**2.4. PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS**

Some suggestions are offered here to the Provinces and Vice Provinces which may be useful for the preparation and carrying out of the Provincial Chapter.

**2.4.1. Tasks of the Provincial Chapter**

“The provincial chapter”, art.170 of the Constitutions states, “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.”

The tasks of the provincial chapter are indicated in art.170 of the Constitutions and art.169 of the General Regulations.

In the present case the provincial chapter is convoked primarily and specifically for the preparation of the GC29. In consequence:

* *It will mainly explore the topic of GC29:*

“PASSIONATE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST, DEDICATED TO YOUNG PEOPLE”

* *It will elect the Delegate or Delegates* to the General Chapter, and their substitutes (C. 171,5).

In addition to fulfilling these primary requirements, the chapter *can deal with other matters of more immediate concern to the province* and considered of particular importance, as provided for by C 171, 1-2.

**2.4.2. Preparation for the Provincial Chapter**

After receiving the Rector Major’s letter convoking GC29, it is desirable that the Provincial **call his council together:**

* to appoint the *Moderator of the Provincial Chapter* (R 168):
* to analyse more deeply the purpose and theme of GC29, and to clarify the objectives of the PC which is to prepare for it;
* to take notice of the study outline on the theme assigned to GC29;
* to study the norms governing the preparation and carrying out of the provincial chapter;
* to invite likely experts and observers to the chapter (R 168).

If it is considered opportune, the Provincial with his council may appoint a *preparatory commission*, to help the Moderator in preparing the provincial chapter. A provincial preparatory commission is not prescribed by the General Regulations. It has nevertheless proved useful in many provinces for the preparation of the provincial chapter. It is for the Provincial and his council to decide how it should be made up.

**The provincial chapter should be convened** by a letter from the Provincial encouraging the confreres and the communities to reflect on the theme and to participate in the Chapter’s work. In it he will announce:

* the name of the Moderator of the provincial chapter;
* the members of the preparatory commission (if there is one);
* the date for the opening and place of the chapter, which could be spread over more than one session;
* lhe manner of grouping of communities which have less than six confreres, for the purpose of electing the delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute (cf. R 163).

**After the election of the delegates of the local communities**, the Provincial in a second letter will

* communicate to the confreres the names of those elected,
* and present the list of perpetually professed confreres eligible for election to the chapter as delegates of the confreres of the province (cf. R 165, 1-2).

**2**.**4.3. The Moderator of the Provincial Chapter**

The Moderator of the Provincial Chapter:

* will decide and inform the communities of the dates by which must take place the election of:
  + the delegates of the communities and their substitutes;
  + the delegates of the confreres (from the provincial list);
  + eventual new substitutes for community delegates if a substitute is subsequently elected from the provincial list as a delegate of the confreres;
* will send to the communities the norms governing the election of the delegates of local communities and the forms for recording the minutes of their elections;
* will also announce the method to be used for the election of delegates of the confreres of the province

**2.4.4.**  **The provincial preparatory commission**

It will be the task of the **provincial preparatory commission** (if there is one) to study, suggest to the Provincial, and foster all the initiatives it may consider useful for:

* sensitising the confreres to chapter perspectives (by conferences, study days, group and community meetings, etc.)
* helping the confreres to prepare themselves spiritually for the work and obligations associated with the chapter (through retreats, days of prayer, celebrations, etc.)
* clarifying the chapter theme and helping the confreres in their study of it: every confrere could well be given a copy of the letter convening GC29, of the study outline found elsewhere in this edition of the Acts.

The preparatory commission can also suggest to Provincials ways of involving members of the Salesian Family (FMA, DBV, Cooperators, Past-pupils)…lay collaborators, friends of our works, (religious, competent members of the clergy – including our Bishops and Prelates etc.) requesting their collaboration in the form and areas allowed by our norms and local situations.

In the provincial chapter it is important to find some special way of *involving young people* both at local community level and at that of the celebration of the PC.

The Moderator, in conjunction with the preparatory commission,

* will send out forms to the communities, for collecting the contributions and reflections of the confreres and/or communities;
* will lay down a date by which the forms must be returned to the Moderator of the provincial chapter;
* will study the contributions and proposals sent in by the communities and confreres, and arrange them in a manner which will facilitate their use for the provincial chapter’s reflection and decisions.

**2.4.5. The carrying out of the Provincial Chapter itself**

Every effort should be made to ensure that the provincial chapter is celebrated in a *fraternal atmosphere of reflection and prayer*, and that it is seeking God’s will as we try to bring an ever better response to the expectations of the Church and of youth. This will be helped by an appropriate preparation of the liturgy as regards content, method, aids, etc.

Every provincial chapter will have its own brief *set of regulations*, containing norms for work, discussions, and the organisation of the Chapter members into study groups or commissions. For these regulations the norms indicated by the Constitutions and General Regulations should be kept in mind (C 153, R 161, 164, 169) together with any indications found in the provincial directory.

For the *communication* *of proposals and contributions to the GC28,* the indications given by the Moderator of GC29 must be scrupulously observed. In particular, proposals and contributions must be written on the appropriate forms. Proposals from provincial chapters will carry the details of the voting. They can be written in *Italian, French, Spanish, English or Portuguese.*

**2.4.6. Participation of the communities and confreres**

It will be convenient at the end of these suggestions to list some duties of the communities and individual confreres.

*The communities*

* Accompany the whole of the chapter process by their daily prayer.
* Elect their delegate to the provincial chapter and his substitute. They compile the minutes of the election, following the model supplied by the Moderator of the PC.
* Receive and study the motives and material sent them by the Moderator of the PC.
* Deepen their knowledge of the theme proposed in view of the GC28, and submit contributions and proposals to the Moderator of the PC.

*The individual confreres*

* Follow, through information and prayer, the preparation, realization and conclusions of their provincial chapter.
* A climate of personal conversion is proposed so as to assume the spiritual and pastoral implications of the topic for GC29, “Passionate about Jesus Christ, dedicated to young people”.
* Vote in the election of the delegate of their own community and his substitute.
* Take part in the election of the delegates of the confreres of the province.
* Make a personal study of the theme, availing themselves of aids and of the exchange of ideas in their own community,
* Submit personal contributions and proposals to the Moderator of the provincial chapter and collaborate in the drawing up and discussion of proposals and contributions from their own community.
* Send, if they so wish, personal proposals and contributions directly to the Moderator of GC29, using the appropriate forms.