charity and the apostolate require the sacrifice of personal wishes or plans which are in themselves lawful, the confrere accepts with faith whatever obedience asks of him, while still retaining the right of recourse to a higher authority.

Before taking on tasks or offices other than those assigned to him in the community, he seeks authorisation from the lawful superior.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 671.

**The talk with the superior**

**70.** Faithful to Don Bosco's recommendation, each confrere meets frequently with his superior for a friendly talk.

This is one of the best opportunities for dialogue, both for his own personal advantage and for promoting the good running of the community.

R 49

In it he speaks with confidence of his own life and work and, if he so wishes, also of the state of his conscience.

**Obedience and the mystery of the cross**

**71.** "Substitute acts of penance," Don Bosco tells us, "with acts of obedience."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes obedience will clash with our own selfish attitudes and desires for independence, or may really test our love. This is the moment to look to Christ, who was obedient even unto death:<sup>2</sup> "Father, if this [cup] cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."<sup>3</sup>

The mystery of his death and resurrection teaches us how fruitful it is for us to obey: the grain of wheat which dies in the obscurity of the earth bears much fruit.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BM XIII, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Phil 2:8 cf. BM IV, 163.

<sup>3</sup> Mt 26:42.

<sup>4</sup> Jn 12:24.

**OUR POVERTY**

*"Jesus said to him: 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'"* (Mt 19:21)

**Gospel significance of our poverty**

**72.** We are aware of the generosity of our Lord Jesus Christ: though he was rich he made himself poor so that through his poverty we might become rich.<sup>1</sup>

We are called to a life closely modelled on the gospel. We choose to follow "the Saviour who was born in poverty, lived deprived of everything and died stripped on the cross."<sup>2</sup>

Like the apostles at our Lord's invitation we free ourselves from concern and worry about earthly goods<sup>3</sup> and, trusting in the providence of the Father, we dedicate ourselves to the service of the gospel.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor 8:9.

<sup>2</sup> C 1875 (Introduction), p. xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Mt 6:25ff.

**Poverty and the Salesian mission**

**73.** Don Bosco lived his poverty in detachment of heart and generous service of others; his manner was marked by austerity, hard work and much initiative.

Following his example, we too live detached from all earthly goods;<sup>1</sup> we participate with a spirit of enterprise in the mission of the Church and in her struggle for justice and peace, especially by educating those in need.

The witness of our poverty, lived in a common sharing of our goods, helps the young to overcome their selfish possessive instinct and opens them to the Christian sense of sharing.

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, IV, 7.

**Requirements of the  
vow of poverty**

74. By the vow of poverty we undertake not to use and not to dispose of material goods without the consent of the lawful superior.

Each confrere retains the ownership of his patrimony and the right to acquire other goods, but before his profession he freely disposes of their use and enjoyment and cedes their administration to others.

Before perpetual profession he draws up his will in conformity with the norms of civil law. After serious reflection, as an expression of his complete abandonment to divine Providence, he may also renounce definitively the goods of which he has retained the ownership in accordance with universal law and that of the Society.

R 51-53

**Personal commitment  
to poverty**

75. Each one of us bears prime responsibility for his own poverty, daily living out by the frugality of his life the detachment he has promised.

He accepts his dependence on the superior and community in the use of temporal goods, but he knows too that permission does not dispense him from being poor in spirit and in fact.<sup>1</sup>

He is careful not to give way gradually to a desire for a comfortable and easy life, which poses a direct threat to fidelity and to apostolic generosity.

When his state of poverty causes him some inconvenience or suffering,<sup>2</sup> he is glad to be able to share in the blessings promised by the Lord to the poor in spirit.<sup>3</sup>

R 55

<sup>1</sup> PC 13.

<sup>2</sup> C 1875 (Introduction), p. xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> Mt 5:3.

**Christian sharing of  
goods**

76. After the example of the first Christians, we share together our material goods,<sup>1</sup> the fruits of our work, the gifts we receive and whatever comes to us from pensions, subsidies and insurance policies. We do the same with our talents, our energies and our experience.

In the community the good of each individual becomes the good of all.

As brothers we share what we have with the other communities of the province, and we show solidarity with the needs of the entire Congregation, of the Church and of the world.

R 56-58, 63, 197, 201

<sup>1</sup> Acts 4:32.

**Witness of poverty in  
the community and in  
our works**

77. Every community is sensitive to the conditions of its neighbourhood and bears witness to its poverty by a simple and frugal way of life in unpretentious dwellings.

Following the example and spirit of our Founder, we accept ownership of the means we need for our work, and we administer them in such a way that all may realise they are being used for the service of others.

Our choice of works and of their location is made in response to the needs of those in want; the criterion for our buildings is that they be simple and functional.

R 1, 58-65

**Work** 78. Unremitting and self-sacrificing work is a characteristic left us by Don Bosco, and is a concrete expression of our poverty.

R 64 In our daily labours we are at one with the poor who live by the sweat of their brow, and we bear witness to the human and Christian value of work.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ET 20.

**Solidarity with the poor** 79. The spirit of poverty leads us to be one with the poor and to love them in Christ.<sup>1</sup>  
For this reason we make every effort to stay close to them, to alleviate their needs, making our own their lawful aspirations for a more human society.

In seeking and accepting help for the service of the needy, we imitate Don Bosco in his zeal and gratitude, and like him we retain the freedom the gospel gives us. “Remember well,” he tells us, “that what we have is not ours; it belongs to the poor; woe to us if we do not use it well.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PC 13.

<sup>2</sup> BM V, 450.

## OUR CHASTITY

*“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life... nor things present, nor things to come... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:38-39)*

**Gospel significance of our chastity** 80. Consecrated chastity because of the Kingdom is a “precious gift given to some by the Father.”<sup>1</sup> Responding in faith we accept it with gratitude and we pledge ourselves by vow to live perfect continence in celibacy.<sup>2</sup>

We follow Jesus Christ closely choosing an intensely evangelical way of loving God and our neighbour with an undivided heart.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, with a specific vocation we take our place in the mystery of the Church, which is totally united to Christ, and sharing in its fruitfulness we dedicate ourselves to our mission.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> LG 42.

<sup>2</sup> CIC, can. 599.

<sup>3</sup> LG 42.

<sup>4</sup> ET 13-14; RD 11.

**Chastity and the Salesian mission** 81. Don Bosco lived chastity as a love for God and for the young which had no limits. He wanted it to be a distinctive mark of the Salesian Society: “Anyone devoting his life to destitute youth should certainly strive to enrich himself with every virtue, but the virtue he should specially cultivate is chastity.”<sup>1</sup>

Our tradition has always considered chastity a resplendent virtue, bearing a special message for the education of youth. Through it we bear witness to the predilection of Christ for the young; it allows us to love them in an open and uncomplicated way, so that they “know they are loved”,<sup>2</sup> and it enables us to educate them to love and to purity.

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, V, 1.

<sup>2</sup> DB, Letter from Rome 1884, BM XVII, 88.

**Chastity and human maturity**

**82.** The educational and pastoral demands of our mission and the fact that the observance of perfect continence touches some of the deepest drives of human nature,<sup>1</sup> require of the Salesian psychological balance and affective maturity.

Don Bosco used to warn: Whoever has not a well-grounded hope of being able, with divine help, to preserve the virtue of chastity in word, in deed and in thought, should not make profession in this Society, for he would often find himself in danger.<sup>2</sup>

R 68

<sup>1</sup> PC 12.<sup>2</sup> C 1875, V, 2.**Chastity and community life**

**83.** Consecrated chastity, a “sign and stimulus of love”,<sup>1</sup> frees and enables us to become all things to all people. It develops in us a Christian sense of personal relationships, encourages true friendships, and helps to make the community a family.

In its turn, the community’s fraternal atmosphere helps us to live our celibacy because of the Kingdom with joy, and sustained by its love and understanding to come safely through difficult times.

<sup>1</sup> LG 42.**Attitudes and means for growing in chastity**

**84.** Our chastity is not a conquest made once for all time. It has its moments of peace and moments of trial. It is a gift which because of human weakness demands a daily pledge of fidelity.

For this reason the Salesian, faithful to the Constitutions, lives a life of work and temperance, practices mortification and the custody of the senses, makes discreet and prudent use of the means of social communication, and does not neglect the natural means which contribute to physical and mental health.

Above all, he implores God’s help and lives in his presence; he nourishes his love for Christ at the table of the Word and the Eucharist, and humbly purifies it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation; he entrusts himself with simplicity to a spiritual director.

He turns with filial trust to Mary, the Immaculate Help of Christians, who helps him to love as Don Bosco did.

R 44, 66-68

## 7. IN DIALOGUE WITH THE LORD

*“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Col 3:16-17)*

### **The gift of prayer**

**85.** The community expresses in a visible manner the mystery of the Church, which is not born of any human will but is the fruit of the Lord’s death and resurrection. In the same way God brings our community together and keeps it united by his call, his Word, his love.

R 69

In praying, the Salesian community responds to this call; it deepens its awareness of its intimate and living relationship with God, and of its saving mission, making its own Don Bosco’s prayer: “Da mihi animas, cetera tolle.”

### **Salesian prayer**

**86.** Docile to the Holy Spirit, Don Bosco lived an experience of humble, trusting and apostolic prayer in which praying and living were spontaneously united.

We learn from him to recognize the action of grace in the lives of the young; we pray for them so that the design of the Father may be fulfilled in each of them, and we pray with them to witness to our faith and share the same hope of salvation.

R 77

Salesian prayer is joyful and creative, simple and profound. It lends itself to community participation, is drawn from life experience and flows back into it.

### **The community attentive to the Word**

**87.** The people of God are gathered together before all else by the Word of the living God.<sup>1</sup>

For us the Word, listened to with faith, is a source of spiritual life, food for prayer, light to see God’s will in the events of life, and strength to live out our vocation faithfully.

With the Sacred Scriptures daily in hand,<sup>2</sup> we welcome the Word as Mary did and ponder it in our heart,<sup>3</sup> so that it will bear fruit and we may proclaim it with zeal.

<sup>1</sup> PO 4.

<sup>2</sup> PC 6.

<sup>3</sup> Lk 2:19,51.

**The community made one by the Eucharist**

**88.** The hearing of the Word finds its privileged place in the celebration of the Eucharist. Each day this is the central act of every Salesian community; it calls for joyful participation in a living liturgy.

There the community celebrates the paschal mystery and unites itself to the immolated body of Christ, which it receives so as to build itself in him into a fraternal communion and renew its apostolic commitment.

Concelebration stresses the richness of this mystery; it expresses the triple unity of sacrifice, priesthood and community, a community whose members are all at the service of the same mission.

For us sons of Don Bosco the Eucharistic presence in our houses is a reason for frequent encounters with Christ. From him we draw energy and endurance in our work for the young.

R 70

**The mystery of Christ in time**

**89.** The Liturgy of the Hours extends the grace of the Eucharistic mystery throughout the day.<sup>1</sup>

The community, united to Christ and to the Church, praises and makes supplication to the Father, nourishes its union with him<sup>2</sup> and maintains an attentive attitude to the divine will. Without prejudice to the obligations assumed by clerics at their ordination,<sup>3</sup> the community celebrates Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer with the dignity and fervour that Don Bosco recommended.

Sunday is the day of Easter joy. Lived in apostolic activity, piety and cheerfulness, it reinvigorates the Salesian's confidence and optimism.

The commemoration of the mysteries of the Lord, as they occur in the liturgical year, makes of our life a time of salvation in hope.<sup>4</sup>

R 70

<sup>1</sup> IGLH 10,12.

<sup>2</sup> LG 3.

<sup>3</sup> CIC, can 1174 §1.

<sup>4</sup> SC 102.

**The community in continual conversion**

**90.** The Word of God calls us to continual conversion.

Aware of our weakness, we respond by vigilance and sincere repentance, brotherly correction, mutual forgiveness and the calm acceptance of our daily cross.

This commitment to conversion on the part of each member and of the whole community is brought to its fulfilment by the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Prepared by the daily examination of conscience and received frequently according to the Church's directives, this sacrament gives us the joy of the Father's pardon, rebuilds brotherly communion and purifies our apostolic intentions.

R 73



**Opportune times for conversion**

**91.** Our will for conversion is strengthened in the monthly recollection and in the annual retreat. These are occasions of spiritual renewal which Don Bosco considered the fundamental part and the synthesis of all the practices of piety.<sup>1</sup>

For the community and for every Salesian these are privileged moments for listening to the Word of God, discerning his will and purifying our hearts.

R 72

These times of grace restore to our spirit a deep unity in the Lord Jesus and keep alive in us the expectation of his return.

<sup>1</sup> C 1875, (Introduction), p. xxxiv.

**Mary in the life and prayer of the Salesian**

**92.** Mary, Mother of God, holds a unique place in the history of salvation.

She is a model of prayer and pastoral love, the teacher of wisdom and the guide of our Family.

We contemplate and imitate her faith, her concern for the needy, her fidelity at the hour of the cross and her joy at the wonders wrought by the Father.

Mary Immaculate, Help of Christians, leads us to the fullness of our offering to the Lord and gives us courage for the service of our brethren.

R 74

We develop a strong filial devotion to her. We pray the rosary each day and celebrate her feasts to encourage a more convinced and personal imitation.

**Personal prayer**

**93.** We can form praying communities only if individually we become men of prayer. Each one needs to express his own personal way of being a son of God, expressing his gratitude, telling him about his yearnings and his concerns in the apostolate.

For us mental prayer is essential. It strengthens our intimate union with God, saves us from routine, keeps our heart free and fosters our dedication to others. For Don Bosco it is a guarantee of joyous perseverance in our vocation.

R 71

**The memory of our dead confreres**

**94.** Faith in the risen Christ sustains our hope and keeps alive our communion with our brothers who rest in Christ's peace. They have spent their lives in the Congregation and not a few have suffered even to the point of martyrdom for love of the Lord.

United with them in an exchange of spiritual benefits, we gratefully offer for them the prescribed suffrages.

R 47, 76

Their remembrance is an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission.

**Life as prayer**

**95.** Immersed in the world and in the cares of the pastoral life, the Salesian learns to meet God through those to whom he is sent.

Discovering the fruits of the Spirit<sup>1</sup> in the lives of people, especially the young, he gives thanks for everything;<sup>2</sup> as he shares their problems and sufferings, he invokes upon them the light and strength of God's presence.

He draws on the love of the Good Shepherd, whose witness he wants to be, and shares in the spiritual riches offered him by the community.

His need of God, keenly felt in his apostolic commitment, leads him to celebrate the liturgy of life, attaining that "tireless industry made holy by prayer and union with God that should be the characteristic of the sons of Don Bosco."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gal 5:22.

<sup>2</sup> Eph 5:20.

<sup>3</sup> R 1924, art. 291.

Part Three

**FORMED FOR THE MISSION  
OF PASTORS AND EDUCATORS**

[Contents](#)

## 8. GENERAL ASPECTS OF OUR FORMATION

### SALESIAN FORMATION

*“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.” (Eph 4:15)*

#### Vocation and formation

**96.** Jesus called his Apostles individually to be with him, and to be sent forth to preach the gospel.<sup>1</sup> Patiently and lovingly he prepared them and gave them the Holy Spirit to guide them into the fullness of Truth.<sup>2</sup>

He calls us too to live out in the Church our Founder’s project as apostles of the young.

We respond to this call by committing ourselves to an adequate ongoing formation for which the Lord daily gives us his grace.

<sup>1</sup> Mk 3:14.

<sup>2</sup> Jn 16:13.

#### Salesian orientation of formation

**97.** The first Salesians found their sure guide in Don Bosco. Living at the very heart of his community in action, they learned to model their own lives on his.

We too find in him our model. The religious and apostolic nature of the Salesian calling dictates the specific direction our formation must take, a direction necessary for the life and unity of the Congregation.

#### The formation experience

**98.** Enlightened by the person of Christ and by his gospel lived according to Don Bosco’s spirit, the Salesian commits himself to a formation process which will last all his life and will keep pace with his maturing in other ways. He learns by experience the meaning of the Salesian vocation at the various moments of his life and accepts the ascetical demands it makes on him.

With the help of Mary, his Mother and Teacher, he gradually becomes a pastor and educator of the young in the lay or priestly state which he has embraced.

#### Personal and community commitment

**99.** Each Salesian accepts responsibility for his own formation. Docile to the Holy Spirit he develops his talents and his gifts of grace in a constant effort of conversion and renewal, as he lives and works for the common mission.

The natural environment for vocational growth is the community which the confrere joins with trust and in which he gives his responsible collaboration. The very life of the community, united in Christ and open to the needs of the times, is itself a factor in formation, and hence must continually move forward and be renewed.

R 85

#### Unity of formation and different cultures

**100.** The principle of unity in the Congregation is the charism of our Founder, which of its richness gives rise to different ways of living the one Salesian vocation. Formation is therefore one in its essential content and diversified in its concrete expressions; it accepts and develops whatever is true, noble and just in the various cultures.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Phil 4:8.

**The provincial community and formation**

**101.** The provincial community welcomes and follows up the vocation of every confrere, sees to the preparation of formation personnel, provides formation structures, and makes each local community aware of its obligations in the formation sector.

It is the duty of the provincial community, through the various organs of animation and government, to lay down the method of formation according to the needs of its own cultural context and in conformity with the directives of the Church and of the Congregation.

In the exercise of this common responsibility, every Salesian, through prayer and personal witness, contributes to the sustaining and renewal of the vocation of his brothers.

R 84

## INITIAL FORMATION

*“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” (1 Sam 3:9)*

**Complexity and unity of initial formation**

**102.** The aim of initial formation is the human maturing of the young confrere, his intellectual preparation and the deepening of his consecrated life, as he is gradually introduced to educational and pastoral work.

In the formative experience these elements must be harmonized into a living unity.

**Formation communities**

**103.** Initial formation is ordinarily carried out in communities specifically designed for the purpose.

In accordance with Don Bosco’s style of education these communities are open and keep in mind the aspirations of the young for a more personal and fraternal lifestyle.

In them our spirit is lived in a more intense manner; together the members form a family founded on faith and enthusiasm for Christ, united in mutual esteem and common endeavour.

Those in formation and their formators contribute according to their different roles to the creation of an atmosphere of shared responsibility, and work with the aims of formation clearly in view.

R 78, 80, 81

**Role of formators**

**104.** Formators in formation communities have a specific and necessary role.

They ensure that those in formation have the opportunities for a valid experience and for serious doctrinal reflection in an appropriate setting.

Aware of being instruments through whom the Lord is working, they make every effort to constitute with the rector, who is the leader of the community and its spiritual guide, a group that is convinced of its common responsibility.

Chosen for this task are men of faith and sufficient pastoral experience, capable of a living communication of the Salesian ideal and of genuine dialogue with the young confreres.

R 78

**The Salesian in initial formation** **105.** For the Salesian the time of initial formation is not so much a period of marking time as already one of work and holiness. It is a time of dialogue between God, whose initiative calls him and leads him forward, and his own freedom as he gradually assumes responsibility for his own formation.

R 79

In this process of growing responsibility he is sustained by prayer, spiritual direction, personal reflection, study and brotherly relationships.

**Formation curriculum** **106.** Lay Salesians, future priests and permanent deacons normally have the same initial formation and follow a curriculum of equivalent level, with the same phases and similar content and objectives.

R 95, 97, 98

The necessary differences are determined by the specific vocation of each one, by his personal gifts and inclinations and the duties of our apostolate.

**Incorporation in the Society and periods of formation** **107.** Before being definitively incorporated into the Society, each one passes through the following periods of formation: preparation for the novitiate, the novitiate itself and the period of temporary profession.

These periods are necessary for both the candidate and the community, so that they may work together to discern God's will and correspond with it.

The candidate gradually gets to know the Society, and the Society in turn can evaluate his suitability for Salesian life.

**Admissions** **108.** After the candidate has freely presented his application, admission to the novitiate, to temporary or perpetual profession, to the ministries and to holy orders, is made by the provincial with the consent of his council after hearing the opinion of the rector of the community with his council.

R 81, 93, 94

The superiors base their judgement on positive indications of the candidate's suitability and keep in mind first of all the canonical requirements.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 642-645; 1019-1054.

## 9. THE FORMATION PROCESS

*“The one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil 1:6)*

### **Preparation for the novitiate**

**109.** To anyone who is thinking of becoming a Salesian, an environment and suitable conditions are offered to enable him to discern his own vocation and to mature as a man and a Christian. In this way, and with the help of a spiritual guide, he is able to make a choice with greater awareness of what he is doing, and without any external or internal pressures.

A period of special preparation is required immediately prior to the novitiate to deepen the candidate’s vocational choice and verify his suitability for beginning the novitiate. This preparation is made through an experience of Salesian community and apostolic life.

R 88

### **The novitiate**

**110.** The novitiate offers the candidate the possibility of beginning the Salesian religious experience.

For this reason the novitiate community must always provide an example of life founded on faith and nourished by prayer, in which evangelical simplicity, joy, friendship and mutual respect create a climate of trust and docility.

With the help of the director the novice examines carefully the motives for his choice, makes certain of his suitability for the Salesian calling, and prepares himself to give his all to God for the service of the young in the spirit of Don Bosco.

R 89, 92

### **Duration of the novitiate**

**111.** In accordance with canon law,<sup>1</sup> the novitiate lasts twelve months; it begins when the candidate, after being admitted by the provincial, enters the canonically erected novitiate house and places himself under the guidance of the director of novices.

The novitiate is invalidated by an absence of more than three months, continuous or broken. An absence of more than fifteen days must be made good.

R 93

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 647 §3; 648; 649 §1.

### **The director of novices**

**112.** The director of novices is the spiritual guide who coordinates and animates all the work of formation of the novitiate.

He must be a man of prudence with spiritual and Salesian experience and an up-to-date knowledge of practical psychology and youth problems. He should be able to relate easily to people, engage in dialogue, and inspire confidence in the novices by his kindness.

He must be perpetually professed and is appointed by the provincial with the consent of his council and the approval of the Rector Major. He remains in office for three years and may be reappointed.

### **Period of temporary profession**

**113.** The first profession marks the beginning of a period of consecrated life. In this period the confrere with the help of the community and of a spiritual guide, completes his maturing process with perpetual profession in view, and develops the different aspects of his vocation as a lay Salesian or as a candidate for the priesthood.

During the first three years of this period, profession may be either triennial or annual; in the next three years it will ordinarily be triennial.

R 95, 96

**The immediate postnovitiate**

**114.** The first profession is followed by a period of religious maturing which continues the formative experience of the novitiate and serves as a preparation for practical training.

The deepening of the life of faith and of the spirit of Don Bosco, together with an adequate philosophical, pedagogical and catechetical preparation that interacts with the prevailing culture, disposes the young confrere to a progressive integration of faith, culture and life.

**Practical training**

**115.** Throughout the whole of initial formation, importance is given not only to study but also to the pastoral activities of our mission.

The practical training phase provides opportunity for a deeper living experience of Salesian educative and pastoral action. During this time the young confrere gets practice in the Preventive System, particularly in Salesian assistance.

With the support of the rector and the community, he is able to integrate his activity and the fundamental values of his vocation.

R 86, 96

**Specific formation of the Salesian priest and the Salesian brother**

**116.** After practical training the Salesian goes on to complete his initial formation.

The specific formation of a candidate for the priestly ministry follows the norms and directives laid down by the Church and the Congregation, and has for its scope the preparation of a priest who will be a Salesian pastor and educator.

The specific formation of the lay Salesian offers him the opportunity to deepen his knowledge of the spiritual heritage of the Congregation. He receives an adequate theological preparation appropriate to his consecrated lay status, and completes his formation with a view to the educative and apostolic work that awaits him.

R 97, 98

**Perpetual profession**

**117.** A member makes his perpetual profession when he has reached the level of Salesian spiritual maturity commensurate with the importance of such a step.

The celebration of this act is preceded by an appropriate period of immediate preparation, and is marked by the fraternal recognition of the provincial community.

Perpetual profession takes place ordinarily six years after the first profession; if he considers it opportune the provincial can prolong this period, but not beyond nine years.

R 94

**Need for ongoing formation**

**118.** In the context of a society characterized by pluralism and rapid changes, the evolving nature of each individual and the quality and fruitfulness of our apostolic religious life call for a continuation of our formation after the initial phases. We try to grow in our human qualities, to conform ourselves more closely to Christ, and to renew our fidelity to Don Bosco, so that we can respond to the ever new demands arising from the situation of the young and the poor.

Through personal and community initiatives we nurture our Salesian spiritual life, ensure our theological and pastoral updating, and develop our professional competence and our apostolic inventiveness.

R 99-102



**Ongoing formation as a personal frame of mind**

**119.** Living in the midst of the young and in constant contact with low-income surroundings, the Salesian tries to discern the voice of the Spirit in the events of each day, and so acquires the ability to learn from life's experiences. He sees his ordinary activities as effective means of formation, and he also makes use of any other means of formation that may be offered him.

Even when he is fully occupied he finds opportunities for renewing the religious and pastoral meaning of his life and learning to carry out his work with greater competence.

R **10, 19, 99-102**

He also feels it his task to make the best formative use of any situation, and to see it as a favourable opportunity for growing in his vocation.

Part Four

**THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY  
IN OUR SOCIETY**

[Contents](#)

## 10. GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

*“Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mk 10:43-45)*

### **Basic structure of our Society**

**120.** Our Society is made up of provincial communities, and these in turn are divided into local communities.

Government at the world level ensures unity of life and action in differing environments and situations.

Central, provincial and local government is exercised with ordinary authority by a superior assisted by his council.

Supreme authority over the whole Congregation belongs to the General Chapter. Provincial chapters are granted specific powers within the domain of the province.

### **Nature of the service of authority**

**121.** In imitation of Christ and in his name, authority in the Congregation is exercised according to the spirit of Don Bosco as a service to brothers for discerning and fulfilling the Father’s will. This service is directed to fostering charity, coordinating the efforts of all, animating, orientating, making decisions, giving corrections, so that our mission may be accomplished.

According to our tradition, communities are guided by a member who is a priest and who by the grace of his priestly ministry and pastoral experience sustains and directs the spirit and activity of his brothers.

He is obliged to make the profession of faith prescribed by canon law.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 833 §8.

### **Unity in the government of the Society**

**122.** Superiors at every level of government share in one and the same authority and exercise it in communion with the Rector Major for the benefit of the whole Society. In this way, while fostering the good of each individual community, they are solicitous for the unity, growth and perfecting of the whole Congregation.

### **Participation and shared responsibility**

**123.** Our common vocation requires the responsible and effective participation of all the members in the life and action of the local, provincial and world communities, not only in terms of implementation but also of planning, organizing and evaluating, according to their respective roles and competence.

This shared responsibility calls for the participation of the confreres, in the most suitable way, in the choice of those responsible for government at the different levels, and in the working out of their more important decisions.

It is the duty of those who exercise authority to promote and guide this contribution by means of adequate information, personal dialogue and community reflection.

**Subsidiarity and  
decentralization**

**124.** Authority of any kind and at every level leaves to the initiative of lower bodies and individuals whatever can be decided and done by them, according to their respective competence. In this way the worth of individuals and communities is recognized, and more real involvement is encouraged.

The principle of subsidiarity implies decentralization which, while safeguarding unity, recognizes a proper autonomy and consequently a right distribution of powers between the different organs of government.

# 11. SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY

*“Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not under compulsion but willingly ... Do not lord it over those in your charge but be examples to the flock.” (1 Pet 5:2-3)*

- The Supreme Pontiff**      **125.** The Salesian Society has as its highest superior the Supreme Pontiff. Even by reason of the vow of obedience, the members are filially submissive to his authority, and available for the good of the universal Church. They welcome his magisterium with docility and help the faithful, especially the young, to accept his teachings.
- The Rector Major**      **126.** The Rector Major, Superior of the Salesian Society, is the successor of Don Bosco, the father and the centre of unity of the Salesian Family.
- His main concern is to promote, in communion with the General Council, the constant fidelity of the members to the Salesian charism, so as to fulfil the mission confided by God to our Society.
- R 103
- 127.** The Rector Major has ordinary power of government which he exercises according to law over all the provinces, houses and members in both spiritual and temporal matters. He visits personally or through others all the provinces and local communities.
- He convokes and presides over meetings of the General Council. He is the official representative of the Society.
- R 104, 105
- 128.** The Rector Major is elected by the General Chapter for a term of six years and may be re-elected only for a second six-year period. He may not resign his office without the consent of the Apostolic See.
- 129.** To be elected as Rector Major, a member must be a priest, perpetually professed for at least ten years, and distinguished for love of the Church and the Congregation, an exemplary life, pastoral zeal, ability and prudence in governing.
- The General Council**      **130.** The General Council cooperates with the Rector Major in animating and governing the Congregation.
- It is the task of the Council to identify and study the problems which concern the common welfare of the Society, promote fraternal union among the different provinces, and develop an ever more efficient organization for the fulfilment of the Salesian mission in the world.
- 131.** The members of the Council collaborate with the Rector Major by expressing their opinion and by voting. In union with him they fulfil the responsibilities assigned to them by the General Chapter and those which the Rector Major judges opportune to entrust to them. For this reason they have their domicile in the same house in which the Rector Major resides.
- R 106

**132.** §1. The Rector Major must have the consent of his Council for:

1. the erection or suppression of provinces, vice-provinces or other circumscriptions [C. 156];
2. the opening and closing of houses or the modification of the scope of works already in existence in accordance with canon law;<sup>1</sup>
3. the erection of novitiates [C. 110];
4. the convoking of the General Chapter in accordance with article 149 of the Constitutions;
5. the approval of deliberations of provincial chapters [C. 170];
6. the constitution of provincial conferences [C. 155];
7. the appointment of the substitute for a member of the General Council, in case of death or impediment [C. 142];
8. the appointment of the Secretary General [C. 144];
9. the appointment of the Procurator and Postulator General [C. 145];
10. the appointment of provincials, superiors of vice-provinces or other circumscriptions [C. 158, 162];
11. the termination of the office of provincials in conformity with article 163 of the Constitutions, and of superiors of vice-provinces and other circumscriptions [C. 158];
12. the alienation of property and movable assets belonging to the stable patrimony of the Congregation [C. 188];
13. the determination of the limits in terms of value within which the provincial and his council may act in respect of all the operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions [C. 189].

§2. The Rector Major must have the consent of the Councillors in residence, who must be no fewer than three in number in the following cases:

1. dispensation from temporary religious profession;
2. the appointment of provincial councillors [C. 167];
3. the granting of authorization for financial operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions, except for what is provided for in art. 132, §1, 12.

§3. In the case of dismissal of members, the Rector Major and his Council proceed in collegial fashion in accordance with canon law.

§4. In addition the Rector Major will consult his Council in other important matters whenever he considers it opportune to do so.

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 609-612.

**133.** The General Council is made up of the Vicar of the Rector Major, the Councillors in charge of special Sectors, and the Regional Councillors in charge of groups of provinces.

The Councillors in charge of special Sectors are: the Councillor for Formation, the Councillor for Youth Ministry, the Councillor for Social Communication, the Councillor for the Missions and the Economer General.

R 107

**The Vicar of the Rector Major**

**134.** The Vicar is the first collaborator of the Rector Major in the government of the Society and has ordinary vicarious power.

He takes the Rector Major's place whenever he is absent or impeded. To him is entrusted particularly the care of religious life and discipline.

**The Councillor for Formation**

**135.** The Councillor for Formation has the duty of furthering the integral and ongoing formation of the members.

He follows the phases of initial formation with particular care, to ensure that in them the content, arrangement of studies, formation methods and structures provide the conditions necessary for growth in the Salesian vocation.

**The Councillor for Youth Ministry**

**136.** The Councillor for Youth Ministry animates and gives direction to Salesian educative and apostolic activity in its different expressions. He ensures that the priority of our commitment to youth and the inspirational role of the Preventive System are achieved in them. He assists the provinces in the development of their pastoral plans and undertakings, so that they may be faithful to the spirit of Don Bosco and respond adequately to the needs of the times and of different places.

**The Councillor for Social Communication**

**137.** The Councillor for Social Communication has the duty of animating the Congregation in this Sector. He promotes Salesian activity in the Social Communication Sector, and in particular coordinates the structures and centres at world level for which the Congregation has responsibility in this field.

**The Councillor for the Missions**

**138.** The Councillor for the Missions fosters missionary spirit and commitment throughout the whole Society. He coordinates initiatives and directs activity in the missions so that it may respond in a Salesian way to the urgent needs of the peoples to be evangelized.

It is also his duty to see that provision is made for the specific preparation and updating of missionaries.

R 24

**The Economer General**

**139.** The Economer General administers those goods which do not belong to any particular province or house but to the whole Society.

He coordinates and monitors the administration of the provinces, so as to ensure that their management accords with the requirements of religious poverty and is at the service of the Salesian mission.

He is watchful to make sure that the norms necessary for sound administration are observed.

R 192

**The Regional Councillors**

**140.** The Regional Councillors promote a more direct liaison between the provinces and the Rector Major and his Council. They look after the interests of the provinces assigned to them. They foster a knowledge in the General Council of the local situations in which our mission is carried out.

R 135-137

**141.** §1. The members of the General Council are elected by the General Chapter in separate ballots for each one. Each regional councillor is elected and chosen by preference from a list presented by the Chapter members of the group of provinces concerned.

§2. To be elected to the General Council a member must have been perpetually professed for at least ten years. It is also necessary that the Vicar of the Rector Major be a priest.

R 126-128

**142.** §1. The Vicar of the Rector Major remains in office for six years and can only be elected to the same office for a second six-year term.

At the end of the first six years, the Vicar of the Rector Major can be elected General Councillor or Rector Major.

At the end of the second six-year period, he can only be elected Rector Major.

The General Councillors remain in office for six years. They can be elected to the same office or to another office, as General Councillors, only for a second six-year term.

At the end of the first or second six-year period, the General Councillors can be elected Vicar of the Rector Major or Rector Major.

§ 2. Should a member of the General Council die or be permanently unable to attend to his duties, the Rector Major with the consent of his Council shall entrust his office to whomsoever he judges most suitable in the Lord, but only until the expiry of the six-year period.

**143.** On the death or cessation from office of the Rector Major, the Vicar assumes the government of the Society *ad interim* and, in agreement with the other members of the General Council, proceeds to the convocation of the General Chapter for the election of the Rector Major and of the new Council.

The election must take place not more than nine months from the death or cessation from office of the Rector Major.

R 111

**The Secretary General**

**144.** The Secretary General is at the service of the Rector Major and his Council in the role of a notary. He is present without the right to vote at the meetings of the Council, and draws up its minutes.

He is responsible for the offices of the General Secretariat and for the Society's Central Archives. He is appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council, and remains in office *ad nutum*.

R 110

**The Procurator General**

**145.** The task of dealing with the Apostolic See is ordinarily entrusted to a Procurator General who is appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council and remains in office *ad nutum*.

Causes of beatification and canonization promoted by the Congregation are entrusted to the Postulator General, chosen in the same way as the Procurator.

**The General Chapter**

**146.** The General Chapter is the principal sign of the Congregation's unity in diversity. It is the fraternal meeting in which Salesians carry out a communal reflection to keep themselves faithful to the gospel and to the charism of the Founder, and sensitive to the needs of time and place.

Through the General Chapter the entire Society, opening itself to the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, seeks to discern God's will at a specific moment in history for the purpose of rendering the Church better service.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 631.



**147.** The General Chapter has supreme authority over the Society and exercises it in accordance with law.

In particular it belongs to the General Chapter to lay down laws for the whole Society, to treat of matters of greater importance and to elect the Rector Major and the members of the General Council.

**148.** The deliberations of the General Chapter must always be based upon the Constitutions approved by the Apostolic See and must contain nothing contrary to their spirit. They are binding on all the members as soon as they have been promulgated by the Rector Major.

Nevertheless, for the promulgation of deliberations which modify the Constitutions the previous approval of the Apostolic See must be obtained.

**149.** The General Chapter will meet ordinarily every six years and in the case referred to in article 143 of the Constitutions; and extraordinarily whenever it is required by a grave reason recognized as such by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council.

R 111-113, 116, 117,  
120-123, 125, 134

**150.** The General Chapter is convoked by the Rector Major, or in the circumstances referred to in article 143 by his Vicar. It is presided over by the Rector Major or in his absence by his Vicar.

**151.** The following attend the General Chapter with the right to vote:

1. the Rector Major;
2. the Rectors Major emeriti;
3. the members of the General Council, those not confirmed in office as well as the new members from the time of their election;
4. the Secretary General;
5. the Procurator General;
6. the Moderator of the General Chapter;
7. the provincials and superiors of vice-provinces, or if they are seriously impeded their vicars, with the prior approval of the Rector Major;
8. the delegates of the juridical circumscriptions referred to in art. 156 of the Constitutions, all perpetually professed, elected in accordance with art. 171,5 of the Constitutions and the General Regulations.

R 114, 115, 118

**152.** For the validity of the acts of the General Chapter at least two-thirds of the members must be present.

In dealing with matters indicated in article 148 of the Constitutions, whatever is approved by an absolute majority of those present shall have the force of law.

For modification to the text of the Constitutions a two-thirds majority of those present is required.

**153.** In the elections of the Rector Major and of the members of the General Council, whoever receives the vote of an absolute majority of those present will be considered elected.

R 126-133

If the first scrutiny should be ineffective, there shall be a second and a third. If the third also should be inconclusive there shall be a fourth in which the only candidates shall be the two members who have obtained the highest number of votes in the third scrutiny. If again there should be an equal number of votes, the senior by profession shall prevail and in the case of equality of profession the senior in age.

**Regional structures**

**154.** In order to facilitate contact with the Rector Major and the General Council and to foster bonds of union among themselves, provinces are gathered in groups, each group being entrusted to a Regional Councillor.

R 135-138

The constitution of the groups of provinces is made by the General Chapter.

**155.** When parallel situations or similarity of problems allow for a closer union between certain provinces, one or more provincial conferences may be set up within the group.

R 139-142

It belongs to the Rector Major with the consent of his Council to constitute provincial conferences after consulting the provinces concerned.

## 12. SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY

*“Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.” (Acts 20:28)*

**Juridical circumscriptions** **156.** It belongs to the Rector Major with the consent of his Council and after adequate consultation with the confreres concerned to divide the Society into juridical circumscriptions, erect new ones, combine those already constituted, define them in a different way or suppress them.

Normally the circumscriptions of our Society are provinces and vice-provinces.

As regards other eventual juridical circumscriptions, their internal structure and representation at the General Chapter will be defined in the decree of erection, in line with Salesian spirit and tradition.

### **The province**

**157.** The province unites the different local communities in one large community. It is canonically erected when the necessary and sufficient conditions exist for promoting in a specific juridical circumscription the life and mission of the Congregation with the autonomy that belongs to it according to the Constitutions.

Through its structures the province strengthens the bonds of communion between the members and the local communities and offers a specific service to the particular Church.

### **The vice-province**

**158.** The vice-province is similar to the province. It is established when distance, number or other circumstances require that some houses be detached from one or more provinces, but the lack of personnel, financial resources or some other reason does not warrant the establishment of a new province.

Its superior is appointed in the same way and with the same conditions as a provincial. He remains in office for six years and governs with ordinary vicarious power with the help of his council.

R 143-149

### **Provincial delegation**

**159.** If, within the confines of a province, distance or other reasons prevent the provincial from taking proper care of some local communities which, although having a certain unity among them do not have the requisites necessary for erection as a vice-province, the provincial with the consent of his council and the approval of the Rector Major, can set up a delegation.

Its superior is appointed by the provincial with the consent of his council and the approval of the Rector Major after due consultation among the confreres of the delegation. He exercises those powers the provincial sees fit to delegate to him.

### **Enrolment of members in a circumscription**

**160.** By first profession a member is enrolled in the juridical circumscription for whose service he asked to be admitted.

He can be enrolled in another juridical circumscription by permanent or temporary transfer on the part of the competent authorities.

R 151-157

**The provincial**

**161.** Each province is headed by a provincial. In union with the Rector Major and with love and pastoral zeal he carries out his service of building up a fraternal provincial community.

With the help of his council he animates the religious life and apostolic action of the provincial community, cares for the formation of the members, especially the novices and young confreres, and directs and controls the administration of the goods of the province and of each house.

R 144-148, 153, 160

**162.** The provincial is appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council after wide consultation in the province concerned.

He must be a priest and perpetually professed for at least ten years. He exercises ordinary power over all the houses and members of the province in both the internal and external forum, in accordance with the norms of the Constitutions and of canon law.

R 143, 149, 152, 153,  
160

He is the competent superior for granting permission to the confreres to publish writings of religious or moral content<sup>1</sup> and to preach to the confreres in their churches or oratories.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 832.

<sup>2</sup> CIC, can. 765.

**163.** The provincial remains in office for six years. During this period, the Rector Major with the consent of his Council may transfer him elsewhere or appoint him to another office, if he judges such action necessary for the good of the Congregation. When he has completed his term of six years he will ordinarily not hold the office of provincial again for at least one year.

**The provincial council**

**164.** The council assists the provincial in everything that concerns the animation and government of the province.

R 155, 159, 160

It is convoked and presided over by the provincial and is made up of the vice-provincial, economer and ordinarily three or five other councillors.

**165.** The provincial promotes the active and responsible collaboration of his councillors.

In matters of greater importance he should always listen to his council.

The provincial must have the consent of his council in the following cases:

1. admissions to the novitiate, to profession, to ministries and to sacred ordinations [C. 108];
2. appointment or transfer of a rector [C. 177];
3. appointment of the director of novices [C. 112];
4. setting up of provincial delegations and appointment of the delegates [C. 159];
5. seeking from the Rector Major and his Council authorization to open and close houses, modify the scope of existing works, and undertake works out of the ordinary [C. 132];
6. convoking an extraordinary provincial chapter [C. 172];
7. financial operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions;
8. deciding which sectors of the communities' activities are to be represented in local councils [C.180];
9. modifying the normal roles and structures within a community [C. 182];
10. authorizing confreres to live outside a house of the Congregation [CIC. can. 665 §1].

R 156-158

**166.** For a member to be a provincial councillor he must be perpetually professed for at least five years and no longer in the period of initial formation.

For the vice-provincial it is also required that he be a priest.

**167.** Provincial councillors are appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council on the proposal of the provincial, following a wide consultation among the confreres of the province.

They remain in office for three years and may be reappointed, or even relieved from office during that period.

R 154

**168.** The vice-provincial is the first collaborator of the provincial in everything that concerns the ordinary government of the province, as also in those matters specially entrusted to him.

He takes the place of the provincial whenever the latter is absent or impeded.

On the death of the provincial and until the Rector Major provides otherwise, the vice-provincial assumes and exercises the whole government of the province.

**169.** It is the duty of the provincial economer to administer the goods of the province, and to monitor and coordinate the economy of the individual houses, in agreement with the provincial and in accordance with the established norms.

R 193-196

**The provincial chapter** **170.** The provincial chapter is the fraternal gathering in which the local communities strengthen their sense of belonging to the provincial community, through their common concern for its general problems.

It is also the representative assembly of all the confreres and local communities.

It deliberates about matters which regard the province, with the exception of whatever is entrusted by the Constitutions and Regulations to other organs of government.

The deliberations of the provincial chapter have binding force after the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his Council, with the exception of what is prescribed by article 171.5 of the Constitutions.

**171.** It is the task of the provincial chapter:

1. to decide on what pertains to the good running of the province;
2. to inquire into suitable means for promoting the religious and pastoral life of the provincial community;
3. to study how the deliberations of the General Chapter may be put into practice;
4. to formulate and revise the provincial directory in matters left to be decided at the provincial level;
5. to elect one or two delegates to the General Chapter and their substitutes in accordance with the General Regulations.

R 167, 190

**172.** The provincial chapter shall ordinarily be called together by the provincial every three years and each time the General Chapter is convoked; extraordinarily, whenever the provincial with the consent of his council and after consulting the Rector Major shall judge it to be for the benefit of the province.

R 168

**173.** The following take part in the provincial chapter with the right to vote:

1. the provincial who presides;
2. the provincial councillors;
3. the superior of each provincial delegation;
4. the moderator of the provincial chapter;
5. the rector of each canonically erected house or if he is seriously impeded, the vice-rector with the previous approval of the provincial;
6. the director of novices;
7. the delegates of the local communities and of the provincial community, elected from those perpetually professed in accordance with the norms of the General Regulations.

R 161-165, 168

**174.** All the perpetually and temporarily professed confreres take part in the election of the delegates of the local and provincial communities.

R 165

## 13. SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

*“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received;... whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in everything through Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 4:10-11)*

- The local community**      **175.** The local community is made up of confreres who reside in a lawfully erected house and in it live a common life in unity of spirit under the authority of the superior,<sup>1</sup> sharing responsibility as they carry out the apostolic mission.
- <sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 608.
- The rector**      **176.** The superior of each local community is called the rector.
- He is first in order of responsibility for its religious life, its apostolic activities and the administration of its goods.
- R 29, 172-179, 199      With the collaboration of his council he animates and governs the community in accordance with the Constitutions and General Regulations.
- 177.** The rector must be a priest, perpetually professed for at least five years; he is appointed by the provincial with the consent of his council and the approval of the Rector Major, due regard being paid to the results of a consultation carried out among the members of the province.
- The rector is appointed for a period of three years and can be confirmed for a second term of three years in the same community.
- R 170, 171      During his period of service he may be appointed to some other office if the provincial, with the consent of his council, deems it necessary.
- The local council**      **178.** In every local community there shall be a council composed of confreres in perpetual vows and no longer in initial formation, in number proportional to the number of confreres and to the requirements of their activities.
- R 180      The council is convoked and presided over by the rector, and has the task of collaborating with him in animating and governing the community.
- 179.** The following are members of the council:
1. the vice-rector and the economer;
  2. the confreres responsible for the principal sectors of the community’s activity, as laid down in article 180;
  3. one or more members elected annually by the assembly of the confreres when the latter are numerous, in accordance with articles 180 and 186 of the Constitutions.
- R 183
- 180.** It belongs to the provincial with the consent of his council, after hearing the opinion of the local community, to decide which sectors of the community’s activity shall be represented in the council. He will also decide whether any councillors are to be elected by the assembly of the confreres, and how many they will be.
- R 183

**181.** The rector must have the consent of his council for:

1. the approval of the annual programme of the community's life and activities, to be submitted to the provincial for endorsement;
2. proposing to the provincial new experiments and substantial changes in the nature of the work;
3. the approval of the annual financial budget and balance sheet of the community and of the works for which we are responsible;
4. the financial operations envisaged by article 188 of the Constitutions;
5. deciding on the normal frequency of the council's meetings.

R 180

In other matters of importance the rector should always listen to his council.

**182.** Whenever circumstances suggest that some exception should be made, the provincial, with the consent of his council and after hearing the opinion of the local community concerned, can modify the ordinary roles and structures within the community, especially when it is small in number of confreres, provided always that the figure of the rector is safeguarded.

R 181

**183.** The vice-rector is the first collaborator of the rector. He takes his place in matters which have been especially entrusted to him and, if the rector is absent or impeded, in everything concerning the ordinary government. He must therefore be a priest.

On the death of the rector and until the provincial provides otherwise, the vice-rector takes up and exercises the government of the house.

R 182

**184.** The economer is the one immediately responsible for the administration of the temporal goods of the religious house, in dependence on the rector with his council.

R 198-202

He carries out his service in a spirit of charity and poverty.

**185.** The role and duties of those responsible for the principal sectors of the community's activities will be laid down by the provincial chapter.

Assembly of the  
confreres

**186.** The assembly of the confreres, which is a gathering of all the Salesians of the local community, is convoked and presided over by the rector for consultation on the principal questions which concern the community's religious life and activities.

It is also its duty to elect the delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute, and also to elect those members, if any, to the local council in accordance with article 180 of the Constitutions.

R 173, 184



## 14. ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

*“Be content with what you have; for [God] has said, ‘I will never leave you or forsake you’... Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Heb 13:5,16)*

**187.** The Salesian Society may acquire, possess, administer and alienate temporal goods. This is true for the Congregation as a whole, for individual provinces and for each house. Such goods should not be held in the name of an individual person and should be retained only to the extent that they are directly useful for our works.

Acquiring and holding real estate with the sole object of producing income and every other kind of permanent interest-bearing investment is forbidden except in the cases referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions.

**188.** The authorization of the Rector Major with the consent of his Council is needed for:

1. acquiring, alienating, exchanging, mortgaging or renting real estate;
2. contracting loans with or without mortgage;
3. accepting inheritances, bequests or donations to which obligations are attached (when no obligation is attached it is sufficient merely to notify the Rector Major);
4. establishing annuities, scholarships, Mass obligations, special or charitable foundations;
5. constructing new buildings, demolishing existing ones or making major alterations.

When such authorization is applied for either at the provincial or local level, adequate documentation must be submitted together with the opinion of the provincial and his council, and also that of the rector and his council when a local house is concerned.

R 187

**189.** With regard to all the operations referred to in article 188, it belongs to the Rector Major with the consent of his Council, after hearing the opinion of the provincials with their respective councils and in the light of relevant decisions of the Apostolic See, to determine the financial limits within which each provincial, with the consent of his council, is competent to grant authorizations by an analogous procedure.

In the case of operations which exceed the amount laid down by the Apostolic See, or of things donated to the Church as the result of a vow, or objects which are precious by reason of their artistic or historical value,<sup>1</sup> the permission of the Apostolic See itself is required.

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 638 §3.

**190.** All temporal goods are administered respectively by the Economist General and by provincial and local economists, under the direction and control of the appropriate superiors and councils, in conformity with canonical dispositions, in accordance with the Constitutions and General Regulations, and in compliance with the laws of each country.

R 30, 190, 192, 202

# CONCLUSION

*“I will run the way of your commands; you will give freedom to my heart.” (Ps 119:32 Grail translation)*

## **The particular law of our Society**

**191.** The life and activity of communities and confreres are regulated by the universal law of the Church and the particular law of the Society.

The latter is expressed in the Constitutions, which represent our basic code, the General Regulations, the deliberations of the General Chapter, the general and provincial directories, and in other decisions made by competent authorities.

## **Meaning and interpretation of the Constitutions**

**192.** The present Constitutions enshrine the spiritual riches of the traditions of the Salesians of Don Bosco, and define the apostolic project of our Society.

The Church, in approving them, assures us of the authenticity of the gospel way of life traced out by our Founder, and recognizes in it “a special benefit for the whole People of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The Apostolic See alone is their authentic interpreter, but for the practical direction of the Society and the good of the confreres the Rector Major with his Council, as well as the General Chapter, can give interpretations.

<sup>1</sup> RD 14; PC 1.

## **Binding quality of the Constitutions**

**193.** The Constitutions are binding on every member in virtue of the obligations he has freely assumed before the Church by religious profession.

Without prejudice to what is laid down by universal law,<sup>1</sup> major superiors can dispense temporarily from individual disciplinary articles.

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 85-87; 90; 92; 93; 1245.

## **Separation from the Society**

**194.** Should it happen that a member believes in conscience that he should withdraw from the Society, he shall do so before God after he has taken the advice of prudent persons, and with the support of the understanding and charity of his confreres.

He may not however leave the Society until his temporary profession has expired or he has not been admitted to further profession, or until he has been lawfully freed from the vows and obligations he assumed at the profession itself by passing to another institute, by dispensation or by dismissal in conformity with the universal law.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CIC, can. 685; 688; 689; 691-704.

## **Fidelity and perseverance**

**195.** Fidelity to the commitment made at our religious profession is a response which we continually renew to the special covenant that the Lord has made with us.

Our perseverance is founded entirely on the fidelity of God who loved us first, and is nourished by the grace of his consecration.

It is sustained too by love for the young to whom we are sent, and is expressed in gratitude to the Lord for the gifts that Salesian life offers us.

**A way that leads to love** **196.** Our living Rule is Jesus Christ, the Saviour announced in the gospel, who is alive today in the Church and in the world, and whom we find present in Don Bosco who devoted his life to the young.

In response to the predilection of the Lord Jesus who has called us by name, and led by Mary, we willingly accept the Constitutions as Don Bosco's will and testament, for us our book of life and for the poor and the little ones a pledge of hope.

We meditate on them with faith and pledge ourselves to put them into practice; they are for us, the Lord's disciples, a way that leads to Love.



**GENERAL  
REGULATIONS**

Part One

**SENT TO THE YOUNG  
IN COMMUNITIES  
FOLLOWING CHRIST**

[Contents](#)

# 1. THOSE TO WHOM OUR MISSION IS ADDRESSED

1. Keeping in mind its own social milieu, every province should study the situation and condition of youth and the common people, and periodically verify that its works and activities are providing an effective service for young people who are poor: in the first place for youngsters who because of economic, social and cultural poverty, sometimes of an extreme nature, have no possibility of success in life; for those who are poor at an affective, moral and spiritual level, and therefore exposed to indifference, atheism and delinquency; and for those who live on the fringe of society and of the Church.

C 26, 77

2. The provinces will encourage commitment to the education of young workers. They will take part in the pastoral activity of the particular Churches by offering initiatives and special services. They will try to be well informed about the world of work and the conditions in which young people are working. They will see that centres of professional training pay heed to pastoral, pedagogical and technical aspects, and that adequate programmes are drawn up to educate the youngsters to an authentic spirituality of work.

C 27

3. Our pastoral and educational service is directed primarily to boys and young men.

Girls are also welcomed in our works in line with the criteria and norms indicated by the provincial chapter.

C 26

## 2. OUR PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

4. Each provincial community will draw up its educative and pastoral plan, drawing inspiration from the Preventive System, to respond to the situation of poor young people and poor neighbourhoods.

C 31-39, 47

A local plan should also be drawn up with the involvement of all the members of the Educative and Pastoral Community and in harmony with that of the province, for the purpose of directing all initiatives to the task of evangelization.

5. The application of the plan requires that in all our works and settings we establish the Educative and Pastoral Community, whose animating nucleus is the Salesian community.

C 38, 47

Let all the Salesians play an active part in the drawing up, realization and subsequent revision of the plan, and let them see to it that in a family spirit the young people, their parents and other collaborators also take part, according to their different roles.

6. Characteristic aspects of our pedagogy should be expressed in the plan and realized in practice through appropriate processes; such aspects are: the active and responsible involvement of the young people themselves; a sensitive education for love; a serious cultural, social and professional preparation; communication in its artistic and recreational expressions.

C 32, 33

7. At the heart of the plan should be an explicit programme of education to the faith, which will accompany the general development of the youngsters and coordinate the different forms of catechesis, celebrations and apostolic undertakings.

C 34, 36

8. We encourage the formation of groups and associations according to the age and interests of the young, and we ensure their continuity. Special care shall be taken of groups having a Christian commitment, and those that share the Salesian mission and live its spirit.

C 35

Attention should also be given to local ecumenical movements, especially in areas where different religious denominations exist.

9. Due attention should be given to the vocational guidance of young people with the help of trained educators and a programme of suitable activities.

C 37

Special regard should be paid to the discovery, and subsequent follow-up by suitable initiatives, of those youngsters who show signs of lay, religious or priestly vocations.

10. To systematically maintain and provide for its various pastoral and educative activities, each province is to draw up a programme for the training and updating of personnel, due regard being paid to the aptitudes and inclinations of the confreres and the needs of the works.



### 3. ACTIVITIES AND WORKS

#### The Oratory and the Youth Centre

**11.** The Oratory is an educational environment with a strong missionary slant, and open to boys and young people.

It should be organized as a service to the neighbourhood with the object of evangelizing, and offers to individuals and groups the opportunity of developing their own interests, using ways and means appropriate to their different ages.

C 42

The activities should always have an educational scope and should foster a healthy use of spare time.

**12.** The youth centre is an environment intended for older youth with their different requirements. It preserves the characteristics of the Oratory, but the emphasis on group activity is more marked and personal contacts are facilitated to a greater extent.

C 42

Formative and apostolic activities should play a more important role than those which are only recreational.

#### The school, vocational training centres and institutions of higher education

**13.** The Salesian school at various levels, vocational training centres and institutions of higher education foster the total development of the young person through the assimilation and critical re-elaboration of culture and education to the faith in view of the Christian transformation of society.

The educational process, carried out in a Salesian manner and with recognized technical and pedagogical expertise, should be based on solid cultural values, and be tailored to the needs of the young. The programme should provide a harmonious balance between intellectual and technical training and extracurricular activities.

C 41, 42

A periodic evaluation should be made to ensure that the contents of the curriculum and pedagogical and training methods are still valid as regards their relationship with the social milieu, the world of work and the pastoral indications of the Church.

**14.** A Salesian school should be for the economically and socially disadvantaged: this should be reflected in its setting, its culture, its curriculum and its choice of students. Services to meet local needs should be provided, such as courses for cultural and professional training, literacy and remedial programmes, scholarships and other initiatives of the kind.

C 29, 33

## Hostels and boarding schools

**15.** Hostels and boarding schools are a service offered to youngsters who have no family or who are temporarily away from home. In such establishments priority should be given to whatever fosters personal relationships, enables the boarders to share responsibility for the organization of their daily life, and offers them scope for different group activities. Contact should be maintained with their families or those responsible for them, and also with their school or the places where they work.

C 42

## Initiatives at the service of vocations

**16.** Vocational guidance centres welcome and keep in touch with young people who feel called to some commitment in the Church and in the Congregation.

This service can also be carried out by organizing local and regional meetings, by means of activities of special groups, or by placing young people in one of our communities.

C 6, 28, 37

**17.** The aspirantate is a centre of Salesian vocational guidance. It keeps itself open to the neighbourhood and in contact with families, and helps older boys and young men who show an aptitude for the religious and priestly life to know their own apostolic vocation and to correspond with it.

C 6, 28, 37

## The missions

**18.** It is the duty of each provincial with his council to lay down guidelines for the animation and coordination of missionary activity.

Provinces which have mission territories within their boundaries should have at heart the service to be rendered to the missions and should prepare personnel for dialogue with cultures not yet evangelized, including those of ethnic minorities.

C 30

**19.** Every missionary should be afforded the possibility of frequenting study centres organized by the particular Churches or by provinces for his specific preparation and updating, for learning languages, and for ethnic and anthropological studies.

C 30, 118

**20.** Normally no missionary residence should have fewer than three confreres. Periodic meetings should be arranged among the missionaries to foster community life, mutual help, spiritual growth, and the exchange of pastoral experiences.

C 49

**21.** Every missionary may return periodically to his native land, in accordance with the norms of his province or provincial conference. His provincial will present him to the provincial of the area where he intends to reside and will provide him with what is necessary for his stay.

The confreres of the province which receives him should see to it that he is given a generous and fraternal welcome.

**22.** In non-Christian countries Salesians, by the application of their educational and pastoral method, should create conditions favouring a free process of conversion to the Christian faith with respect shown for the cultural and religious values of the neighbourhood.

C 30

In places where the religious, social or political context does not allow of forms of explicit evangelization, the Congregation should maintain and develop a missionary presence of witness and service.

**23.** In accordance with the prescriptions of the Dicastery for Evangelization, formal agreements are to be drawn up with the ecclesiastical authorities in the territories where an apostolic work is entrusted to us.

**24.** To support missionary activity, the Rector Major with the consent of his Council and in agreement with the local provincial, may set up mission offices to serve the whole Congregation.

Their organization and method of functioning will depend on the provincial or provincials in whose territory the offices operate, in the light of a statutory agreement made previously with the Rector Major, and in agreement with the General Councillor for the Missions and with the Economer General.

C 30, 138

For the setting up of local offices or the making of twinning arrangements the provincial has the competence, with the consent of his council and in agreement with the General Councillor for the Missions.

## Parishes

**25.** We carry out our mission also in parishes; in this way we respond to the pastoral needs of the particular Churches in those areas which offer us adequate scope for service to the young and poor people in general.

C 29, 42

The acceptance of a parish is effected by means of a contract between the provincial and the Local Ordinary, after obtaining the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his Council.

**26.** A parish entrusted to the Congregation should be distinguished by its low-income population and its interest in the young, especially those who are poorer.

C 29, 31, 33, 44

The religious community is responsible for its animation. It should consider the oratory and youth centre an integral part of its pastoral project; it should set great store by the systematic catechesis of all and show zeal for bringing back those who have lapsed; it should see that evangelization is linked with human advancement, and should favour the vocational development of each individual.

**27.** The parish priest or administrator is chosen by the provincial after hearing the opinion of his council, and is presented by him to the Local Ordinary.

C 48

He is responsible for the discharge of the obligations assumed by the Congregation before the Church, and fulfils them in collaboration with the other confreres assigned to the parish.

**28.** The confreres attached to the parish should have the stability which the office and the good of the faithful demand. Nevertheless the superior will judge when the moment is opportune for a necessary rotation of persons and duties, according to the practice of the particular Churches. The parish priest should not normally remain in office for more than nine years. When he is changed, the bishop must be informed in advance.

C 48

**29.** Where the situation allows it, the house serving the parish should itself be canonically erected with the parish priest as its rector.

Whenever the offices of rector and parish priest remain distinct, the rector must see that the unity and Salesian identity of the community is preserved, and should encourage the sharing of responsibility of the confreres in the realization of the parish pastoral plan.

C 44, 176

**30.** In respect of administrative operations, the prescriptions of article 190 of the General Regulations are to be followed, due regard being paid to obligations to the parish community in accordance with canon law.

There must be a clear distinction, with appropriate registers and documentation, between what belongs to the parish *qua talis* and to the Congregation.

C 190

## Social communication

**31.** As far as local possibilities permit, the provincial with his council should promote our pastoral presence in the social communication sector: he should prepare confreres to enter the fields of publishing, cinema, radio and television; he should establish and build up our centres for the publishing and diffusion of books, aids and periodicals, and found centres for the production and transmission of audiovisual, radio and television programmes.

These services should be established on sound legal and economic foundations, and there should be liaison and cooperation between those in charge of them and the General Councillor for Social Communication.

C 6, 43

**32.** Salesians should take care to educate their charges to an understanding of the various forms of expression found in social communication, and to a critical aesthetic and moral sense. They should also encourage musical and dramatic activity, and promote reading and cinema clubs.

C 6, 43

**33.** The channels of information and dialogue both inside and outside the Congregation and Salesian Family (bulletins, ANS, short films, video-cassettes, etc.), should be developed, with appropriate use also of the means offered by recent advances in technology.

C 6, 43, 59

Publishing houses in the same country or region should devise suitable methods of collaboration so as to adopt a unified plan.

**34.** Whenever required by canon law, the ecclesiastical review of matter for publication will be preceded by that of censors appointed by the provincial.

C 43

## Service in non-Salesian structures

**35.** Service to the young may sometimes require our presence in non-Salesian institutes for a more immediate collaboration with the particular Church in pastoral work for youth or for the world of work, and in the care of vocations.

It belongs to the provincial with the consent of his council to accept such undertakings and to assess their validity.

Members assigned to such activities must take care to remain a real part of the Salesian community. The latter will in turn show a fraternal and responsible interest in their work.

C **41, 42, 44**

## 4. SERVICE TO THE SALESIAN FAMILY

**36.** It is the duty of the provincial and the rector, assisted by their respective delegates, to sensitize the communities so that they may discharge their duties in the Salesian Family.

C 5

The community, in agreement with those responsible for the various groups, with respect for their autonomy and in a spirit of service, offers them spiritual assistance, promotes meetings, encourages collaboration and initiatives in the educational and pastoral fields, and cultivates the common commitment for vocations.

**37.** In response to their requests and as far as lies within our power, we offer the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians our fraternal help and our priestly ministry.

C 5

We collaborate with them in deepening our understanding of Don Bosco's spirituality and pedagogy, and particularly in keeping alive the Marian dimension of the Salesian charism.

**38.** Every community should feel it its duty to increase and support the Association of Salesian Cooperators for the good of the Church. It should help in the formation of its members, promote and spread knowledge of this particular vocation, especially among our more committed young people and among our lay colleagues.

C 5, 47

**39.** The community should maintain friendly relations with the past pupils, giving special attention to the younger ones. It should show a real interest in them and promote opportunities for meetings, formation and collaboration.

It should encourage and support the Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, and through it try to contact those who have distanced themselves.

C 5

It should help those who are more sensitive to Salesian values to develop in themselves the Cooperator vocation.

**40.** We provide a service of spiritual assistance to the Volunteers of Don Bosco, and to the religious and secular institutes which affirm in their statutes that they have a project of apostolic life according to the Salesian spirit, which have made the request to belong to the Salesian Family through a General Chapter, and which have received official recognition by the Rector Major.

C 5

**41.** The Salesian Bulletin, founded by Don Bosco, spreads knowledge of Salesian spirit and activity, especially in its missionary and educational aspects.

It is concerned with the problems of youth, encourages collaboration and tries to foster vocations.

It is as well an instrument for formation and a bond of union between the different branches of the Salesian Family.

C 5, 6, 43

It is edited in accordance with the directives of the Rector Major and his Council in various editions and languages.

## 5. FRATERNAL AND APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES

**42.** Once a year let both the local and provincial communities, gathered around the rector and provincial respectively, celebrate the community feast day as a sign of its fraternal communion and an expression of its gratitude.

C 50, 55

**43.** For reasons of health, to foster apostolic activity and life together and an atmosphere of prayer and recollection, every confrere should regulate his work in an orderly manner, and the local community should see to it that there is a balanced distribution of duties with opportune periods for rest and silence, and for suitable relaxation in common.

C 52

**44.** Following the example of our Founder and aware of the austerity demanded by religious life and the obligations arising from our work, the superior and every member of the community should keep their conscience alert to their moral obligations in the choice of reading matter, film and stage presentations, and in the use of communications media.

C 84

**45.** The community will warmly welcome those who come into contact with us or are guests, especially if they are confreres.

A previous understanding with the rector is needed before invitations to meals are given.

C 56

Externs however are not permitted to live with the community except with the permission of the provincial.

**46.** The community maintains cordial relations with each confrere's family, and shows them love and gratitude.

The Salesian who has left his home to follow Christ loses none of his love for his relatives and especially for his parents; he gives it expression by his prayers, messages and visits.

**47.** Each community, as a sign of brotherly communion, should remember all deceased confreres in a special way; for this purpose individual communities should decide on an opportune moment for the daily reading of the necrology in one of the community practices.

C 54, 94

**48.** In keeping with the Salesian tradition, the rector or someone in his place should address the community by way of a "good night", preferably after evening prayer.

C 55

## 6. FOLLOWING THE OBEDIENT, POOR AND CHASTE CHRIST

### Our obedience

**49.** In an atmosphere of mutual trust every confrere should frequently see his rector to let him know the state of his health, how his apostolic activity is proceeding, the difficulties he faces in religious life and fraternal charity, and everything that may contribute to the welfare of the individual members and of the community.

C 70

Let the rector consider that one of his principal duties is to always be available to receive and listen to the confreres.

**50.** To promote family spirit and avoid upsetting the community programme, a confrere who has to be absent from the house, especially for visits, journeys or holidays, should have an understanding with his rector. In the case of a prolonged absence he will follow what is prescribed by the Church in canon 665 §1.

C 65

### Our poverty

#### Requirements of the vow

**51.** The ceding of the use and usufruct of his goods and of their administration carries with it the express condition that the member shall not be involved in responsibility for their management.

With the permission of the provincial and for a just reason he can change this cession and arrangement concerning his goods and can perform those acts with regard to property which the civil law prescribes.

He must also observe all this with regard to goods which come into his possession after profession.

C 74

He will also inform the provincial from time to time of the goods of which he retains the ownership, and of their condition.

**52.** The will by which, in accordance with civil law, a member disposes of his present and future goods, is to be drawn up in two copies, one of which will be kept in the provincial archives. The provisions of canon and civil law shall be observed for any eventual changes to it.

C 74

**53.** In the spirit of gospel detachment a member, after at least ten years of perpetual profession and with the consent of the Rector Major, may definitively renounce the ownership of all his personal goods. This act of renunciation shall be drawn up in accordance with the prescription of the civil law of his own country.

C 74



**54.** Should a confrere leave the Society, he shall once again have full rights over property and movable assets, the ownership of which he reserved to himself. He shall not, however, have the right to demand any of their fruits, nor any account of their administration.

C 74, 194

Fraternal help will be afforded him to face the initial difficulties of his new situation; he shall not, however, be entitled to anything for the period he has spent in the Congregation.

**Personal poverty**

**55.** Every member lives out his poverty by temperance in the use of food and drink, simplicity in dress and moderate use of holidays and amusements.

He furnishes his room in a simple manner, taking care not to make it a refuge which keeps him separated from his confreres and from young people.

He is watchful so as not to become a slave to any habit opposed to the spirit of poverty.

C 76

Faithful to a constant tradition he abstains from smoking as a form of Salesian temperance and as a witness in his personal work of education.

**56.** The members cannot retain for themselves anything they may acquire by their own work or because of their membership of the Society, but everything must be placed among the common goods.

C 76

Whatever money they receive from the community to carry out their work or for small individual needs they will use with a sense of responsibility and give an account to the superior of how it was spent.

**57.** Royalties received by Salesians for their publications or other productions are fruits of work which as members they place in common for the benefit of the Society.

Hence every confrere, whether author or publisher, shall cede the copyrights he acquires in accordance with what is laid down by the province and in the manner prescribed by the laws of the respective countries.

C 76

**Community poverty and service**

**58.** It belongs to provincial chapters to lay down norms with a view to establishing a modest and effectively uniform level of community life throughout the province, while taking into account special situations.

In particular they will regulate:

1. the use of personal equipment which can be taken to another house when a member is transferred;
2. the holidays permitted to members for a proper restoration of their physical and mental energies;
3. the norms for a practical exercise of solidarity between the houses of the province, and the help the communities will offer for the general needs of the province.

C 76-77

**59.** The Society should not retain possession of any real estate apart from its houses and the property needed for its work, in accordance with article 187 of the Constitutions.

In any case, whatever has the appearance of counter-witness to poverty should be avoided, remembering that effective service can often be rendered with very simple material structures and in works we do not own.

C 77

**60.** The purpose of our works is to give service to others; they should therefore be open and available for the needs of the neighbourhood. Space and facilities required for the pastoral needs of the area should not be left unused.

C 77

**61.** Our meals should conform to the demands of religious poverty in line with the customs of the different countries.

The interior decoration of the house, the furniture and equipment should be simple and functional and should never give the impression of wealth and luxury. This holds good also for our churches, while maintaining in them a proper decorum.

C 77

**62.** Proper attention should be given to the maintenance of assets and property. Special importance attaches to the preservation of libraries, archives and other documentary material, because of their cultural and community value.

C 77

**63.** Means of transport shall be the property of the house or province; they should not be for exclusive personal use but at the disposal of the community, which will make use of them only as a means of service and with criteria of poverty.

C 76, 77

**64.** With a sense of economy and in keeping with our family spirit, domestic work and services should as far as possible be done by the confreres. They will try to acquire the relevant basic skills especially during the period of initial formation.

C 77, 78

**65.** The community, whether local or provincial, should examine its own state of poverty at intervals it considers opportune, both as regards its collective witness and the services it renders, and should study the means to ensure a constant renewal.

C 77

## Our chastity

**66.** The giving of witness and pastoral service requires the presence of the Salesian in the world.

Faithful to the vocation he has chosen he will avoid the comforts and attractions of the world. He will be prudent in making visits or frequenting amusements, excluding anything not in keeping with religious chastity.

C 84

**67.** Female personnel should be employed in our houses and works only when necessary and due regard should be paid to the requirements of religious life.

C 84

**68.** In his relationships with others and in his friendships, the Salesian should be consistent with the obligations assumed at his profession. Let him therefore avoid any ambiguous or dangerous conduct or behaviour, which could obscure his witness to chastity.

C 82, 84

## 7. IN DIALOGUE WITH THE LORD

C 85      69. At the beginning of the year every community should draw up the programme for its life of prayer, bearing in mind its apostolic commitments and the demands of fraternal life.

C 88, 89      70. The members will celebrate, in common if possible, Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer. Other prayers may be substituted, according to circumstances. All the members will be faithful to the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

C 93      71. Every day the members will spend at least half an hour in common for meditation and some time in spiritual reading. It is for the local community to devise different ways in which this can be done and encourage the confreres in the fulfilment of this duty.

C 91      72. The community will devote at least three hours to the monthly recollection, and every three months a whole day will be given over to a suitably prepared recollection.  
Every year the members will make a retreat of six days in the manner laid down by the provincial chapter, which they will conclude with the renewal of the commitments assumed at religious profession.

C 90      73. In harmony with Salesian tradition and the teaching of the Church, Friday is to be a day of community penance for the members. In Lent the community should establish some common practice of mortification to help the members prepare for Easter and open them to a greater sharing with the poor.

C 92      74. As well as the Rosary, by means of which Mary teaches her children how to unite themselves with the mysteries of Christ, the monthly commemoration, the daily prayer after meditation and the frequent use of the Blessing of Mary Help of Christians are other signs of unity in our Marian devotion. The details will be laid down in the provincial directory.

C 92      The members, both individually and as a community, should feel the obligation of zealously spreading devotion to Mary Help of Christians and of fostering, wherever possible, the Association of Mary Help of Christians.

C 9, 21      75. Our father Don Bosco will be commemorated on the last day of each month. The feasts of our saints and beatified members should be celebrated as family events and devotion to our servants of God should be fostered.

76. Salesians will express love and gratitude to confreres, relatives and benefactors who have been called by the Father to eternal life, by praying for the repose of their souls both privately and as a community.

In particular:

1. on the death of a confrere or novice the community to which he belonged will have thirty Masses said, and one Mass will be said in every house of the province;
2. on the death of the Rector Major or a Rector Major emeritus, in addition to the thirty Masses one Mass will be said in every house of the Congregation;
3. on the death of parents of confreres, the house to which the confrere belongs will have ten Masses said;
4. each year:
  - for the deceased confreres every priest will say Mass on the day following the liturgical solemnity of Don Bosco; in addition the provincial will have one Mass said during every retreat;
  - for the deceased parents of confreres one Mass will be celebrated in every house on 25 November, anniversary of the death of Mamma Margaret;
  - for deceased benefactors and members of the Salesian Family, a Mass will be celebrated in each community on 5 November.

C 94

77. Our community life of prayer will have a practical guide in the form of a manual to be prepared by the provinces, provincial conferences or regions, which will contain a common core of prayers as indicated by the Rector Major with his Council.

C 86

Part Two

**FORMED FOR THE MISSION  
OF PASTORS AND EDUCATORS**

[Contents](#)

## 8. GENERAL ASPECTS OF FORMATION

### Formation communities

**78.** Formation communities must have a rector and a team of formation personnel who are specially prepared, above all as regards spiritual direction which is ordinarily given by the rector himself.

Those being formed and their formators must share responsibility for periodic planning and evaluation of their work.

C 103, 104

Those in formation should play their part in practical ways in the running of the community.

**79.** During the period of initial formation, once a month the confreres will have the friendly talk with the superior referred to in article 70 of the Constitutions.

C 70, 105

**80.** To educate those being formed to a sense of personal responsibility in the use of time and to encourage the spirit of initiative, there should be reasonable flexibility in the timetable and the day's activities, with priority for the more pressing needs of the community.

C 103

**81.** The local community, since it shares the responsibility for the growth of each confrere, is invited to express its opinion whenever one of its members seeks admission to profession or to holy orders. This will be done in the form most in keeping with charity.

C 103, 108

### Intellectual formation

**82.** Our Salesian mission orientates and characterizes at all levels the intellectual formation of the members in a way that is original and unique. Therefore the programme of studies must preserve a balance between serious and scientific reflection and the religious and apostolic dimensions of our way of life.

C 97

Those branches of study shall be cultivated with special care which deal with the education of and pastoral work for youth, catechesis and social communication.

**83.** During the years of initial formation the studies should be so structured as to lead to degrees and qualifications recognized by the State, where circumstances allow.

**84.** The provinces able to do so should have their own study centre for the formation of the confreres and to provide qualified services of spiritual, pastoral and cultural animation.

When the study centre is interprovincial, the provinces concerned shall give their responsible collaboration to enable it to achieve its aim.

C 101

As far as possible it should also be open to externs, religious and lay, as a service to the particular Church.

**85.** The assimilation of the Salesian spirit is fundamentally a fact of living communication.

But for this vital experience to be really efficacious it should be accompanied throughout the whole process of initial formation by a gradual and systematic study of Salesian spirituality and the history of the Society.

## Pastoral experiences

**86.** The pastoral experiences should be carried out in activities proper to our mission, and should have as their purpose the development of an apostolic spirit and of the educative and pastoral potential of the Salesian in formation.

Such experiences should be diversified and graded so that they respond to the personal and religious development of the individual confrere and to the phase of formation he has reached.

The community has the responsibility for programming these pastoral experiences, following up their realization with the presence and guidance of the formation personnel and their periodic evaluation.

C 115

## Practical guide for formation

**87.** The practical guide for formation at world level will be the Salesian “Ratio fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum”, and at provincial level a directory approved by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council.

The “Ratio” sets out in an integral and instructive way the complexus of principles and norms concerning formation which are found in the Constitutions, General Regulations and other documents of the Church and of the Congregation.

The provincial directory applies the principles and norms of Salesian formation to the concrete local situations.

C 100, 101

## 9. THE FORMATION PROCESS

### Immediate preparation for the novitiate

**88.** Under ordinary circumstances the period of immediate preparation for the novitiate should not be less than six months in length and should be spent in a Salesian community.

C 109

The details are to be laid down in the provincial directory.

### The novitiate

**89.** The house of novitiate should be in contact with the social and apostolic realities of the neighbourhood. If circumstances make it desirable, the novitiate may be established alongside another suitable community.

C 110

**90.** When the candidate considers himself ready and sufficiently prepared he makes his application to begin the novitiate.

To be admitted he must be free from the impediments listed in Canon Law (CIC can. 643-645 §1), show the aptitudes and maturity necessary for entering upon the Salesian life, and his health must be such as to enable him to observe all the Constitutions of the Society.

C 108

The eventual dismissal of a novice belongs to the provincial of the province in which the novitiate house is located.

**91.** Studies during the novitiate should be carried out seriously and follow a precise programme which forms part of the overall plan of studies. They should have as their overriding objective initiation into the mystery of Christ, so that the novice by means of contact with the Word of God may develop a deeper life of faith and a loving knowledge of God.

C 110

A solid theological basis for the religious life should also be presented. The Constitutions, the life of Don Bosco and our traditions should be studied.

**92.** The novices are to make a retreat at an appropriate time at the beginning of the novitiate, and again before making vows.

C 110

**93.** The novice may freely leave the Institute during the novitiate. If he remains he will be admitted to profession after he has made the necessary application and if he is judged suitable; otherwise he is sent away.

C 108, 111

In special cases the provincial may prolong the novitiate, but not beyond a further six months in accordance with can. 653.



**94.** When a religious in perpetual vows asks to pass from his own institute to our Society, he must undergo a period of trial of at least three years' duration in one of our communities, so that he may assimilate our spirit.

C 108, 117

At the end of this time he may make a formal request for admission, and if he is accepted may make his perpetual profession in accordance with canon law.

## Formation after the novitiate

**95.** Immediately after the novitiate all confreres must continue their formation for at least two years in formation communities, preferably Salesian studentates.

C 113, 114

A general philosophical and pedagogical formation is given during this phase, with an introduction to theology. Technical, scientific or professional training may also be commenced or continued with specific qualifications in view.

**96.** Practical training lasts ordinarily two years and is carried out before perpetual profession in a community that can provide whatever is necessary for the validity of this experience.

C 115

**97.** Members who are preparing for the priesthood must receive, over a minimum period of four years, a more intense and specifically priestly formation in formation communities, preferably studentates.

They must attend seriously to theological studies, preferably in Salesian centres.

C 116

They must not undertake duties or other studies during this period that will interfere with the specific purpose of this formative phase.

**98.** In the phase which completes their initial formation following the practical training, lay Salesians must be afforded the possibility of acquiring a serious theological, Salesian and pedagogical preparation suited to their cultural level.

C 116

They should be engaged also, according to their talents, in studies aimed at their professional preparation in view of the apostolic work they will later carry out.

## Ongoing formation

**99.** Ongoing formation requires that each confrere develop his capacity for communication and dialogue; he should form in himself an open and discerning mentality and a spirit of initiative and in this way renew his own plan of life as and when necessary.

C 118, 119

Each one should cultivate the habit of reading and the study of those branches of knowledge proper to his mission; he should maintain his openness to prayer, meditation, and to personal and community spiritual direction.

**100.** Let every confrere study with his superiors the field of further qualification best suited to his abilities and to the needs of the province, giving preference to whatever concerns our mission.

C 118, 119

He should preserve that availability which is characteristic of our spirit and be ready for periodic requalification.

**101.** It is the duty of the provincial and his council to promote ordinary means and also extraordinary initiatives for spiritual and cultural formation.

Meetings of rectors, pastoral animators, economists and other confreres should be occasions for deepening our Salesian identity in its educational and pastoral dimensions.

An attitude of ready acceptance should be fostered to formative opportunities offered by different bodies of the Church and of society.

Interprovincial initiatives should be carried out by the provincials concerned in agreement with the Regional Councillor.

C **101, 118, 119, 161**

**102.** All Salesians in their mature years should periodically be offered the possibility of spending an appropriate period of time for their renewal.

Provinces should take this need into account in their planning, and each confrere should respond to it for his own good and that of the community.

C **101, 118, 119**

Part Three

**THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY  
IN OUR SOCIETY**

[Contents](#)

## 10. THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY

**103.** The Rector Major shall be attentive to the needs of the universal Church, and shall keep in active contact with provinces, houses and members. He shall seek the collaboration of all, promote formal and informal meetings, and spread knowledge of the apostolic activity of the Congregation within the Salesian Family.

C 59, 126

The members in turn shall express their love for Don Bosco and the Congregation by keeping united with the Rector Major and accepting his directives. They shall help him by prayer and dialogue, and above all by fidelity to the Constitutions.

**104.** The Rector Major and the General Council, at the beginning of the six-year period, will establish the times and ways for carrying out extraordinary visitations in each region, exploiting the possibilities offered by art. 104 of the General Regulations, so as to ensure, in any case,

- the possibility for each confrere to have a personal chat with the delegate of the Rector Major;
- knowledge of the local situations in which our mission is carried out;
- the effective exercise of the powers of jurisdiction required by the nature of the visit;
- the presence of the Regional at least at some moments during the visitation, if made by another Visitor;
- communication between the Visitor and the Regional to ensure further accompaniment by the Regional after the visit;
- adequate time for the Regional Councillor to carry out the tasks proper to his office in the service of the region and the individual provinces.

C 140, 154; R 135-137

**105.** The Rector Major, as Superior of the Society, is the Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Salesian University (UPS). He is the representative of the Apostolic See for the UPS and the representative of the UPS before the Apostolic See.

By virtue of the mandate of the Dicastery for Catholic Education, he has full power over the University, and is the guardian and interpreter of its statutes.

C 127

He carries out the functions of Grand Chancellor either personally or through a delegate, chosen preferably from among the members of the General Council.

**106.** In addition to the cases enumerated in article 132, §1 of the Constitutions, the Rector Major requires the consent of his Council:

1. for beginning extraordinary juridical proceedings which could compromise the Society;
2. for setting up mission offices at the level of the whole Congregation [R 24];
3. for accepting parishes [R 25];
4. for the approval of provincial formation directories [R 87];
5. for the appointment of a delegate for a central secretariat [R 108];
6. for establishing administrative-technical offices and advisory boards referred to in article 107 of the General Regulations, and determining their mode of operation and the offices and roles of their members;
7. for the appointment of his personal delegate for a delegation [R 138];
8. for the approval of binding decisions made by provincial conferences [C 139];
9. for establishing the manner of making the consultation preceding the appointment of provincial councillors [R 154];
10. for the approval of the financial budget and balance sheet prepared by the Economer General's department [C 190, R 192].

C 131, 132

**107.** The animation of the Salesian mission at world level calls for the identification of common objectives and for cooperation among the Councillors in charge of specific Sectors and for the coordination of their interventions with the Regional Councillors, through systematic meetings of planning and evaluation.

The General Councillors in charge of specific Sectors can avail themselves of the services of administrative-technical offices and advisory boards in carrying out the duties confided to them.

Their establishment, mode of operation and internal organization are to be determined by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council.

C 133

**108.** For areas of particular importance which do not form part of the duties assigned by the Constitutions to individual Councillors, appropriate central secretariats may be set up depending directly on the Rector Major.

The establishment of such secretariats belongs to the General Chapter. Their immediate responsibility is entrusted to a central delegate who is appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council and remains *ad nutum*.

**109.** To ensure a more regular discharge of business with the Apostolic See it is desirable that this be done through the Rector Major.

**110.** The official organ for the promulgation of directives of the Rector Major and his Council and for official information is the 'Acts of the General Council'. Its publication is the responsibility of the General Secretariat.

C 144

## The General Chapter

**111.** Except in the case provided for by article 143 of the Constitutions, the convocation of the General Chapter will be made at least one year before it opens. It will be announced to all members by means of a circular letter which will indicate the principal purpose, place and opening date of the Chapter.

C 143, 150

**112.** For the preparation of the General Chapter the Rector Major, or in his absence his Vicar, will appoint a Moderator to whom the provincial chapters, local communities and individual members will send their proposals and study contributions if any. He will also appoint a technical commission to work with the Moderator in establishing a plan of preparation for the General Chapter and in securing the interest and active participation of the members.

C 150

**113.** The Rector Major, or in his absence the Vicar, will also appoint a precapitular commission which, under the responsibility of the Moderator and in agreement with the Rector Major, will draw up the reports or schemata to be sent in good time to those taking part in the General Chapter.

C 150

**114.** Provinces with fewer than 200 professed members, and vice-provinces, will send to the General Chapter one delegate elected by the respective chapters. Moreover, provinces will send another delegate for every additional two hundred members or fraction thereof. Other eventual juridical circumscriptions referred to in article 156 of the Constitutions will have their representation defined in their decree of erection.

C 151.8

**115.** At least three months before the opening of the General Chapter, the provincials will send the Moderator the minutes of the elections, which will be examined by an appropriate commission appointed by the Rector Major, or in his absence by his Vicar.

If any defects should be discovered, the Moderator will see that they are rectified in good time, and if necessary the elections are repeated.

C 151.8

**116.** In the first session of the General Chapter the President will appoint two or more secretaries and if necessary also other Chapter officials. If necessary the President can also choose other secretaries and officials who are not members of the General Chapter.

It is the duty of the secretaries to record accurately in the minutes, the acts and deliberations of the General Chapter, the decisions made and a summary of the discussions.

C 150

**117.** Once the secretaries have been appointed the Moderator, in the name of the President and with the consent of the assembly, will declare the Chapter lawfully opened.

C 150

**118.** If, at the opening of the General Chapter, the election of any delegate is found to be invalid or still doubtful, the Moderator will inform the Chapter of this at the first session.

The first act of the Chapter will then be to pronounce on each case, so that with the authority with which it is invested it may either declare an election null and void, or rectify its invalidity.

C 151.8

**119.** In one of the early sessions, the Rector Major, or his Vicar, shall present a general report on the state of the Congregation, and this shall be the object of study and analysis by the assembly.

C 150

**120.** The meetings of the General Chapter will be presided over by the Rector Major, or in his absence, by his Vicar. He will be helped in the direction and conduct of the work by the Moderator and by three chairmen, elected by an absolute majority by the General Chapter from a list of names prepared by the President.

C 150

The President, the Moderator and the three Chairmen constitute the Presidency of the General Chapter.

**121.** The General Chapter will elect by absolute majority at least five members who, with the Moderator and Chairmen, will form the central commission which, under the presidency of the Rector Major, has the duty of coordinating the work of the Chapter and ensuring its smooth functioning.

C 150

**122.** The General Chapter works through groups called commissions, which have the task of studying the schemata or reports assigned to them. As soon as possible the Moderator will inform the General Chapter of the themes and the commissions dealing with them, and will ask for its approval. The commissions will be constituted by the President, who will keep in mind each one's preferences.

C 150

**123.** It is the duty of the members of the Chapter to be present at its meetings; for this reason they may not absent themselves without the permission of the President.

C 151

**124.** The confreres shall be given full and timely information about the work of the Chapter.

A commission of Chapter members, chosen from the various groups of provinces, is responsible for such information and in general for all contacts with the mass media.

It will function in agreement with the Presidency of the Chapter.

All who take part in any way in the General Chapter must exercise discretion and respect for persons concerned, whenever referring to the work, events or discussions of the Chapter.

C 150

**125.** The Rector Major and the capitular assembly have the faculty of calling other persons to the General Chapter as experts or observers without the right to vote; they may or may not be Salesians.

Experts may take part in discussions in the commissions to which they are invited; they may speak in the assembly only when requested. Observers may speak both in the commissions and in the assembly.

C 150

**126.** It is for the General Chapter to decide on the date for the elections, providing for an appropriate period of reflection before the election of each Council member.

C 141, 153

**127.** The election of the Rector Major and members of his Council is an act which calls for the full responsibility of every Chapter member before the Congregation. It must therefore be prepared for by prayer and carried out in a spirit of faith.

Every elector may request and provide information about the qualities of those eligible, but must avoid whatever may offend against fraternal charity.

With reference to art. 133 of the Constitutions, the election of the Councillors for the Sectors is to be preceded by a process of discernment on the part of Chapter members divided according to regions, on the important challenges of the Sector and on the profile of the candidates. Such a process of discernment concludes with the proposal to the assembly of one candidate from one's own region and of another from outside the region, identified through secret ballot.

C 141, 153

**128.** In accordance with the prescription of article 141, §1 of the Constitutions for the election of Regional Councillors, the members from each group of provinces will choose by secret vote in a single ballot the confreres to be presented to the assembly, writing one name on each voting paper. They will then present to the assembly a list containing the names of those who have received votes with the number given to each.

C 141, 153

**129.** At the beginning of the electoral session, the President will announce its purpose.

Two secretaries and three scrutineers will then be elected by secret ballot; the scrutineers and the President are obliged to maintain secrecy even after the Chapter.

C 153

**130.** Should any elector be ill in the house where the General Chapter is being held, and be unable to be present but able to write, two scrutineers will go to him to receive in a ballot-box his vote which will be added to the others.

C 153

**131.** The election procedure is to be carried out by means of an electronic system (intranet). All Chapter members are to have access to the personal details of the individual members who can be elected. The individual voters will express their vote by selecting the surname of the member for whom they wish to express a preference.

If there is a technical malfunction of the system, the procedure for election by means of a paper ballot will be used.

The scrutineers will verify that the number of votes in the electronic system corresponds to the number of voters. If the number of votes exceeds the number of voters, the ballot shall be null and void; if, on the other hand, it corresponds to or is lower, the scrutiny is to begin. The secretaries will record the names as they are read out by a scrutineer.

C 153

**132.** Whoever has received the votes of an absolute majority of those present is elected and will be proclaimed as such by the President; on accepting he will immediately enter into office. If the President himself is elected, the proclamation will be made by the oldest member of the assembly.

C 153

**133.** After the elections the Rector Major will inform all members of the Society of the names of those elected and the offices assigned to them.

C 153



C 150

**134.** In the last session of the Chapter, after everything prescribed by the regulations has been carried out, the Moderator, in the name of the President and with the approval of the assembly, will declare the General Chapter closed.

## Regional structures

C 140, 154

**135.** The Regional Councillors will keep in touch with the individual provinces: they must visit them periodically, arranging meetings of provincial councils. In agreement with the provincials, they may meet with rectors and other groups of confreres and lay people to point out to them whatever they consider more opportune for the welfare of the Congregation and for the provision of a better service for the province and the particular Church.

They shall have at least one annual meeting with all the provincials of the Region and liaise with bodies in the Region, formation communities and any provincial conferences.

C 140, 154

**136.** In addition it is the duty of the Regional Councillors:

1. to further a concrete and creative family sense in the relationship of confreres and provinces among themselves and with the Rector Major and his Council;
2. to attend diligently to the official business of the provinces of the group and of the provincial conferences;
3. to foster the efficient functioning of interprovincial structures, where they exist, and the setting up of regional offices of documentation regarding the religious, cultural and social services of the areas of their competence, where this is possible and advisable.

C 140, 154

**137.** In the fulfilment of their office, Regional Councillors will act with proper discretion so as not to substitute themselves unduly for the local, provincial or other superiors, nor intrude in matters of their specific competence.

C 154

**138.** If particular reasons require that certain provinces be detached from one or more groups, without an entirely new group entrusted to a Regional Councillor being constituted, the General Chapter may unite them in a delegation, for which the Rector Major with the consent of his Council and after consulting the provinces concerned will appoint his personal delegate, to whom he will assign such duties as he considers opportune.

C 155

**139.** The provinces of each conference meet at least once a year to study problems concerning the animation and coordination of their joint Salesian activity.

The conference is presided over by the Regional Councillor or his delegate.

The conclusions of the conference are ordinarily indicative.

In special cases the conference can make binding decisions, which acquire their force only after the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his Council.

**140.** The following take part in the meetings of the conference:

C 155

1. the Regional Councillor or his delegate;
2. the provincials of the conference;
3. one or more delegates for each province, selected according to the norms laid down in the regulations of the provincial conference.

**141.** Experts and observers, both religious and lay, may be invited to participate in the work of the conference in the manner to be laid down by each conference in its own regulations.

C 155

**142.** The following tasks, among others, are assigned to the provincial conference:

1. to study and further the application of the general directives of the Congregation regarding its government and work, and particularly those of the General Chapter;
2. to provide for the coordination of common pastoral activity, of the formation, qualification and updating of confreres, and of the means of social communication, by promoting generous collaboration in the exchange of members and resources;
3. to promote liaison and collaboration with other organizations and institutions interested in the problems of youth and of development;
4. to examine and encourage appropriate experimentation, particularly in the field of community poverty and in our service to the poorest young people and ordinary folk;
5. to draw up its regulations and decide upon possible interprovincial structures, secretariats and offices for animation and coordination.

C 155

# 11. THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY

## The provincial and his council

- C 162** **143.** Before appointing a provincial the Rector Major will consult the professed members of the province in accordance with article 162 of the Constitutions, and will ask each one for a list of three names of members of their own or other provinces and arranged in order of preference.
- C 161** **144.** The provincial is the bond of union between the province and the Rector Major with his Council; he fosters relationships with the civil authorities and with ecclesiastical and religious organizations in his area.
- C 161** **145.** The provincial should keep in contact with the rectors and give them special attention. He should call them together at least once a year to treat of matters of general interest for the province.
- 146.** The provincial will see to it that he has frequent personal contact with the members, always in a spirit of service and fraternal communion.
1. Once a year he will make with particular care the provincial visitation to each community.
  2. During the visitation he should meet each member, hold a meeting of the local council, and carry out with the community a review of their religious observance, the witness of their consecrated life, their apostolic zeal in pastoral activities, their concern for fostering vocations, and the financial situation. The provincial councillors may assist him in this task.
  3. At the end of the provincial visitation he should write down in the register kept for this purpose in the archives of the house his observations and decisions of a general character. Those of a confidential nature he should communicate separately. At the next visitation he should verify that they have been carried out.
- C 161**
- C 5, 161** **147.** By means of opportune contacts with the various groups of the Salesian Family and through his delegate, the provincial will seek to promote the sense of belonging to a common vocation and a deeper understanding of what this means.
- C 47, 161** **148.** Aware of the important role played by our lay colleagues, the provincial should show a keen interest in their Salesian preparation and should ascertain how they are integrated in our works.
- C 162** **149.** The provincial may stay the execution of a superior order, in accordance with universal law, if there are motives to the contrary so grave and evident as to justify him in believing that if the superiors concerned had known of them they would have acted otherwise, but in such a case he must inform them fully and immediately. If the suspended order concerns a member, the latter shall place himself at the disposal of the provincial while a reply is awaited (CIC, can. 41).

**150.** A member is assigned to a specific Salesian house by a precept of obedience from his own provincial or other competent authority. The number of confreres in a house shall normally not be fewer than six.

C 160

**151.** The provincial, after hearing the opinion of his council and the member concerned, may if requested and for a just reason send him temporarily to another province under a written agreement with the provincial who receives him. Permanent changes of province require the authorization of the Rector Major.

C 162

**152.** Members will exercise the ministry of hearing confessions with the permission of the provincial, in accordance with canon law.

**153.** To change the provincial house the provincial must have the consent of his council and seek the authorization of the Rector Major.

C 161, 162

He shall also have an understanding with him if he will be absent from the province for a considerable length of time.

**154.** The manner in which the consultation preceding the appointment of provincial councillors is made shall be laid down by the Rector Major with the consent of his Council.

C 167

**155.** It is the duty of the provincial council to collaborate with the provincial for the development of the Salesian life and mission, help him gain knowledge of situations, and see that the provincial plan is being put into practice through contacts with those responsible and with the respective commissions.

C 164

The council shall be called together by the provincial at least once a month, and the agenda shall be made known in advance.

**156.** In addition to those already indicated in the Constitutions, the provincial needs the consent of his council according to the General Regulations in the following cases:

1. authorizing coeducational schools [R 3];
2. drawing up contracts with local Ordinaries and other bodies [R 23, 25];
3. setting up mission offices and twinning arrangements [R 24];
4. allowing a confrere to carry out pastoral work in non-Salesian institutions [R 35];
5. changing the location of the provincial house [R 153];
6. appointing the moderator of the provincial chapter and inviting experts and observers [R 168];
7. establishing the manner in which the consultation for the appointment of rectors shall be carried out [R 170];
8. transferring a rector to another office during his term of appointment [R 171];
9. requesting authorization for the financial operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions [R 193];
10. approving the financial budget and balance sheet of the province [C 190; R 196];
11. fixing the contributions to be requested from the houses for the needs of the province [R 197];
12. authorizing modifications, or solutions to economic problems, or other undertakings of considerable importance in the houses [R 200].

C 165

**157.** The provincial must hear the opinion of his council, according to canon law and the General Regulations, in the following cases:

1. for the choice and preparation of personnel for formation communities;
2. for the selection of parish priests [R 27];
3. for the temporary transfer of a confrere to another province [R 151];
4. for the appointment of the provincial secretary [R 159];
5. for the setting up of offices and secretariats, and the establishing of commissions for consultation or pastoral activity at the provincial level [R 160];
6. for setting in motion the process of dismissal of a member [CIC, can. 697].

C 157, 165

**158.** When matters of particular importance concerning a local community are dealt with in the provincial council, care shall be taken to ascertain the views of the community concerned.

C 165

**159.** The provincial and his council have at their service a secretary who has the role of a notary.

He is present at the meetings of the council without the right to vote, unless he is one of the councillors; he records the minutes. He is in charge of the provincial archives and sees to the collecting and recording of statistics. He is appointed by the provincial after hearing the opinion of his council and remains *ad nutum*.

C 164

**160.** It belongs to the provincial, after hearing the opinion of his council, to set up offices and secretariats and to establish commissions for consultation or pastoral activity at the provincial level.

C 162, 164

## The provincial chapter

**161.** The elections of the delegates of the local communities to the provincial chapter and of the delegates of the provinces to the General Chapter will be made separately by secret ballot according to the norms of article 153 of the Constitutions.

C 173

**162.** After the delegates are chosen, an equivalent number of substitutes will be elected to take their place if they are definitively prevented from taking part in the provincial or General Chapter. The manner in which the substitution is to take place for the General Chapter will be decided by the provincial chapter.

C 173

**163.** In the case of local communities having fewer than six professed members, if circumstances permit, the provincial should arrange that they meet together so as to form the number of at least six professed members, under the presidency of the rector who is senior by first profession. Thus united they will elect the delegate for the provincial chapter and his substitute according to the norms of the General Regulations.

If however because of special circumstances the members of a house with fewer than six professed members cannot join with another in like condition, with the consent of the provincial, the members of such a house shall join the members of a house with six or more professed members and together with them and with equal rights, active and passive, will proceed to the election of the delegate and his substitute.

C 173

**164.** Besides what is prescribed in article 165 of the General Regulations, voting by letter is allowed with the approval of the provincial in the following cases;

1. when because of distance or other serious reasons the members of communities with fewer than six professed members cannot meet together nor join the members of another house with six or more professed members for the election of the delegate to the provincial chapter;
2. when a confrere cannot be present for serious reasons at the election of the delegate of his own community;
3. when a member of the provincial chapter cannot attend the chapter for the election of the delegate of the province to the General Chapter.

C 173

**165.** For the election of the delegates of the provincial community the following is to be observed:

1. When the election of the delegates of each community has been completed, the provincial will notify the confreres of the names of those elected, and will send them a list of the perpetually professed members of the province who are eligible for the provincial chapter. This list will include confreres temporarily and lawfully absent from the province and exclude confreres of other provinces present for the same reasons;
2. confreres who for lawful reasons are temporarily absent from their province will participate in the election of the delegate of the community in which they reside, but for the election of the delegates of the provincial community they will receive from their own provincial a voting-paper which they will return to him duly completed;
3. the number of those to be elected is in the proportion of 1 for every 25 or fraction of 25 members of the province; in arriving at this number both temporarily and perpetually professed members are included as well as confreres temporarily absent from the province for lawful reasons;
4. each confrere with the right to vote will receive from his provincial a voting-paper on which he may indicate as many names as there are members to be elected;
5. it is for the provincial to collect the voting papers and guarantee the secrecy of the voting;
6. the counting of the votes will be done by scrutineers appointed by the provincial. Those who have the highest number of votes in successive sequence will be elected. If votes are equal the senior by profession will be elected, or in the case of further equality the senior in age;
7. if the substitute of a delegate of a community is elected on the provincial list a new election for the substitute will be made. If one of those elected on the provincial list cannot take part in the chapter, he will be substituted by the first of the non-elected members who received the highest number of votes.

C 173, 174

**166.** The following confreres are to be considered as lawfully absent from the province:

1. those who by express mandate of their own provincial are living temporarily in houses of other provinces for reasons of health, study or other duties;
2. those who received permission for *absentia a domo* without giving up their right to active and passive voice;
3. those with permission for *absentia a domo* who have renounced their right to active and passive voice; but this last group, while being included for the purpose of article 165 of the General Regulations, are not to be included in the list for the election referred to in nos. 1 and 2 of the same article.

C 173

**167.** In addition to what is prescribed in article 171 of the Constitutions, it belongs to the provincial chapter:

1. to study and analyse the report of the provincial on the state of the province;
2. to verify what has been done in response to the guidelines issued by the previous provincial chapter;
3. to suggest ideas and criteria for the planning and reorganization of the works of the province;
4. to establish standing orders for the functioning of the provincial chapter in accordance with canon law (CIC, can. 632);
5. to forward proposals to the Moderator of the General Chapter.

C 171

**168.** With the consent of his council, the provincial has the power of appointing the moderator and of inviting Salesians and non-Salesians to the provincial chapter as experts or observers, without the right to vote.

C 172, 173

**169.** In elections, consultations and appointments, it should be kept in mind that it is desirable for chapters and councils to express by the significant presence of clerical and lay members the complementary relationship between them that is characteristic of our Society.

C 123

## 12. THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

### The rector and his council

**170.** The manner of making the consultation for the appointment of the rector will be determined by the provincial with the consent of his council and in the light of any indications made by the provincial chapter. When a rector is confirmed for a second three-year term of office in the same community, the approval of the Rector Major referred to in article 177 of the Constitutions is not required.

C 177

**171.** The period of service of the rector shall not normally exceed six years without an interruption of at least one year.

Even during his three-year term he may be appointed to some other office if the provincial, with the consent of his council, deems it necessary.

C 177

**172.** The rector should keep himself free from commitments which could interfere with his fundamental duties of service to the confreres. He should not absent himself from the house for any notable length of time without necessity and without an understanding with the provincial.

C 55, 176

**173.** He must see that the confreres practise the shared responsibility and collaboration in the family spirit desired by Don Bosco. He should respect areas of responsibility, fostering in an atmosphere of healthy freedom the employment of natural gifts and personal talents for attaining the common end.

He must ensure that the assembly of the confreres and the council of the community function in the most effective way.

He should encourage meetings and events which contribute to brotherhood, updating and relaxation.

C 55, 176, 186

**174.** He should programme with the community the best way of carrying out and periodically reviewing the community expression of its prayer life, allowing scope for opportune initiative.

He should ensure that the confreres have opportunities for frequent confession and freedom as regards direction of conscience.

C 176

**175.** Basing himself on Salesian sources and by means of common spiritual direction, conferences, “good nights” and informal meetings, he should take care that the community becomes deeply imbued with our spirit, and lives it in an intense way.

In addition he will see to it that official documents of the Church and the Congregation are brought to the knowledge of all the confreres.

C 55, 176



**176.** He should show, especially in his personal relationships with the confreres, his concern for their health and particular needs. He should show special care for the confreres still in the period of initial formation, for the sick and the aged and for those who are in difficulty.

C 55, 176

He should take an interest also in the parents of confreres, and consider them as united to the community in a special way.

**177.** On the death of a confrere, the rector is to write his obituary letter without delay.

C 176

He shall send copies to the General Secretariat, to the provinces and communities particularly interested and to formation communities.

**178.** He should keep the archives in order and up to date, and compile or see to the compiling of the house chronicle.

C 176

**179.** Conscious of the fact that he belongs to the provincial community, he should give the provincial a clear and simple account of how the community is progressing.

C 176

**180.** The local council will meet as often as the council itself determines, but at least once a month. In addition it must be called together whenever the rector considers it necessary or whenever he is asked to do so by at least one third of its members.

The agenda to be dealt with should be made known in advance and the minutes are to be signed by the rector and members of the council and kept in the archives.

The rector should keep the confreres duly informed about decisions of common interest.

The members of the council must remember their solidarity as regards decisions taken, and that in any case they are obliged in conscience to have respect for persons and to be discreet regarding matters discussed.

C 178, 181

**181.** Where there is no local council, the rector must consult the provincial in those cases in which the Constitutions call for the opinion or consent of the said council.

C 182

**182.** It is customary for the vice-rector to be responsible for one of the principal sectors of the educative and pastoral activity of the community. Ordinarily, however, the office of vice-rector should not be combined with that of economer.

The community should be informed of the special duties of the vice-rector referred to in article 183 of the Constitutions.

C 183

**183.** The appointment of the vice-rector, the economer and those responsible for the principal sectors of the activity of the community is made by the provincial. In the case of the appointment of the vice-rector and the economer he shall first hear the opinion of the rector.

C 179, 180

## The assembly of the confreres

**184.** With regard to the community the principal tasks and duties of the assembly of the confreres are:

1. to seek appropriate means of fostering religious and apostolic life;
2. to identify and examine the more important problems;
3. to draw up a programme each year covering the life, activities and updating of the community, and to review this programme;
4. to participate in the elaboration of the educative and pastoral plan;
5. to be informed and reflect on the financial situation, in view also of community poverty.

The frequency of meetings is decided by the assembly itself, but they shall take place at least three times a year.

C 186

# 13. THE ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

## General norms

**185.** Where necessary, advisory groups of confreres should be set up at various levels to provide advice and guidance in the solution of administrative problems, in the drawing up and examination of financial budgets and balance sheets, in the preparation of economic programmes and the realization of building projects. The expertise of non-Salesians may also be made use of.

**186.** To ensure the availability of personnel with the necessary competence for the administrative sector, specialized courses for economists should be organized periodically within a province or group of provinces.

**187.** Any money surplus to the requirements for running expenses at different levels should, when convenient, be deposited in banks in the account of a house or institute of the Society and not in the name of an individual person. These accounts should be operable by three, or at least two, signatures, with one signature sufficient for transactions.

C 187

When the superior in question considers it opportune, two signatures may be jointly required for transactions.

**188.** The following operations in favour of third parties are forbidden: making loans, acting as guarantors, accepting obligations, issuing or backing letters of credit, mortgaging the property of the Society and similar operations.

**189.** As far as non-Salesian employees are concerned, the legislation of the country must be followed in regard to the documentation needed on taking up or leaving employment, social security, social welfare and insurance, and a just wage must be paid.

It is also necessary to take out and keep up to date insurance policies against damage or harm to property or persons, to the extent judged appropriate by the competent superiors.

**190.** The formulation of detailed rules of administration at provincial and local levels is left to provincial chapters. In particular they will give directives concerning:

1. the keeping of official records, administrative archives for official documents, agreements and covenants, wills, registers, files of obligations, inventories, etc.;
2. property registration, the safe custody of articles of value and of important documents;
3. legacies for religious purposes and bursaries;
4. the keeping of accounts and centralization of administration where there are different groups involved in a single work;
5. financial arrangements between parish and house in conformity with canon law and the Constitutions;
6. every other norm which local experience may suggest.

C 171

The provincial chapter may delegate this task to the provincial with his council.

**191.** If any member, no matter what office he holds, should contract debts or any other kind of obligation without authorization from a competent superior, he alone remains responsible. Neither the Society nor the province nor the house to which he belongs accepts any responsibility in the matter.

Should a corporate body – province or house – raise a loan, even with due authorization, it alone remains responsible for repayment; a clause to this effect should be written into the loan contract.

C 190

## At world level

**192.** The Ecomer General supervises the whole Society as regards the operations listed in article 188 of the Constitutions. He supervises the administration of the provinces and the houses, and in particular examines the annual report which is drawn up and despatched according to the indications of article 196 of the General Regulations.

He renders an account of his administration to the Rector Major and his Council at least once a year and whenever he is called upon to do so.

C 139, 188

## The provinces

**193.** The provincial ecomer administers those goods which do not belong to a particular house of the province, and those which individual confreres have entrusted to the Congregation. He supervises and monitors the administration of each house. He carries out his duties in dependence on the provincial, who will make decisions with the consent of his council in the case of operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions and others of a certain importance.

C 169, 190

**194.** The provincial ecomer will have an understanding with the provincial concerning:

1. the help he gives local ecomers to ensure the exact fulfilment of their duties and in coordinating initiatives at provincial level;
2. the visits he makes to the houses to examine the condition of buildings and property, and to check the administration, maintenance and hygienic conditions;
3. the calling of the annual meeting of local ecomers;
4. the prompt submission of the annual financial report and other periodic reports on forms supplied by him;
5. the withdrawal from the houses of the contributions referred to in article 197 of the General Regulations.

C 169, 190

**195.** Among the rights and duties of the provincial ecomer is also included the supervision of all building operations in the province, even when these concern a house already in existence and where the work is to be carried out under the immediate control of the local ecomer and the responsibility of the rector.

C 169, 190

**196.** The provincial economer should be solicitous in keeping the provincial and his council periodically informed about his administration, and in drawing up the annual financial budget and balance sheet which they have to approve.

C 169, 190

The balance sheet will include the cash income and expenditure and the situation of the province in regard to capital assets and liabilities, together with a summary of the financial reports of the individual houses; a copy, signed by the provincial and his council, will be sent to the Economer General.

**197.** The provincial with the consent of his council will decide on and inform the houses of the contributions required from them for the needs of the province, and will likewise withdraw surplus funds that may be available in certain houses.

He will draw up a periodic plan of financial solidarity among all the houses of the province, in order to help those in greater need and to provide funds for extraordinary works and purchases programmed in the provincial chapter.

C 76, 190

He will also ensure solidarity with the worldwide Congregation, especially at moments and in ways called for by the Rector Major and his Council.

## The houses

**198.** The administration of the goods of each house is entrusted to the local economer, who will act in dependence on the rector and his council.

Every financial transaction in any sector of the house, even that of the rector, must be referred back for accounting purposes to the economer's office, which will be organized in a manner proportionate to the importance and complexity of the work involved.

Even confreres in charge of works which by statute or agreement have a separate administrative council, must render an account of their administration to the religious superiors. This must be done even when there exist separate administrations for the community and the work concerned.

C 184, 190

**199.** It is the economer's duty to manage affairs with diligence and precision.

In agreement with the rector he will make the necessary purchases, look after employees and take care of insurance matters; he will be watchful to see that abuses and waste of every kind are avoided, and that furnishings and rooms are kept simple, functional, clean and well ordered.

C 176, 184, 190

The rector will keep himself frequently informed of everything that relates to the financial state of the house.

**200.** Without prejudice to what is laid down in article 188 of the Constitutions, the rector and the economer will not make modifications, seek solutions to economic problems, or take other initiatives of any considerable importance without the consent of the local council and without the authorization of the provincial and his council.

C 184, 190

**201.** The rector and the economer will be solicitous in satisfying their financial obligations to the provincial in the manner laid down, and in transferring to him any surplus remaining at the end of the financial year, in obedience to article 197 of the General Regulations.

C 176, 184, 190

They will also diligently fulfil any other obligations they have undertaken and pay any debts contracted both with other Salesian houses and with externs.

**202.** The economer will keep himself always ready to give an account of his management to the rector and his council. He will send a report of his administration to the provincial and provincial economer annually and whenever he is asked to do so.

C 184, 190

As opportunity offers, and especially when the programme for the year's work and the economic situation are being discussed, he will seek the involvement of the entire community with regard to the financial situation, ordinary and extraordinary, of the house.