

**XIX GENERAL CHAPTER**  
**OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY**

1965 • ROME



# ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

## ACTS OF THE 19th GENERAL CHAPTER 8th April to 10th June 1965 **ROME**

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## INTRODUCTION BY THE RECTOR MAJOR

**Turin, 31 January, 1966.**

*My dear Confreres,*

I have the pleasure *of* presenting to you the Acts of the 19th General Chapter eagerly awaited by every part of the congregation.

I would not do your intelligence justice if I lingered over how much work went into writing, revising, correcting and finally editing these acts. I am sure I voice the general feeling when I express here my deepest thanks to all, and they are not a few, who have been working during these recent months to prepare the acts for publication.

The work undertaken by the General Chapter, the Major Superiors and the postcapitular commissions has reached its end. Now, with the promulgation by the Rector Major which follows, as much of it as was within his competence, and the approbation of the Congregation of Religious, the acts become the patrimony of each and every Salesian, the life of our life, food for daily reflection and above all the generous and sincere pledge that they will be put into practice.

### THE SALESIAN AT THE CENTRE OF IT ALL

If I were to have recourse to a metaphor to give, in some way, the picture of our General Chapter, I would take it in the spirit of humility, from the Gospel; I would say that it was and is a house built upon a rock.

At the centre of this house built and made our own, brick by brick in a long and exhausting elaboration of ideas there is a human

figure which dominates and which all the Chapter members kept in view with fraternal concern, as bit by bit the house grew, was the Salesian,

I would not like the variety and weight of the documentation you have before you to turn you from the central vision which has *been* the most important and constant preoccupation of all the long General Chapter; the Salesian to be formed and placed courageously in the setting of a rich and vigorous tradition onto which must be grafted the new, and which serves precisely to give life and renewed vigour to the Salesian of the new century. Our first concern was for you, dear confreres, rather than for our activities, for each One of you in particular. We have had you present to us every day with true fraternal joy and fear, thinking first about the precious lives of the brethren and then about the structure and activity of the family. I would like you to take note of this and be comforted.

This has been the aim of all the elaboration of documents, this the scope of the variety of initiatives whether new or under a new form, like the re-organization of our activities, the re-adaptation of various offices and councils, the bringing in a vicar to the Provincial and Rector, the defining of the figure *of* the spiritual director, the monthly day of recollection in a more binding framework, the spiritual retreat adjusted to give more scope for personal work, the periodic ascetical refresher courses for different categories, the preparation courses for future superiors and masters of formation of the congregation, the constitution of consultative bodies, the *preparation* of Rectors for the different levels of formation, the revision of the practical training course, the adequate preparation for the perpetual profession, the possibility of a second novitiate, etc. It is a blossoming of initiatives aimed at increasing the fruitfulness of the work of the formation of the Salesian in the way required by the epoch-making times in which we live and by the very apostolate which we today are called upon to carry out.

Connected with this need for formation there is the other not less important one of qualification for the individual confrere *for* the various tasks that obedience calls him to. Today society *refuses*

to accept into its structure the utility men, men without cultural, technical or professional training. Unfortunately the sad traces of this exacting toll are seen in the agonizing phenomena of unemployment, hunger, emigration, etc.

We cannot therefore afford to drag our feet in the sweet illusion that a hit of good will is all that is needed to meet the immense needs our activities uncover for us every day, and that it is enough just to pull the cart and arrive at evening tired out by the quantity and multiplicity of the work we have undertaken.

The people, and the Church first of all, consider us authentic specialists in pedagogy and the apostolate (see "Discourse of Paul VI to the members of the 19th General Chapter of the Society of St. Francis of Sales"). We must, to the limit of our capacity, live up to this reputation. We must become qualified by using the means the congregation generously puts at our disposal (studies, courses, degrees, literature, etc.) A bit of practice is no longer enough to teach in class or direct a workshop. From now on every manifestation of our activity calls for personnel qualified in theology, liturgy, philosophy, pedagogy, science, technical knowledge, teaching, art, recreation, administration. etc. It is not a question of collecting degrees or specializing for its own sake, and much less of encouraging selfish or ambitious aim to study for one's own satisfaction but sterile for the apostolate; what is required is simply an adequate preparation to work fruitfully in one of the innumerable fields of action Providence has called us to. It can be seen at once what and how many consequences for superiors and confreres follow these changes.

## 2. THE CONGREGATION AT THE TURN OF THE ROAD

During the work of the Chapter one always felt that all those present were anxiously watching the Vatican Ecumenical Council II. The atmosphere in Rome clearly encouraged this spring climate of expectancy so full of promise.

We are all agreed that the congregation is at a turning of the road. Let us not, however, quibble at the word. If by turning we mean taking another road, then we speak incorrectly. If we mean we keep on the same road having taken our bearings, new inspiration and fresh means, then we are correct, because before us the Church, decided and courageous, herself has taken the same turning while yet remaining on the fruitful soil of her centuries-old divine-human tradition.

The words Pope Paul VI spoke to us appear very opportune in this context and should be well considered: "Your Society has completed a stage of its journey, has taken its bearings (as seafarers say), has concluded one period and now begins another." (Paul VI *ibid.*) We have sown generously in the soil of tradition. Undoubtedly there will be the new growth : always, however, grafted on to the vigorous stock of a tradition that has in the past given abundant fruit, and which consequently does not delude us about the future.

Let us look therefore to the future with "wise adherence to the needs of the times." (Paul VI. *ibid.*)

### **3. RENDERING ALIVE TILE PRINCIPLES AND RULES**

So that this graft may grow into the best and most fruitful plant, it is necessary to mould in ourselves a mentality rather than set up an inventory of injunctions to be carried out. Like all that is good and grand, the Chapter too has to be realized in each of us to be understood and appreciated. It must become the substance of our thinking and of our love before it is transformed into rhythmical action. With the help of the Holy Spirit and under the loving guidance of the superiors deputed for this most delicate task we must study and steep ourselves first in the ideas that give life to all the documents: only thus can we carry out not so much the individual dispositions only, as the overall plan intended to renew our life as religious, as Salesians, as apostles.

Do not let us say, immediately we see a document: This does not concern me: this is for the priests, the coadjutors, the parishes, etc." In a family they neither think nor act thus. What concerns one, concerns all: the interest of one is the interest of the whole family. Let us read therefore and meditate with equal attention all the documents and appendices contained in the volume. Light, we know, is made up of various colours. Every document contributes to, and shows one facet of the diamond that is the Chapter: the documents throw light on each other. Here and there it is possible to find particular points that help greatly in illuminating the true spirit that animated so purposefully all the Chapter.

Read them, then, attentively by yourselves: do not be satisfied with a first reading in community. The congregation, I would almost say Don Bosco himself, with these acts does not wish only to give a conference, or preach a fine sermon to his sons: the wish is to initiate a dialogue, intimate and constructive, with each one of us: it wants to tell us what must be done to continue fruitfully along the path of our second century of life.

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERIORS

Naturally in the acts there are certain things which must be made clear and put into practice prudently and gradually. For this reason the responsible superiors will not fail to give timely and opportune rules so as to avoid arbitrary interpretations. After *the* promulgation of these acts we are all agreed that personal opinions must be submerged so as to flow into a common stream of united action without which it is impossible to do any constructive work. There are things that cannot be left to the way of thinking or spirit of initiative of individuals. Our family is large and it is necessary to co-ordinate our efforts in a single line of action and renounce, after a certain point, our own personal point of view where that is necessary. Hence arises the urgent *need* on the part of every superior to coordinate, clarify, direct, call together those directly concerned in order

to advance to the executive phase without wasteful dispersal of energies, Work together: take advice. Here it is profitable to insist again on the spirit of "service" which must characterize authority at every level : an orderly, harmonious, organized service.

Nothing has to be improvised . The programmes of action should be studied and made to be studied. A practical way must be found to implement the dispositions of the Chapter among the diverse categories of confreres working inside the community: priests, coadjutors, the young and the old.

Pair this delicate interweaving of work it is necessary that we call upon and rely on the sense of collaboration at every level: at the centre of the congregation, in the groups of provinces, in the provinces themselves, in each house and in every sector of our activity.

Here we rediscover the value of a fraternal and constructive dialogue, so much recommended by the Church in its historical encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* . It is a question of justice; all of us will draw great advantage from it in every respect.

Ours is a congregation of the active life and disposes of resources to be wisely used. Perhaps many confreres already well on in years and experience can still discover in themselves new resources for the apostolate to their own advantage and that of the community where they work. Let us make use of them and give them confidence.

The authority responsible will willingly listen to his helpers; and they in *their turn will* hold it as their first and most urgent duty to help, giving of their understanding and experience in the councils. Having always at heart only the true good of the community and of souls, and not seeking to impose at all costs their own point of view.

None of us is a well of spring water : we are all streamlets with a greater or less flow of water which we must pour generously into our common stream, that of our community, blessed by God.

The problems will be neither small nor few whether in the provinces or in the houses, But Our Lord will not fail to reward the single-minded and sincere effort that all the congregation, in all its members and at every level, will make to match themselves to the times in vital renewal, to put into practice methodically and courageously the decisions that the congregation herself, through the General Chapter, her juridical and well qualified organ, has decided and laid down,

## 5. REORGANIZATION OF OUR WORK

Our activities are already *very* numerous and often very complicated both in their size and in their diversity. If we *were* to take action under the pressure of the requests which increasingly come from authorities, benefactors and civil bodies, we should increase them beyond measure. But we cannot ignore the wise and enlightened advice of Paul VI; we would be lacking in that watchful sense of responsibility which must guide us in the government of the congregation, We must not undervalue the admonitory words of the Supreme Pontiff : "There are subtle temptations.., grave dangers... difficulties inherent in the size of the work itself which the congregation goes on accepting." (Paul VI *ibid.*)

It is clear that before moving on to increase already existing activities in number and size we should all of us feel a preoccupation for the man, the religious, the Salesian, the one who plays the leading part in this whirlwind drama, If we did not, we could start undertakings impressive enough to those looking on from outside, but *we* would only succeed in extinguishing the man, the religious, the Salesian. We cannot require more than a certain limit allows for the real good of the confrere, and for the efficiency itself of his generous apostolic effort, It concerns us and must concern us that he is a religious person, because he, in making his profession, has placed in our hands his entire existence for time and eternity. That does not of

course mean that the Salesian of the future will not continue to be that great worker the Church and society hold him to be.

We must consequently ask ourselves with a little realism: why do we keep certain activities going, enlarging some and starting others? To help souls! What souls? Those of the young and adults confided to our care. But who does not see that this goal is not achieved if confreres are lacking to do the work, or if those who can do it break under the martyrizing pressure of work without respite, without the rest that body, mind and soul require?

The Pope has told us that there is "a primacy not only of objective worth but also of operative virtue" which must be conceded to the religious life for our own sanctification and for the education of others. (Paul VI *ibid.*)

I admit it takes much courage to say 'no' to so many requests, especially when they come from persons to whom our works owe so much, and from authorities that want to meet urgent social needs. I admit it, dear confreres, and I understand. But it is a question of life and death for the congregation. We do not feel it right to put greater burdens on the backs of so many confreres who feel the fresh and pure springs of their priesthood and their religious consecration drying up within them.

The apostolate is a delicate spiritual work. It cannot be effective if one's soul is tired out. If tomorrow Our Lord, in view of our generosity, should create a more favourable situation, we shall be very happy to give ear to the pressing demands that come to us from all along the Church's front line.

## 6. OUR ACTIVITIES NEED FIRST THINGS FIRST

From Don Bosco's day to this we have seen grow beyond all computation and before our very eyes not only the number but also the kind of our activities.

Here, too, courage will be needed to get into line with what the Church, by means of the Council, has considered it opportune to

recommend, and the General Chapter itself has clearly laid down. In this matter two basic conditions have to be taken account of: not to stray from the spirit of the congregation and to give preference to the more needy classes of the modern complex *social* structure.

It is the natural instinct of institutions to seek a higher level with the risk of their original scope being frequently obscured. This happens in civil organizations as well as in religious. It is necessary that the Church, desirous of reaching the less favoured social classes, (Paul VI *ibid.*) should be able to count fully upon our generous acceptance,

In short, our congregation must continue to be a "witness to the vitality of the Gospel and to the anxiety of the Church about the world's needs, and especially the needs of the young and of the workers." (Paul VI *ibid.*)

Let us have faith in the `ends' to which our congregation is `consecrated' because "they could not be more noble, more up to date, more urgent, more in conformity with the apostolic programme of the Church today." (Paul VI).

These ends are those proposed for the formation of youth. With them "the congregation participates in the Church's mission" (Doc. 9 "Youth Apostolate" Chap. I); with them "we act like the Church". In this sector the Church makes explicit and pressing demands on us. "The Salesian is sent by the Church to the youth of today". (Doc. 19. "Formation of the Young" Chap. I).

Out of filial respect for the tasks confided to us by the Holy Father, we must therefore put in the forefront the work of the oratories *and* that of education, especially professional schooling for the young *of the less favoured classes*. The oratory *must* become again our first preoccupation : an oratory that, opening its doors to the crowds of boys who surge around its walls, can tackle adequately the problems presented today by free time, with technical apparatus and the devices of modern art: an oratory that does not limit itself to a

playground or an over-crowded games room, but is a 'youth centre' in the most complete, most modern, most dynamic sense of the word, and in which the catechism becomes alive with methods and techniques more adapted to our times.

There is also professional instruction which is felt to be an indispensable need of society, and consequently of the Church. The Pope and the world episcopate have expressed themselves in terms of great urgency. The world of the workers awaits a Christian soul and this soul can be transmitted only when the human element is still susceptible of direction and formation. It is the young apprentices, the young workers who must be met, organized, directed into our schools, into our hostels, into our youth centres. The world has re-discovered that work is an economic factor of the first importance it is our duty to re-discover it also and make others re-discover it as a daily spiritual element of spiritual uplift.

Any abandonment of these fields which is not imposed on us by particular circumstances recognized as such by the Church herself and consecrated by obedience, would be a betrayal, a desertion from the part of the front line allotted to us by God.

In this front line each and every one of us has his post. We must persuade ourselves that "the integral formation of youth 'is the work of the whole educative community.'" ((Doc. 19 "Formation of Youth" Chap. I). Every empty space we leave in this sector to dedicate ourselves to personal activities and initiatives breaks the solidarity of this educative phalanx in which every move, every word has the sacredness of a religious act, because Jesus assures us : "all you have done for the little ones and the needy, you have done for Me." (Paul VI *ibid.*)

But priority and pre-eminence naturally do not mean exclusiveness. Our Constitutions anticipate other apostolic activities besides, which also are essentially Salesian, and as such must be esteemed and cared for by those who in any way have that responsibility. Our mind goes to the missions which must continue to be the trenches of our conquests and of our glory; to the apostolate of the press and

to the means of social communication which today is its natural development, And how can we leave out our co-operators and past pupils? The parishes too are often a necessary integral part of our specific mission.

The important thing is to keep, in the variety of tasks offered to the congregation, that sense of proportion and that openness of mind which, while it makes us engage all the forces we dispose of without petty objections, at the same time keeps us far from uncontrolled paths aiming at goals not destined for us either by the Church or the congregation or obedience and often created by wishful thinking.

## CONCLUSION : GO. FORWARD!

My dear confreres, I have tried to call your attention to some ideas that may guide and enlighten you in appraising and still more in carrying out the overall resolutions of *the* 19th General Chapter.

I hope they help you to detect, in the phrase of Paul VI, the hour of God which has struck with the Vatican Council II and for us also with the 19th General Chapter: to become in reality *factores verbi*, doers of what the Church and the congregation have decided for the good of our own souls and of those for whom we are responsible.

All of us indeed, after the promulgation, have the duty not to discuss further, *but to carry out* with goodwill and generous fervour, as true sons of the Church and of Don Bosco, the resolutions of the 19th General Chapter.

On the new road that we begin, united in mutual charity and confidence, we are encouraged by the words of Paul VI spoken to the representatives of our beloved congregation and therefore to every Salesian. He wished to assure us "that the road travelled has been straight and beneficent and that it must be continued with a confident and joyful step." (Paul VI *ibid.*)

Confidence and joy!

We have 'chosen well'. The Church confirms for us "the sureness and the merit of our apostolic programme. " (Paul VI *ibid.*)

"Go forward!" was the Holy Father's last word in taking leave of the General Chapter: "Go forward to greater heights of true fidelity to the spirit of the Church and of Don Bosco." (Paul VI *ibid.*)

Dear confreres, the acts of the 19th General Chapter which with the heart of Don Bosco I present to each one of you, aim just at this goal.

May the Virgin, Mother and Help of the Church and of our congregation assist us on our new journey.

FR. ALOYSIUS RICCERI

*Rector Major*

*FIRST PART*

CAPITULAR DOCUMENTS

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONGREGATION

### **General Introduction**

The Constitutions in Chapter VI (art, 50), "Government of the Society" declare: ' In its internal government the supreme authority over the whole Society is, under ordinary circumstances, vested in the Superior General and his Council, which is called the Superior Chapter and consists of a Prefect, Spiritual Director, Economer and five Consultors; but in extraordinary circumstances this authority is vested in the General Chapter.'

The fundamentally positive experience of long Salesian tradition has endorsed the validity of this formula, which has remained essentially unchanged except for necessary adaptation to the needs of the times and changing circumstances.

The desire to remain faithful to the original overall purpose and at the same time adapt the traditional structure better to the new requirements of the Congregation, led the 19th General Chapter to make a careful re-examination of the whole subject, keeping in mind the suggestions and proposals emanating from Provincial Chapters and individual confreres, with a view to making the maximum contribution to greater efficiency.

Such a re-examination seemed all the more desirable because of the rapid geographical expansion and diversification of our Salesian work, the corresponding increase in the number of confreres coming from countries differing in both language and culture: and also because of the rich fund of experience gathered by the Superior Council in

\* The 19th General Chapter decided to change the names "Superior Chapter" and "House Chapter" to "Superior Council" and "House Council", as stated in Chapter III of this document, page 22.

the course of Extraordinary Visitations, and the difficulty of reconciling the demands of a centralised government with those of a live contact between the members and the Major Superiors.

There is also the absolute necessity that this growth in quantity and extension be sustained and invigorated by a suitable structure of government based on the same spirit and identical traditions, with the guarantee of firmer bonds of brotherhood and obedience which are at once the cause and effect of that harmony of mind and heart which must always be characteristics of Salesian vocation and Salesian life.

Finally it is becoming daily clearer that the Salesian Society, through competent authority, must be readily able to coordinate its work with other kinds of initiative which are appearing in the Church, and especially with those emanating from Episcopal Conferences, Associations of Major Religious Superiors, from the various Catholic organizations on a national, international and worldwide level; from professional associations and the lay apostolate, and of youth institutes which on educative and scholastic grounds have an affinity in object and methods with our own work.

The re-examination carried out by the General Chapter, though not exhaustive, extended to all aspects of the structure of the Society: General Chapter, Provincial Chapter, Superior Council, Provinces, houses, with their respective governing bodies.

The discussions in the General Chapter led to a series of new norms which, when added to those remaining unchanged, give an integrated code meeting the present-day needs of our Congregation.

## CHAPTER I. THE GENERAL CHAPTER

### **Deliberations**

#### 1. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NORMS AND COUNSELS.

The 19th General Chapter, following various earlier General Chapters and particularly the 10th Chapter (1904) decided that in

the deliberations of General Chapters a clear distinction must be made between

:

-- obligatory norms decided on by General Chapters and incorporated in the Constitutions and Regulations;

decisions of General Chapters which oblige only *ad experz mentum* :

- practical directives and recommendations which serve only to illustrate and promote the observance of deliberations properly so called.

The 19th General Chapter decided that with a view to attaining complete clarity in matters of religious observance a careful investigation be made to decide which norms are no longer in force, either because of later decisions of the Holy See or of the lawful Salesian authority, or because of changed conditions.

## **2. THE RECTOR MAGNIFICUS OF THE PONTIFICAL SALESIAN ATHENAEUM AND THE GENERAL CHAPTER.**

The 19th General Chapter welcomed the proposal that the Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum should have the right to participate in the General Chapter with deliberative vote; it proposed that art. 128 of the Constitutions be modified in this sense.

## **3, TIME AND MANNER OF THE ELECTIONS,**

### *Time of the elections.*

Without prejudice to art. 62 of the Constitutions which grants to the Rector Major the right to decide the day of election of his successor, the General Chapter decided to fix the time of the election of the members of the Superior Council by means of an appropriate article in the Constitutions to read as follows : Art, 137 bis: One of the duties of the General Chapter is the election of the members of the Superior Council; this must take place not earlier than ten days and not later than fifteen days from the opening of the General Chapter."

### *Election of Consultors without specific responsibilities.*

The 19th General Chapter gave careful consideration to the proposal that the General Chapter should elect each Consultor explicitly for specified duties or for a specified group of provinces.

Traditional practice, reasons of convenience especially during the experimental period of the new structure, and the need to ensure to the Rector Major the possibility of entrusting duties to his immediate collaborators with the greatest efficiency led the Chapter to reconfirm the system laid down in art. 69 of the Constitutions.

*Manner of election of Members of the Superior Council.*

The General Chapter decided that the election of the Members of the Superior Council shall be made as for the Prefect, Spiritual Director, and Economer, and that art. 146 of the Constitutions be amended in this sense: "In electing the Prefect, Spiritual Director, Economer, and Consultors of the Superior Council, the scrutinies shall be by secret ballot and separate in each case..."

**4. SECRECY.**

In addition to what is stated in the Regulations of the General Chapter, the 19th General Chapter decided that non-members of the Chapter who for any reason take part in the Chapter's work shall be equally bound to secrecy.

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER**

#### **Deliberations.**

The General Chapter carefully examined the question of a wider and more representative composition of the Provincial Chapter. After considering at length all aspects of the matter, the Chapter expressed itself in favour of a wider representation at the Provincial Chapter, but in view of the many and serious practical difficulties and because of the conflicting proposals put forward did not consider it possible to reach a definite decision forthwith, and decided to leave it to the

Superior Council to submit the problem to fuller study with a view to produce a precise plan for discussion and eventual approval by the next General Chapter.

In the meantime it was decided that the Master of Novices should have the right of membership of the Provincial Chapter.

### CHAPTER III THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

#### **Preliminary**

The General Chapter recognized the need for the government of the Congregation to operate and wield its authority not only at the centre but also in more distant parts. There must therefore be a strong and unbroken bond between the Major Superiors and all the members; that the government be continuous and efficient; that it extend to all the different sectors: that it be based on the clearest possible knowledge of local needs; that it be consistent and unified in operation without overlapping of its different departments and without a kind of structure which, through altered conditions of time and place, would be inefficient and useless.

Whilst desiring for these reasons to place the structure of the Congregation on a new basis, the General Chapter was concerned to see that the spirit of the Rule given to us by our Founder remained unaltered, that no excessive changes should be made to the Constitutions, that the overall scheme of government by the Superior Council be not unduly enlarged, and that fundamentally its present structure should be preserved without the introduction of Superiors of a kind foreign to our traditions.

The General Chapter, steering a middle course between the practice of the past and the present needs of the Congregation made the following decisions, which will not be incorporated in the Constitutions at once but will oblige *ad experimentum* until the next General Chapter.

## **Deliberations**

### **GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL**

The 19th General Chapter decided to increase the number of the Consultors of the Superior Council from five to nine.

All the members of the Superior Council take part, under the authority of the Rector Major, in the general government of the Society, and they vi!! normally live in the House where the Superior General resides.

The Superior Council will exercise its powers of government in two ways : at Headquarters through Superiors in charge of certain branches of our work, who will have at their disposal adequate means of study and effective office-staff; and away from Headquarters through Consultors in charge of groups of Provinces, who will coordinate the work of the Provinces amongst themselves and keep them in contact with Headquarters.

The Superiors in charge of specified sections are the Prefect, the Spiritual Director, the Economer and three Consultors.

According to the Constitutions the Prefect, the Spiritual Director and the Economer General are concerned with aspects of Salesian life concerning the whole Congregation; in particular the Prefect deals with disciplinary matters, the Spiritual Director with religious and moral affairs, and the Economer with financial questions.

The three Consultors in charge of specified sections, on the other hand, look after those particular branches of Salesian activity which have been confided to them by the Rector Major.

The other six Consultors are each in charge of a certain number of Provinces entrusted to them by the Rector Major and his Council.

The Consultors in charge of sections will not normally be responsible for a group of Provinces; this could compromise the efficiency of their office or would react adversely on the work of organization and co-ordination demanded by the requirements of the group of Provinces with which they would have been charged.

To ensure uniformity of nomenclature at every level in the Congregation, the General Chapter decided that henceforth the "Superior Chapter" shall be known as the "Superior Council", and the "House Chapter" as the "House Council".

## 2. DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL.

*The Prefect General.* His duties are defined in art. 70 of the Constitutions. Long tradition gives him the care of the general discipline of the Congregation, To him also is confided, as it was many years ago, the care of the Missions; in the solution of local missionary problems he will be assisted by the Major Superior in charge of the group of Provinces in which the particular mission is situated; the Central Missionary Office will be dependent on him in its work of organization and coordination.

*The Spiritual Director General.* His duties are found in arts. 71-75; he is principally responsible for those matters which concern the moral and spiritual welfare of the whole Congregation and all its members. By analogy with what is laid down in art. 72 concerning the novices, he has full responsibility in matters concerning vocations and the Houses where aspirants are cared for during the time preceding the novitiate.

*The Economist General.* For his duties cf. art. 76 and 77 of the Constitutions.

*The Consultor in charge of Salesian formation.* The institution of this new office was decided upon because of the need of ensuring unity of formation for all our personnel, and in view of the close collaboration between ecclesiastics and coadjutors in our Salesian apostolate. This Consultor following the direction of the Rector Major and Spiritual Director, will be responsible for matters touching the formation of all members from their first profession, i.e. from the Studentate of Philosophy for clerics and *from the period of professional training for coadjutors right up to the end of the formation period.* His authority therefore extends to every House and every activity concerned with the training of our personnel, both ecclesiastical and lay, including the course in Pastoral theology and the quinquennium following ordination. The Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum comes under his jurisdiction, as also do other institutes of university level and technical training colleges for Salesians. Spiritual and cultural books for confreres in formation are also his responsibility, as also are any publications emanating from houses of formation.

*The Consultor in charge of parishes and the apostolate for youth.*

The General Chapter thought it opportune to entrust to a single Consultor the care of our parishes and the apostolate of the young because of their close interdependence. In fact our Salesian parish work has as a primary objective the formation of the young, and our *educative work for youth* has in turn the object of enabling them to take their place in the life of the Church through their parish community. As far as boys are concerned, this Consultor will have care of their general formation, religious, moral and intellectual, in every kind of Salesian house: oratories, hostels, day schools, boarding schools, *youth* centres, sodalities and other youth organizations; due regard being paid to the authority of provincials and with the collaboration of the Consultor in charge of the group of provinces concerned when there is question of specific local requirements in technical, scholastic or professional matters, or in methods of organization, etc.

*The Consultor in charge of the apostolate for adults.* He will take care of the co-operators, past pupils, Salesian propaganda and public relations (including the Salesian Bulletin), and mass media of communication in general.

*The Consultors in charge of groups of Provinces.* At

Headquarters they will normally have the following duties: - they will take part in the general government of the Society;

--- they will present, explain and expedite the affairs of the Provinces belonging to their own group;

- they will organize, for the benefit of the Superior Council and in collaboration with the Provinces concerned, offices which will collect and collate information concerning the religious, moral, cultural, social and economic life of the areas allotted to them.

*In the Provinces entrusted to them:*

- *they will* promote in a concrete manner the sense of being one family which must unite and characterize the whole Salesian Congregation, by keeping the major superiors and confreres more in touch with one another, by gaining at first hand more precise knowledge of local situations, by providing a more direct link between the Provinces of their group and the Rector Major and other Superiors with whom they will represent their provinces and foster their concerns.

they will organize and preside at meetings of the provincials of their group of provinces.

- in agreement with the Provincials they will organize interprovincial meetings for different groups of people.
- they will study with others the situation in their provinces from the point of view of possible future activity in the spheres of religion, education, charitable undertakings, etc.
- they will keep in touch, when necessary, with organizations of national or international character, with episcopal conferences, etc.

In view of these deliberations of the 19th General Chapter, art. 78 and 79 of the Constitutions, which define the duties of Consultors of the Superior Council, are suspended.

### 3.FURTHER EXPLANATIONS CONCERNING THE CONSULTORS IN CHARGE OF GROUPS OF PROVINCES.

The experience of the next six years will be of great assistance in defining more clearly the figure of the Major Superior in charge of a group of Provinces.

For the experimental period the General Chapter puts forward *the* following guiding principles:

- Without prejudice to the possibility of communication personally or by letter between confreres and the major superiors and their respective offices, the ordinary business of the provinces will normally be conducted through the Consultor in charge of the group concerned, by analogy with former practice in the case of Consultors who had been extraordinary visitors in a province.
- In technical matters belonging specifically to one of the special sectors in the charge of another Consultor he will act in agreement with the Consultor concerned. On the other hand a Consultor in charge of a sector who has to deal with a Province about matters concerning his sector will normally have an understanding with the Consultor in charge of that Province.
- - The appointment of Consultors in charge of a group of Provinces will not put limits to the lawful authority of the Rector Major, of the Consultor in charge of sectors, or of the Provincials.

The Consultor in charge of a Province cannot put limits to the governing power of the Rector Major on either a juridical or practical level because whenever they wish to do so individual confreres, houses, Provinces and groups of Provinces can have direct recourse to *the* Rector Major who wields supreme authority in all the fullness given to him by the Constitutions and Salesian tradition.

The authority of the Consultors in charge of specific *sectors* is in no way lessened or changed. All that is required is that in the case of some particular directive or when some definite line of action is to be laid down, there shall be an understanding between the Consultors in charge of specific sectors and the Consultors in charge of the groups of Provinces.

The Provincia! retains all the authority inherent in his office, because the Consultor in charge *of the group has no power of jurisdiction*.

-- The General Chapter did not think it fitting to define the membership of the groups of Provinces to be confided to each of the six Consultors of the Superior Council for two reasons : firstly, so as not to contradict art. 69 of the Constitutions, and secondly so as to afford the Rector Major a certain liberty of decision in a period which will be essentially experimental in character.

-- The introduction of this distinction between Consultors in charge of provinces and visitors in the canonical sense in no way prevents the Rector Major from appointing extraordinary visitors whenever he considers it necessary. Such visitors can, hut need not be members of the Superior Council.

#### 4. ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL.

The 19th General Chapter decided that there should be inserted in the Constitutions an Art. 83 bis: The Superior Council will make its decisions known to the confreres by means of the 'Acts of the Superior Council', which is the official organ of the Congregation."

In harmony with what was laid down above in Chapter I of this document, the 19th Genera! Chapter decided that in the exercise of their legislative powers, whether ordinary or extraordinary, the competent authorities at Headquarters should always take care to distin-

guish clearly between what they put forward as guiding principles and what they intend as definite laws.

The Acts of the Superior Council will be clearly divided into two parts: in the first, called "Official Acts" or some similar title, there will be promulgated dispositions containing norms of preceptive force binding on the whole Congregation; in the second, which could be called "Communications", there will be published whatever the Major Superiors wish to bring to the knowledge of all confreres or of some particular group by way of exhortation, information, or general indication.

The official language of the "Acts of the Superior Council", on which authentic interpretations will be based, will be Italian. Nevertheless it is desirable that the "Acts" be issued from Headquarters translated also into the other principal languages.

## CHAPTER IV THE PROVINCES

### **Preliminary**

A careful examination of the conclusions of provincial chapters, confirmed in large part by studies and proposals sent in by individual confreres concerning the structure by which provinces and houses are governed, showed that the fundamental requirements are: unity, adaptability, flexibility, reasonableness and practicability.

Such requirements seem to correspond perfectly to the spirit of Don Bosco, to Salesian tradition and to the development of the Congregation, and at the same time can be adapted without difficulty to the needs of the present day and of the Church in an era which turns on the decisions of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican.

The need for unity, besides its obvious necessity for an efficient government based on enlightened decisions and their firm enactment, is a fundamental characteristic of the Salesian Society which sees in the Rector Major, in the Provincial, and in the Rector of a house respectively the central figure, the competent and harmonious source

of all guidance for the entire Congregation, for the province, and for the individual House.'

The spirit of adaptability characterizes both the origins and the development of the work of Don Bosco who understood very clearly the need to meet the demands of the apostolate both for the young and for older people in so many different circumstances, with institutions and methods that are now accepted by the modern world and fully in accord with Vatican II as far as apostolate and pastoral applications are concerned.

To harmonize the requirements of unity and adaptability a kind of government would seem to be needed in which there is the greatest possible flexibility, at both juridical and technical levels, both as regards the internal regime of the Congregation and its insertion into the community of the Church and society for the necessary ever increasing co-operation.

A final requirement appears from the studies and suggestions, and also from the modern concept of organized work, even in the field of apostolic activity: rational good sense and practicability, with a corresponding division of work and differentiation of sectors. Among other things, this calls for the establishment of centres of study and of technical offices with properly qualified personnel, who will be responsible for diagnosing problems in good time and for working out plans of campaign in different sectors (pastoral work, education and school matters, building schemes, economics and finance, etc.) and gradually putting them into effect.

## **Deliberations**

### **1. SIZE OF PROVINCES.**

The 19th General Chapter proposed as a general principle that the creation of too many provinces with a resulting weakening in their consistency should be avoided.

The putting into effect of this decision will result in a better qualified and more efficient central organization, a saving in and greater possibility of placing prepared personnel effectively, greater freedom of movement to meet new needs in our work, a more con-

sistent economic situation, a higher level of spiritual, Salesian and cultural formation, especially in the training houses (aspirantate novitiate, studentate, etc.)

## 2. PROVINCIAL CONFERENCES.

The same reasons which demand a strong consistency in the individual provinces, as well as more urgent reasons of modernization in organization, make it eminently desirable that some form of collaboration on a juridical basis should be adopted between provinces which for pastoral, geographic, ethnical, linguistic and cultural reasons have affinity to each other and common circumstances and problems,

For these reasons the 19th *General Chapter* decided that "Provincial Conferences" should be set up presided over by the Consultor in charge of each group, referred to in the preceding chapter.

It belongs to the Rector Major and his Council to establish Provincial Conferences.

*The duties of provincial conferences include:*

- To study and promote the application of the general directives concerning the government and *activities* of the Congregation.

To promote the co-ordination of Salesian activity as between one province and another, keeping in mind the declarations of episcopal conferences, civil law, and other local requirements;

- To carry out with discretion experiments that may seem necessary to bring up to date the methods of the Salesian apostolate:

To carry out those duties which have been assigned to them in the deliberations of the General Chapter.

Conclusions reached by Provincial Conferences will not be binding on the provinces concerned until they have been approved by the Rector Major and his Council, to whom they will be submitted by the Consultor in charge of the group.

## 3. THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

The General Chapter decided that the Provincial Council should be composed as follows:

- The Provincial;

-- Two or three Consultors free from office or special duties in the houses: of these one will have the authority of Vice-Provincial and another that of Provincial Economer;

Two or three Consultors chosen from those confreres who have duties of particular importance in the houses.

For the appointment of all the Consultors, even under the new arrangement the dispositions of Art. 91 of the Constitutions still hold good.

The Provincial Council will operate according to the following norms:

It will normally meet at least once a month;

The agenda is to be sent out some days earlier so that the members can study the matters to be discussed;

The minutes, which should be complete and compiled with care, are to be read and signed by all those taking part in the meeting;

- Every time there is question of any matter in which the Constitutions or Regulations require that the consent of the Superior Council be obtained this shall be formally requested by the Provincial who will include with his request a copy of the minutes of the Provincial Council meeting at which the matter was discussed or voted upon.

The Vice-Provincial shall take the place of the Provincial, absent or impeded, in all that bears on the ordinary government of the province. He shall also act for him in those matters for which he has received a special delegation.

The Provincial Consultors free from office and from other obligations in the houses, shall concern themselves with the problems of administrative and organizing character arising from the various works undertaken in the province.

The Provincial himself shall decide the distribution of the field to be covered by each Consultor.

#### 4. PROVINCIAL DELEGATES.

The 19th General Chapter, approves and recognizes the institution of Provincial Delegates, in charge of diverse activities at provincial level (co-operators, old boys, sodalities, Christian doctrine, vocations, schools, professional training, parishes etc.) - their terms of reference will be study, development, organization and co-ordination.

It is not considered a good thing that the delegates *vi muneris*, should be members of the Provincial Council. The qualities necessary for both duties will not always coincide. Nevertheless, there is nothing to hinder a Consultor of the Council being delegated for the care of any such activity.

#### 5. TEAMS OF EXPERTS.

While the Provincial Council remains intact as the consultative and deliberative body by force of the Constitution, let the Provincial with his Council set up, for the main activities, groups of experts, Salesian and non-Salesian, and let them be consulted systematically.

#### 6. PARTICULAR CONSIDERATIONS.

The Provincial and those helping him, if it is considered functionally convenient, may form a community on its own, with its own Rector, who may be the Vice-Provincial or one of the Consultors. Such a community should not be either isolated or too distant from a Salesian House.

Bank accounts should not be in the name of a single person, but in the name of the province, or of a moral body duly recognized. Where possible, these accounts should be operated by three signatures, with the proviso that at least two signatures be necessary. In any case there never be less than two signatures with the possibility that both sign conjointly or separately.

Since the Salesian Congregation has for its special scope "every sort of charitable work, spiritual and temporal for the benefit of youth, especially those who are poorer" let every province establish at least one house exclusively destined for such charitable work, or establish a convenient number of burses for deserving boys who are without means, and place them in our other schools according to a plan approved by the Provincial.

While the existing prescriptions for the authorization of building programmes remain as before, the immediate supervision of the actual building in progress in the house is the concern of the Prefect under the responsibility of the Rector, nevertheless, among the rights and duties of the Provincial Economist and his technical advisers is the continued and careful control of all building operations of the province.

## CHAPTER V THE HOUSES

### Preliminary.

In the re-structuring which has the purpose of guaranteeing both the proper functioning and fruitfulness of the work of each single house, and in addition to the directives indicated, with regard to the structure of the provinces, the following exigencies have come to light which summarize the study, observations and proposals of provincial chapters, and those also of individual confreres.

It has been held essential for the conservation of the Salesian spirit, and for the vigour of the formative and apostolic work we do, that the image and function of the Rector and the superiors of the house be kept, and their original characteristics be upheld.

According to the will of Don Bosco, and our uninterrupted tradition the Rector constitutes, without a shadow of doubt, the centre for unity and of initiative in all Salesian work whatever its type or composition, either as the head of the religious community and guide of the confreres, or as the one who encourages and sustains every activity, apostolic as formative, being first among those who would educate; or as the one finally responsible for every activity, whether it be economic, technical or in the field of organization. "It is the duty of the Rector to rule the house in all matters spiritual, scholastic and material". "The Rector is the one responsible for all that pertains to the oratory (Regulation for the Festive Oratory 3951. In this sense the Rector is held responsible for the action of all members. Let him show himself constantly the loving father who desires to know everything, so that he can do good to all and harm to none.'

The same Salesian tradition, in the beginning, was, so to say, incarnated in the person of Don Bosco, and has given a concrete definition of this unifying and vitalizing activity of the Rector, which includes something which cannot be substituted, namely, the co-responsibility and mutual collaboration with other superiors, in the first place with his Council. Don Bosco himself succinctly affirms

*1. Memorie Biografiche X,1102 Epistolario di Don Bosco II, 320; Epistolario di Don Bosco III 360, 380; Memorie Biografiche XII 81, 82; Memorie Biografiche XI 111 258 etc.*

"with us the Rector is everything" and repeatedly insists, clarifying the concept: "Let the Rector be the Rector. Let him know how to make others work; let him supervise, decide and order, but let him

never do the work himself. Should he not find men of great ability

to do the work, let him leave *it* to somebody with less, but let him not do the work himself, through any desire to do all things in the best way possible. He should *see* that all do their duty, but he should not take on any particular duty himself.' The essence of a Rector is to divide out the work to be done, and then to see that it is done,' and *more* especially, call the council and from time to time, all his teachers to study the means which each one judges best fitted to correct what has to be corrected. Remember, the Rector need not do a great deal, but he should *see* to it that all others do it, and he should be vigilant to see *each* one does it."

The need of flexible unity here considered on the Rector's part is above all to be seen in his fatherliness which is at once spiritual and formative, vital and operative, promoting well coordinated collaboration; and it would appear that this is to be underlined in a very definite way today, especially in the new circumstances in which every Salesian work is being carried out.

In the very first place, the image of the Rector today is somewhat confused by those early uncertainties caused by the loss *of* that original quality of ordinary confessor to the community of the confreres and of the boys.

The figure of the Rector as educator and spiritual director is still not clear when considered as an effective and practical factor.

The complexity of the administration of a religious community in the field of education today, with the growing mass of services, legal and financial obligations, *the* complexity also of the contacts and problems, the demands made by many different sectors have all served to distract, in various directions, the attention of the Rector, and have taken away the prefect-administrator entirely from the sphere of education.

1. *Memorie Biografiche XII, 81.*
2. *Memorie Biografiche XIII 258.*
3. *Epistolario di Don Bosco III, 158*
4. *Epistolario di Don Bosco II. 270*

In the field of education (boarding schools, professional schools, technical schools, day schools and hostels) new exigencies tend to augment considerably the need for more paper work, more organization, to say nothing of the cultural, teaching and legal demands. This overburdening of Rectors, Prefects of Studies, and Consultors, with duties less formative, means less time and less energy for work of a truly pedagogic and family character.

All, and in every single one of our works, find themselves overburdened by things to be done, some technical, some questions of organization: (sport, recreation, camping, tours etc. with the consequent financial problems). All this tends to obscure and damage the pastoral character of the education.

It is evident that the solution is to be found in the direction of a kind of government which keeps intact and yet renders more *effective* the original unity which it interprets and makes actual *with* flexibility, showing a division of work, of duties, of responsibilities, and *reassesses* the value of collaborators organized in councils, groups and in sectors.

### **Deliberations**

The 19th General Chapter, having recalled in the preceding foreword the traditional teaching on the government of the Salesian House in its different aspects and characteristics, which it still must have in face of the new situations in which the Congregation finds itself today, voted certain norms. As appears from their formulation, they sometimes confirm attributions and norms already established by Constitutions and Regulations, with the specific purpose of recalling confreres to a more responsible endeavour. Sometimes they define more clearly attributions and establish new norms for insertion in the Constitutions and Regulations: finally, there are formulas of practical directive character to render *more* efficacious the norms established by Constitutions and Regulations.

#### **1. THE RECTOR**

The 19th General Chapter, well aware of the great importance they have for the well-being of the religious life, recalls attention to the following Constitutions and Regulations, as also the recommendations of the 17th and 18th General Chapters seeking thereby more perfect observance.

It is the duty of the Rector to rule the house in all matters spiritual, scholastic and material.'

He has the obligation of watching over, with paternal solicitude, first, the conduct and formation of the confreres ; and then the careful training of the pupils, *wherefore* let him not accept duties extraneous to his office, nor should he absent himself from the house for any considerable time without necessity, and without permission of the Provincial.'

- He should hold two conferences every month for the members of the house, to encourage them in the practice of the religious virtues and the exact fulfilment of their duties. Besides, he should hold at least three conferences during the year for the teachers, crafts masters, and assistants, on the methods of education taught and practised by Don Bosco.'

- Every month he shall with all kindness receive the manifestation which each member should make to him, and he should send for those who do not present themselves of their own accord. He must also hear in mind the grave obligations which the Constitutions' place upon him of fulfilling all the duties of the Novice Master in regard to those members of the house who have temporary vows.'

- *He has* analogous duties to the staff, and also with regard to cultural and material needs of the confreres.'

-- Let the Rector, especially in works making great demands, keep himself free from all duties and obligations in his house and outside of it which could compromise his fundamental duty of coordinator and guide, especially in the spiritual field and that of formation - let him abstain from the demands of direct administration, as for example, the work of prefect, headmaster, teacher (if a regular one), and duties of a demanding pastoral character e.g. Parish Priest.'

1. Constitutions, article 113..
2. Regulations, article 157
3. .. Regulations, article 158
- 4 Constitutions, article 184.
5. Regulations, article 159.
6. Regulations. articles 160-161
7. 18th General Chapter 1958, Acts of Superior Chapter, number 203 pages 22-23; 17th General Chapter 1952, Acts of the Superior Chapter number 170 pages 29-30.

## 2. PREPARATION OF RECTORS AND THEIR '*aggiornamento*'

Seeing that the office of Rector is particularly delicate and demanding, it should be confided to confreres who are prudent, fatherly, understanding, mature in outlook, enjoying *the esteem of* others, so that it is possible for them to accept the principal responsibility for the regularity and high level of religious life in the community, and guarantee their pastoral efficiency. To obtain this end more easily, the following proposals are made:

Let Provincials provide new *Rectors* with time for recollection and immediate preparation for this very important and delicate task.'

- Having in mind that a Rector before all else should possess the necessary gifts to govern the community spiritually,' let it be made possible for him to obtain a solid personal formation, and a regular '*aggiornamento*' in spiritual matters Christian, religious, and Salesian.

- *To invigorate ascetic preparation with its enrichment of culture, and to deepen pastoral and pedagogic preparedness, short refresher courses may prove very useful at the end of retreats or on other similar occasions.*

The periodical provincial and interprovincial reunions of *Rectors* could provide a most helpful means towards maturity and specialist formation in the field of the techniques of organization and direction, by means of study groups and discussion.

- The manual for *Rectors* should be brought up to date.

- Consideration should be given to a prudent rota of choice of those thought to be fit to direct our houses, together with the possibility of granting them periods free from responsibility of *office*:<sup>a</sup> having in mind however that authority has an eminently social character, and therefore is given to individuals according to their capacity for effective service.

1. 18th General Chapter 1958, Acts of Superior Chapter, number 203, page 24.
2. 17th General Chapter, 1958. Acts of Superior Chapter, number 203. page 203.
3. 16th General Chapter 1947, Acts of Superior Chapter. number 143. page 71,

### 3. THE HOUSE COUNCIL

The 19th General Chapter calls attention of confreres to the observance of the Constitutions and Regulations governing the council of the house.

a) its competence. The House Council in so far as the individual house is concerned, is the principal instrument, juridically constituted, with the specific purpose of guaranteeing collaboration with the Rector.

While according to the Constitutions the Rector is the superior of the house, in the sense of Canon Law, he has no right to deprive his collaborators (prefect, catechist, headmaster, consultants) of the authority given to them,' although this in its turn is exercised under his direction. This authority should be recognized and accepted by all the confreres of the house.

-- Neither has he the right to do without the opinion of his council in the cases contemplated.' He, therefore, has the obligation to call meetings of the council regularly,' with the members of which he should share in some way his own responsibility.'

Let him therefore ask their opinion in the things of greater importance, even when this is not expressly demanded by the Constitutions and Regulations; and when given he should not discard it too readily. This will create in the council harmony and effective cohesion of a true community, and produce results. This obligation is particularly grave in the cases listed in article 114 of the Constitutions, and 153, 154 of the Regulations.

Obviously the council duly constituted, as far as possible with the traditional offices, should also function in the smaller houses.

b) *Its Composition.* The need of improving the wording of art. 111 of the Constitutions is recognized so that confreres with special duties can participate in the House Council, the General Chapter established that art. 111 should be modified in this manner

1. Constitutions, articles 116-118. 2.
- Constitutions, article 113. 3.
- Regulations, article 156. 4,
- Constitutions, article 113.

"The house council is made up of the prefect or vice-rector, the parish priest, the catechist, the president (or headmaster), and consultors, who should in an ordinary way not be more than three. The Rector of the festive oratory (youth centre) may also take part.

*c) Council Meetings.* in order to bring into effect the principles cited above concerning the systematic and continued collaboration of the superior of the house, especially with the members of the council, the General Chapter, determined the following precise regulations to be made operative concerning council meetings.'

Let the house council be called at least once a month.

Let the agenda be made known at least a few days previously, so that members may study the points proposed for consideration.

Let the minutes be compiled with care and in their entirety, and he signed after having been read by all the members who participated.

Whenever, in conformity with the Constitutions' and the Regulations,' certain business demands the consent of the Rector Major or the Provincial or an understanding with the latter, let the Provincial or the Rector send the formal request accompanied by the minutes signed at the meeting of the House Council at which the matter was discussed and voted on.

- To specify art. ] 13 of the Constitutions it is established as the ordinary practice (this to be provided for by a special article in the Regulations) that the opinion and vote of the house council be sought in all financial undertakings of some importance, as the purchase of costly machinery even when demanded by the ordinary equipment of the workshop, sales and contracts of a notable value, debts etc.

-- That the disposition of art. 116 of the Constitutions and art. 176 of the Regulations be made effective for a proper control of the administration of the house; in this the Rector can avail himself of the co-operation of the council.

1. Regulations, article 156.
4. Constitutions, article 114.
5. Regulations, article 153.

#### 4. THE PREFECT OR VICE-RECTOR

The 19th General Chapter, with the intention of better defining the characteristics of the prefect in the Salesian house, and in addition to the modifications of art. 111 of the Constitutions when speaking of the house council, has ruled the modification of art. 116 according to the following formula: "The prefect (vice-rector) takes the place of the Rector. His principal duty is to help the Rector sustain religious discipline, to administer temporal affairs, to have charge of the non-Salesian personnel, to watch over the general discipline of the pupils according to the norms of each house, and with the consent of the Rector. He should be prepared to give an account of his administration to the Rector, whenever he is requested to do so."

The prefect, as the vicar of the Rector, should have those qualities which enable him to take his place and within limits similar to those limiting the authority of the Prefect General in art. 59 of the Constitutions.

Under the guidance of the Rector, he is also charged with the administration and general order of the house, and those extraordinary disciplinary measures which do not accord with the image of the Rector.'

When the administration of a house is particularly complex and renders the duty of the prefect difficult as vicar, the Provincial may give him the help of an economer - either a priest or coadjutor.

Let the Provincial Economer organize courses for the training of prefects and economers, and hold meetings to unify the administration of the houses of the Province.

Bank accounts must not be in the name of a single person, but of the institute, and the operative signatures are those of the Rector and/or the prefect.

#### 5. THE CATECHIST

In addition to the duties of the catechist laid down in the Constitutions and Regulations, and by Salesian tradition, the General Chapter established that according to need and opportunity he

Regulations, article 163 and 183.

should be able to help the Rector in counselling and directing the pupils individually, to complete the whole formation, moral, religious and apostolic, for which he has the immediate responsibility. This duty demands that he be given an office.

## 6 THE CONSULTOR OF STUDIES. PREFECT OF STUDIES

Where there is a Principal (Headmaster) the Prefect of Studies could fill the office of deputy head, and be in charge of the ordinary discipline of the pupils.'

## 7, 'IIIIE PRESIDENT – HEADMASTER

In those states where the law demands a person recognized as in charge of the school before the civil authorities (president, headmaster, prefect of studies, or the like) with the function not easily compatible with the image and office of the Salesian Rector, the General Chapter expresses the hope that the two offices be undertaken by different persons.

As to the relation between the Rector and the President (or Headmaster) the latter, while remaining mainly responsible before the authorities, nevertheless, at a religious level and in the practical exercise of his function represents the Salesian Society, and exercises such responsibility not in his own name, but in the name of the Society itself and therefore 'under the guidance of and in accord with the Rector of the house» It follows that it should be made clear to all, pupils, parents and public alike, that the Superior who has complete authority and the ultimate responsibility in the School is the Rector, and the President (Headmaster) is only his delegate.

If there is no deputy, he, the President (Headmaster) will be responsible for the discipline of the pupils'

The financial administration of the school is the business of the prefect.' if the President (Headmaster) has financial responsibility before the authorities, he without making himself autonomous, nor having a separate account, has the right of control of that money for

1. Regulations, article 192.
2. Regulations, article 191.
6. Regulations, article 192.
7. Constitutions, article 116.

which he is responsible. He will see that it is spent as it should be.

The 19th General Chapter with the intention of defining the competence of the President (Headmaster) established that art. 198 bis and 198 ter be inserted in the Regulations.

Art. 198 bis: In the states where the law demands someone responsible for schools before the civil authority, such an office be given to a superior distinct from the Rector.

Art. 198 ter: "The President (Headmaster) while being directly responsible for his office before the civil authorities shall exercise *this office in* perfect harmony with and dependence on the Rector of *the* religious house and with other confreres having duties administrative, disciplinary and pedagogical which are connected with the work of which he is the titular head.

## 8 COADJUTORS IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONGREGATION

Whereas

in the mind of Don Bosco and his successors, according to Salesian tradition and with rich written testimony the coadjutor constitutes in the Congregation an original, characteristic reality, for essential equality in religious life and the apostolate with other members in the clerical state:

the progressive and positive evolution of this reality is constantly accompanied by an increasing richness in theory and in practice, which confirms his status equal to that of other confreres, in front of pupils, dependents and externs;'

on the other hand the Salesian Society, of which the coadjutor is a living member possesses this unmistakable characteristic of common life and common action which distinguishes it from other Religious Congregations of a similar type, specially because it is essentially founded on brotherly and cordial collaboration of all members among themselves and with their Superiors, at all levels, religious, apostolic and as organizers:

still further, the situation today, its exigencies and its prospects for the future show ever more clearly how valuable and necessary the collaboration of many more coadjutors is for the Salesian Society and its work, when animated by a vigorous

religious spirit and by apostolic generosity. It is abundantly clear how important it is to encourage by all available means an increase in numbers and in quality, as also their technical qualifications and the use made of their services; and this by a deeper rooting in the organization of the Society:

finally, it is a matter of common accord, based upon the requests of various Provincial Chapters and given responsible consideration that the coadjutor should have a part by insertion in the operative structure of the Congregation, especially in those things compatible with the particular and general common law, and that the Superiors pledge themselves in this sense should difficulties be brought forward of a juridical character;

### **The 19th General Chapter establishes:**

- The house council when it treats of affairs of ordinary Salesian activity, let it act as a Council of Action with the participation of determined coadjutors whose names will appear in the catalogue of confreres immediately after those of the consultors of the same house -- the practice shall be followed wherever the Provincial and his Council consider it necessary.

*So that a coadjutor may be* nominated a member of the house council, he must be professed perpetually, have completed the 30th year of his age, and ten years since his first profession.

It confirms the eligibility of coadjutors to the Provincial Chapter *On* so far as it does not perform function of government) and recommends that the Provincial and Provincial Council consult the coadjutors for business which does not imply the spiritual government of the Province.

It also expresses the hope that the Rector Major will invite coadjutors in the category of experts, and make it possible for them to take part in the various commissions, and in the General Assembly for those matters for which they have been summoned to the General Chapter.

## 9. CO-RESPONSIBILITY AND COLLABORATION OF ALL!

### CONFRERES OF THE HOUSE

In the exercise of his office let the Rector and his council be greatly helped by all confreres: wherefore the 19th General Chapter recommends that:

-- The Rector and his council invite the community to make themselves responsible for the life of the house by means of talks or discussions which could ordinarily complete the fortnightly conferences, especially with the effective help of consultors in their own field: councils of teachers (professors), groups of confreres given to the parish and oratory, the heads of departments and his assistants in the workshop, the assistants of the boys, with the headmaster, catechists, and leaders and assistants of the sodalities.

Confreres, priests and coadjutors be invited to special meetings of the house council when they are especially competent and when matters are going to be discussed concerning their field of activity, and where consulting them may prove useful.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR WORK

#### 1. QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL AND CONSOLIDATION OF WORKS

The General Chapter being made aware that in the past, too many works have been undertaken and houses opened without *sufficient* qualified personnel, and that this numerical scarcity of qualified confreres is a very serious deficiency which could cause the Congregation to risk a notable diminution of interior power, and a consequent loss in her capacity to fulfill the mission the Church expects from her, lays down what follows

:

- All the energies of the Congregation now fully extended in numbers and work, be turned to a better qualification of the personnel and to the consolidation of the existing works to give a richer return educationally as well as spiritually.

Therefore the Superior Council undertakes not to permit the opening of new works except in the case of real necessity exclusively reserved to its own competence, and then only whets there is personnel available in sufficient number and with proper preparation.

If the first epoch of the Congregation was marked by expansion, the present epoch must be one of both interior and exterior strengthening: it is the condition of life and an efficient apostolate.

## 2. PROGRAMME FOR THE REDRAFTING OF OUR WORK

The General Chapter being well aware that although our work has had a worldwide expansion in the first hundred years of the life of the Congregation, now however sees that a revision is called for to reshape it to meet the new conditions of time and place, considering also that a hundred years from the foundation of the Congregation, at a time when the Vatican Council II calls for an ever better organized apostolate, a timely reappraisal of the state of our work is necessary and therefore deliberates as follows

:

- Provincials, in accord with their respective member of the Superior Council responsible for the provincial conference, and with the help of specially chosen groups of experts let them study the situation of their own province, its actual religious, moral, social and economic condition at the moment, and determine which activities in harmony with our Rule and our spirit *are to* be maintained and encouraged *because* they correspond to the needs of young people and working class areas.

That they formulate a precise programme for reshaping the work in hand, taking into account the numbers of the confreres, the particular condition of time and place, the possibilities of the future, the needs of the hierarchy, and the present worth of the work now being done.

- That they present this programme to the Superior Council for approval within two years of the promulgation of the Acts of the General Chapter, and they bind themselves to its gradual, and courageous application.

### 3. SIMPLIFICATION OF HOUSES WHICH ARE TOO LARGE

The General Council being persuaded that houses which are too large and too complex constitute a serious obstacle to the regular religious life, and effective education, deliberates their simplification,

To this end it is not possible to fix any one criterion by reason of the difficulty of defining in practice *which* houses are too complex, and for the variety of conditions which demand a different assessment,

Leaving such decisions to the Provincial and his Council who will assess the exigencies of the particular place and time, it proposes the following criteria by way of exemplification:

- Let the number of the pupils be reduced to within convenient limits, not allowing ourselves to be guided by purely economic ends.

- To suppress activities not essential to the primary scope of the work, and those which give little or no spiritual and apostolic fruit.

- To set in motion a more rational organization of *the* house, so that the Rector and superiors, leaving aside secondary occupations, can perform completely their function of government.

-- To divide such houses into two or more works by transferring elsewhere activities which have a sufficient completeness and homogeneity to constitute a Salesian work on its own, especially in big cities.

- To create two distinct Salesian houses on the same Salesian campus - where the work has interests which are distinct and in contrast - when this is materially possible and where there are no other problems to be considered in the apostolate.

### 4. ELIMINATION OF WORKS WHICH ARE TOO SMALL

Regarding the very small works, the General Council proposes that they be closed, when in the judgement of the Provincial and his Council they cannot develop an apostolate specifically Salesian and do not give positive spiritual results, or have a character absolutely incompatible with a regular religious life at least in the essentials.

## VARIA

### *The clerical habit*

Article 197 of the Constitutions remains unaltered, but articles 198 and 199 are to be changed as follows:

"Priests and clerics will wear ecclesiastical dress except when some just reason considered such by the Provincial counsels other wise."

The dress of coadjutors, in keeping with their calling, should not be worldly either in style or in colour."

*But the changes proposed in these Articles were not approved. (cfr. p. 237).*

### 2. *Collections*

Regarding collections (of coins, stamps, etc.) it is laid down that we keep to the norms that govern the vow of poverty; hence;

a) they may be made only with the permission of the superior; b) the collection is not to be considered the private property of the one making it, but "belongs to the congregation.

### 3. *Reading at table for the confreres*

The General Chapter decrees:

a) that the prescription of article 18 of the Regulations which prescribes that at table there be reading for a certain period of time is still in force.

b) that we recall what is laid down in the "document" on the "Practices of Piety" so that the reading of Holy Scripture may never be omitted and devout attention be paid to this reading.

### 4. *Reading for the pupils*

The General Chapter recommends that the useful and educational practice of reading for the pupils in the refectory and dormitories should not be allowed to lapse into disuse.

### 5. *Mortuary letters*

They should be written, for all the confreres, by the Rector. Let them *be* short and edifying, and they should be sent to all the houses of the country and to those outside it where the deceased may have worked.

The provincial secretary should send a number of copies to all Provincials for the houses of formation and also to the secretary of the Superior Council with all biographical data and a few lines of general information so that he may be able to see to their publication in the Acts of the Superior Council.

The Provincial shall appoint someone to write brief biographies of the more outstanding members of his Province. These could be collected together to form a library of good biography.

#### *6. Smoking*

After thoroughly examining the matter the General Chapter has decided to confirm the prohibition on smoking contained in article 12 of the Regulations changing the article, however, to read as follows:

"Smoking is absolutely forbidden." The remainder of this article is suppressed.

## THE APOSTOLATE FOR VOCATIONS

In the divine plan for salvation ecclesiastical and religious vocations have an essential part to play, both because of their importance in personal sanctification and in the apostolate. In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council such importance is to be given special emphasis in modern times to fit in with the apostolic drive of the Church to meet the needs of the present day; needs characterized in many parts of the world by phenomena of great magnitude: such as population increases, the complexity of moral problems, the progress made by atheism and laicism, the dangers of indifference and of pleasure-seeking, etc.

The Salesian Society is aware of the problem for the increase in number and in quality of vocations. The General Chapter had the duty to study ways and means of expanding and intensifying its apostolic activity for the young and for the working classes as can be seen from the list of the themes being considered : the teaching of catechism, oratories, schools, colleges, parishes, the press, etc.

The problem is made more acute by the crisis in vocations that is to be found in many countries and by the fact that vocations no longer come from some centres of our apostolate for youth, such as boarding and day schools, which at one time were a rich source of supply.

On the other hand interest in vocations is one of the chief purposes of the Salesian Society. It owes its inspiration to one of the branches of the apostolate tenaciously fostered by Don Bosco in word and in deed. It is rooted in a Salesian tradition that was truly active, both well documented and put into practice. For this reason the words of Don Rua have lost nothing of their value: "Salesians must have at heart the cultivation of vocations. Without this the Pious

Society of St. Francis de Sales would languish and would not measure up to the scope Don Bosco had in mind when he founded it." These words are an echo of the statement made by our Founder when he said: "...it is not necessary for me to give you new advice in order to urge you to cultivate vocations to the ecclesiastical state. This is now the principal aim of the Congregation."

### **Deliberations.**

The 19th General Chapter, while it takes note of what is being done in each individual Province, makes a special appeal to all Salesians without distinction and whatever their task to work efficaciously to help to increase vocations in number and in quality. They should not, moreover, limit themselves to the needs of our own *Society*, but they should keep in mind the present difficulties of the Church in general, of the diocesan clergy, of the missions, and of other religious families.

In particular the 19th General Chapter recommends the following

I. Let there be a conscientious review also at provincial level - of all the work for education that goes on in our various fields of activity examining especially its fitness to give that special stamp of Christian training that guides boys to a choice of a state of life that is well pondered upon and thought out.

- All this should take place in surroundings that are helpful: in an atmosphere of solid liturgical piety where there is personal, cultural, spiritual and apostolic formation suited to the age and individual characteristics of the pupil. There should be a family spirit where sacrifices too are constantly demanded.

---- The work of seeking out, choosing and forming aspirants should be rooted in the prayer, *the* zeal, and the self-sacrifice of the educators. These must be apostles who are entirely consecrated to God and who give good example as individuals and as members of the Salesian community.

- In our work for vocations the degree of Christian life in the family background should be carefully examined.

*1. Lettere Circolari di Don Michele Rua al Salesiani Colle Don*

*Bosco (Asti), 1965, page 187.*

*2. Memorie Biografiche XII, R7.*

In our selection and formation let there be nothing that savours of improvisation, of empiricism, of subjectivism, or of false economy. Instead, what we do should be based on well thought-out plans and we should make a well-balanced use of the help modern science and methodology has to offer.

2. In addition, the 19th General Chapter proposed that the Superior Council:

should have a manual on vocations compiled by a special commission;

-- should see to the setting up of a central Secretariate for vocations and, through the members of the Superior Council who are in charge of groups of Provinces, to set up Provincial and InterProvincial Secretariates where local circumstances allow. This will assure the co-operation of all Salesians, co-operators, youth organizations, past pupils, and layfolk.

The work of these Secretariates will be : to initiate enquiries, to compile statistical data, to engage in practical activities as opportunities offer, to organize special inter-provincial meetings between delegates, to consider common topics and to co-ordinate methods of recruitment and selection, to prepare helpful material and aids in order to encourage a vocation mentality in all our confreres, in families, and in organizations that gravitate towards our work or grow out of it. They should, besides promote meetings, conferences, special courses, school camps with a vocational bias, examination of projects for cooperation with diocesan vocation groups, and such like.

## HOUSES FOR ASPIRANTS

Preliminary.

In order to fit in with the principal scope of the Congregation` every Salesian work should be a nursery of vocations.'

In virtue, then, of this aim which has a constitutional basis our Society undertakes to assist in a special way "those young men who aspire to the ecclesiastical state.

The vocation of aspirants who present themselves for admission may be in various stages of development: there may be just a mere inclination towards the religious life; there may be a ready desire for consecration to the service of God: or there may exist the necessary qualities and the good will to make a definite decision on vocation.

### **Orientation.**

The 19th General Chapter makes the following recommendations:

I. In fostering vocations full use should be made of everything that education can offer, beginning from a solid foundation that considers the candidate as a human being *offering him* ideal conditions for a full Christian life directed towards the apostolate. In this way the ground is prepared to receive and develop the seed of vocation to the religious, Salesian and priestly life; but in all this due consideration must always be given to the candidate's psychological development and to the degree of growth of his vocation. With this in view the organization of the following is suggested:

- Schools with an apostolic bias for boys who, because they are so young, do not yet show an inclination for the religious or priestly life nevertheless have the necessary qualities.

-- These schools should not be called aspirantates or preaspirantates.

1. *Memorie Biografiche* XII: 87.

2. Constitutions, articles 6 and 7

- Aspirantates for older boys who manifest an inclination towards the priesthood and the Salesian life.

-- Houses for late vocations to receive young men who are more settled and who are better able to make a definite decision.

2. It should be made possible for all the aspirants

to live in an atmosphere that proclaims the happiness of living close to God, an atmosphere that is fostered by the efficacious good example of the educators who should always be carefully chosen

to have really genuine freedom of choice without restraint of any kind whatsoever;

to follow a course of studies that would make it possible for them to continue elsewhere without inconvenience;

to engage in apostolic work suitable for their age.

3. There should be a more open formation in accordance with the Second Vatican Council which says, "In minor seminaries set up to cultivate the germs of vocation and in special schools which, in view of local and personal needs, aim at attaining the same end, let the pupils be educated to follow with generous hearts Christ our Redeemer. This calls for a specialized religious training and for efficient spiritual direction. In addition the pupils should lead a life that fits in with the needs of adolescence and is in conformity with their development and age. Their mode of life should conform too to the norms of sound psychology. Suitable contact with normal ways of living should not be neglected nor contact with their families."

The aspirant's family should be helped to take real interest in the education of their son to fit him for his vocation, and they should be encouraged to co-operate in its development.

The problem of holidays at home will be studied by the respective groups of Provinces so that the periods away from the house of formation may help to enrich and develop the boy's vocation.

The same is to be said regarding social contacts.'

4. The General Chapter charges the Superior Council to have a manual on the formation of aspirants compiled by a special commission.

5. While noting the work being done in various countries for late vocations the General Chapter proposes that the organization of the *Sons of Mary* be restudied and put into operation once again adapting it to times and places and assigning to it suitably prepared confreres.

6. Regarding the age of admission to the novitiate : after examining the various proposals and discussions on this point and keeping in view that the Second Vatican Council is studying this same question, the 19th General Chapter considers the criteria followed up to the present to be still opportune while it declares itself ready to follow whatever the Church decides.

## FORMATION OF PERSONNEL

*The Ratio Institutionis which will be the official document of the Congregation with regard to the formation of personnel, is in course of preparation. The 19th General Chapter therefore considered it advisable not to enter into the full discussion of the documents of the VI Commission.*

*The results of the work of the Commission are presented for purposes of information only, except regarding the novitiate and practical training, concerning which the General Chapter has made some decisions, obligatory ad experimentum until the Ratio Institution is promulgated.*

### CHAPTER I THE NOVITIATE

Preliminary.

The novitiate has for its object the examination and testing of the call from God and the taking of the first steps in the way of perfection. It gives the religious *his character and* spiritual lineaments, sealing his mind and heart with the genuine spirit of Don Bosco.

The spiritual atmosphere of the novitiate, as understood by the Church, should not lead one to think that all that is human and personal must be sacrificed on the altar with one's vows, as though

one could not come close to God and still feel oneself fully human or preserve one's individuality. The attraction and sublimity of human values is nowadays keenly felt as never before. Certainly the novitiate involves mortification and self-sacrifice, but it is first of all a period of great spiritual enrichment.

### **Deliberations.**

1. The master of novices, prior to assuming office, should receive a specific psychological, theological, ascetical and Salesian formation, following courses arranged, or in course of being arranged at the P.A.S. for this purpose.

2. The masters of novices shall attend periodic courses designed to bring them up to date.

3. The house of novitiate shall have its own house council.

4. The manual for the novitiate shall be revised, and shall give an outline of ascetics, liturgy, psychology, pedagogy and the Salesian spirit, so that it may guide the masters of novices in their responsibilities towards future Salesians.

5. The clothing ceremony and the rite of profession shall be revised in the light of changes in the liturgy, and shall take place during Holy Mass.

6. Coadjutors will be presented with a crucifix instead of a medal.

7. It will be well to defer the clothing ceremony to a more suitable time of the year, viz., when uncertain or immature candidates have withdrawn.

8. The date for the commencement of the novitiate shall be freely adapted to the various local requirements.

### **Recommendations.**

The religious life should be presented from an eminently positive angle as the attaining of great divine and human values, incarnated and lived by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The novitiate atmosphere should have a tone of spontaneity, confidence, peace joy. family spirit.

The novices should be educated to a sense of responsibility, authenticity and loyalty, to manly strength and firmness of character, so that they know how to rule themselves.'

That special disposition of soul should be inculcated in them which will make them ready, throughout their lives, to accept the observations of the responsible Superiors.

They should be led to love, respect and admire the Salesian family.

Care must be taken both that the novices make good use of their time, not only without loss to, but to the advantage of their religious and Salesian formation, and that study in the novitiate retains its formative character. A deepened knowledge of religion, theology, liturgy and ascetics should be imparted.

In admitting novices to profession each member of the council must base his judgement on the positive suitability of the candidate for the Salesian life and not only on the absence of serious defects?

If the number of novices be too few, let the house of novitiate be joined with another novitiate or placed next to a studentate of philosophy: in this way the members of the house council and the staff is increased, and the choice of confessors is easier.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STUDENTATE OF PHILOSOPHY

Preliminary.

The purpose of the studentate of philosophy is the religious, ecclesiastical, social, intellectual and apostolic formation of the clerics. This period of temporary vows is dedicated to the consolidation and development of the entire foregoing formation, in view of the specific purpose of the Congregation.

As young men nowadays have a special sensitivity in social matters, there is an obligation to make full use of this as an element in

1. Statute: *Sedes Sapientiae*, title 7, article 37, 2.
2. Coder *Juris Canonici*, 538: Stat. Gen. of *Sedes Sapientiae*, 31, 32, 33, 34.

their formation. And as the world in which we live calls for a broader view of social values, it is thought well to make the studentate into a community really open and committed over a wider area than in the past.

Study is regarded by *Sedes Sapientiae* as an essential element in the programme of specific formation. Application to study should not of itself disturb the cleric's spiritual poise; rather it is an indispensable means of his perfection and apostolic formation.

While not lessening *the* importance of other cultural values, both scientific *and* humanistic, greater emphasis must be placed on the value of logic and philosophy by a serious study of philosophy as a real part of effective and improved spiritual formation.

Apostolic formation on account of its practical character is to be continuous throughout the period of studies, but without prejudice to them.

### **Proposals of the Commission.**

1. The number of clerics in the studentate should be neither too large nor too small. Accordingly, studentates should, as far as possible, be inter-provincial.

2. The scrutinies laid down for students of philosophy are to be held thrice yearly, and the judgement expressed should be as complete as possible. It should be recorded in the personal file in a clear objective way, with due respect for the personal dignity of the cleric, for whose spiritual progress it will serve as a guide.

3. *The course* of pure philosophy should be increased to two years, as is recommended by *Sedes Sapientiae*. Those Provinces in which the novitiate is followed by four years of Teacher Training (*Magistero Professionale, Profesorado*, etc.) will have one year of pure philosophy.

4. The staff of the studentate of philosophy should have had a *specific formation*. *The culture derived from* the normal theological course does not seem sufficient either for the Rector, or for the teacher of religion.

5. During the school year the clerics should take part in some degree of apostolic activity, by assisting and giving catechism class in

*near-by oratories* and parishes, under the control of the Superior or his delegate.

6. During the holidays the clerics should employ themselves in studying the techniques of the apostolate.

7. The time and *means* should be supplied that make it possible for the clerics to undertake initiatives (sodalities, drama, music, art), which, while developing their talent, prepare them for the apostolate.

### **Recommendations.**

While awaiting the forthcoming reform of the studies, let it be arranged that the teaching of religion is allotted three periods each week at a time that allows real application; that it really and truly be an introduction to theology and scripture; that the programme for it be drawn up by a commission of experts in theology, catechetics and psychology in the Eight of modern theology and the Salesian spirit.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE PERIOD OF PRACTICAL TRAINING**

Preliminary.

The purpose of the period of practical training according to *Sedes Sapientiae* and our Regulations<sup>1</sup> is: the practical testing of one's general specific vocation, information about and education in the Salesian spirit and way of life in its various manifestations; an apprenticeship in the practice of the preventive system; the completion of one's secular studies and one's culture in preparation for ecclesiastical studies.

It is accordingly evident that the period of practical training is aimed primarily at the betterment and formation of the confreres and not at the advantage and profit of the institute

1, Regulations, articles 51 and 56.

2. *Stat. Gen. of Sedes Sapientiae, article 13*

Many Salesians remember this period of their formation as one of the happiest in their lives, and such is the case if it is lived according to its true purpose, notwithstanding the many difficulties normally encountered during it. Our houses are, moreover, enriched by the youthful zest the clerics and coadjutors in training bring with them.

On the other hand there are frequently voiced complaints about this period, as a trial-by-fire or moment of decision, during which many vocations are lost.

Part of the responsibility for this state of things is due to failure to observe the prescriptions of the Holy See and of the Congregation, and to the fact that there is as yet no real clear awareness of the nature of the period of practical training, in contrast with an actual understanding of the nature of the other formative periods.

### **Deliberations.**

1. The provincial delegate for studies shall guide and supervise the studies of those in practical training, both as regards what is laid down by the Consultor General, and as regards other studies they are undertaking.

2. Where the moral atmosphere and the nature of the curriculum permit, those in practical training may undertake university studies, preferably in Catholic universities, but avoiding those areas of study out of keeping with their work of formation. Such students shall have special spiritual and cultural assistance.

3. Local superiors shall provide those who are undertaking special studies with the time, accommodation and means required for them to fulfil their duty with seriousness.

4. The Provincial will decide to which houses he will send students for their practical training, having in mind the character and abilities of each, and after hearing the opinion of the council of the house of formation from which they are drawn.

5. With the exception of houses of formation, the Provincial shall assign three or more, and never less than two clerics and coadjutors in training to the houses particularly suited to receive them

6. The Rector shall have a weekly meeting with those in training, in which he will treat particularly arguments of religious and Salesian formation, and introduce them gradually to the reading of *Holy Scripture*.

7. *The superiors* concerned shall from time to time call together those in practical training to examine with them the technical, theoretical and practical aspects of their work as educators: assistance, discipline, preparation of classes, sodality activities ,etc.

8. The period of practical training shall normally last for three years. For reasonable motives the Provincial may suggest to the Rector Major its reduction to two years.

9. As regards apostolic activity, those in training shall dedicate themselves not only to assisting and teaching, which always remain their basic forms of apostolate, but also to other activities for youth characteristic of our Congregation, such as: sodalities, youth groups, liturgical activities, catechetics, youth centres, etc.

But they shall avoid those occupations and duties which are not formative for them, such as assistant-prefects, infirmarians, censorship of films, unsuitable responsibilities *in* seaside or mountain camps, etc.

10. Books and magazines of religious, pedagogical and topical interest shall be placed at their disposal, and both in the weekly meeting with the Rector and in manifestation they shall exchange ideas and comment on what they have read.

11. Let the Rector be more effectively helped by his vicar, so that he may follow those in training more closely, acting also as their *ma sister spiritus*, according to our traditions and the desires of the Holy See.

12. The meetings with the Rector and the other superiors, which serve to make the brother in training share in the life of the Congregation and share responsibilities for its educative work, must take place in a climate of dialogue, and be expressions of team work.

## CHAPTER 1 V

### STUDENTATES OF THEOLOGY

Preliminary.

The theological studentate brings to a fitting close the cycle of the formation of our clerics. This is the period which leaves the deepest impression on the mind and heart of the future priest.

It is destined to establish solidly the priest's personality in its natural and supernatural lineaments.

It is an ideal formative environment both by reason of the age of the students and of the object of their studies.

The future of the Congregation depends principally on the efficiency of the studentates of theology.

#### **Proposals of the Commission.**

1. A course of Catholic sociology shall be included in the curriculum.

2. Where a studentate of theology exists, it is necessary for the Provincial to plan systematically the provision of staff with the indispensable and advisable qualifications.

3. To foster the acquisition of ecclesiastical degrees, and the more effectively to provide for the students' serious application to their duties, every step should be taken to affiliate and aggregate the studentates of theology to the P.A.S., so that the S.T.L. may be conferred.

4. As the curriculum of ecclesiastical studies is being revised, the Chapter desires that the attention of the competent authority be drawn to the need of inserting in it literary and scientific disciplines of human culture related to the sacred sciences, and such others as open the minds of the future apostle to a sensitive awareness and understanding of the problems of our age.

5. Let the buildings of studentates of theology be simple and functional. Because of their purpose, they should be situated in town or city where there is cultural life and the opening for a variety of

apostolic experience. There should be a prudent separation from the world, but excessive isolation is to be shunned, being damaging to discipline and the apostolate.

The students should move in that atmosphere of peaceful recollection which is so much needed for serious and fruitful intellectual and formative activity.

6. Students of theology should be given individual rooms in view of the quiet indispensable to whoever has the duty of a life of intense study and interior recollection.

7. Students of theology shall be prudently encouraged to take part in the apostolate among the young on Sundays and Feastdays (oratories, parishes, youth clubs).

## CHAPTER V

### THE PASTORAL COURSE

Preliminary.

A complete year of pastoral training is prescribed for all priests who are religious, after their theological course.

It has the general aim of equipping better the priest for the life of the apostolate, and the specific one of preparing the Salesian for the education of youth. *Sedes Sapientiae* ordains that this course be at once theoretical and practical to ensure its success.

the need for such a course is today more keenly felt since social conditions call for a better specific and professional formation. The priest should, under the guidance of experienced men, be introduced to work in a society in continual evolution, characterized by a high level of immigration, increased cultural standards, greater differentiation in the Christian commitment of the laity, the steady improvement of the means of information and social communication.

1. *Sedes Sapientiae, Statuta Generalia*, article 23.

2, *Ibidem*, article 48.

As only *few* Provinces have managed to provide a complete course of pastoral lasting an entire year with qualified staff, the Sacred Congregation of Religious has authorized the separation of its theoretical from its practical part. In this case the theoretical classes will be spread over two or three years to complete the hundred days of class prescribed.

Note that it neither meets the desires of the Church nor has it been shown useful to cause priests doing pastoral courses to reside in various houses and attend an agreed centre for the course.

### **Proposals of the Commission.**

1. The pastoral course will be directed to the preparation both for the general and specifically Salesian apostolate.

2. When this course is held with other non-Salesian priests it should be integrated with elements characteristic of Salesian pastoral activity.

3. If the course lasts a full year, the student priests form an autonomous community with, at least in part, superiors of their own. and proper accommodation,

4. The quinquennial examinations begin after the first year of pastoral, even in those cases where the theoretical part of this extends to three years. The examinations in pastoral do not dispense from *those of* the quinquennial,

### **Recommendations.**

1. The pastoral course can be arranged in two ways:

a) giving to it a full school year of nine months, with at least 100 days class:

hl with Summer courses for the theoretical part, spread over two or three years with 50 or 33 days class respectively, to reach the 100 days laid down.

2. In either case, theory should be completed by practice. Those following the course are from time to time to be sent to oratories and

parishes, to be initiated into the practical apostolate, and made to practise the administration of parochial affairs.

3. For such an important course one must naturally choose the best teachers, both for theory and practice. Accordingly inter-provincial courses are encouraged.

4. The programme given in the *Ratio Studiorum* is to be followed, and reports on one's own experience sent periodically to Headquarters; in this way it will be possible to improve the programme for the course in the following years.

5. The Consultor for formation is to be kept informed of the system in use in each Province, where the course is held, of the composition of the staff, the programme followed, and the duration of the course.