



ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

SUMMARY

- I. Letter of the Rector Major** (p. 3)
 The journey we travelled together
 THE SINISTER EVIL OF INDIVIDUALISM
 Wholehearted obedience willed by Don Bosco
 Today's 'reasons' for individualism
 Salesian reasons for "vivere in unum", living in unity
 Conclusion: Living a life of charity
- II. Instructions and Norms** (p. 26)
 The Confreres' Pensions
- III. The 21st General Chapter** (p. 31)
 1. Its preparation thus far
 2. Provincial Chapters Documents to be forwarded to the Generalate
- IV. Communications** (p. 34)
 1. Salesians and Slum-areas Apostolate Seminar
 2. A Course for Parish Apostolate Workers
 3. The Salesian Cooperators' World Council
 4. The 8th Course on On-going Formation
 5. The 107th Expedition and other missionary news items
 6. Solidarity Fund
 7. Three books and a documentary
 8. Saving on telegrams
- V. Activities of the Superior Council and initiatives of general interest**
 (p. 45)
- VI. Documents** (p. 49)
 To build together our Congregation for the young generations
- VII. From the Provincial Newsletters** (none in this issue)
- VIII. Pontifical Magisterium** (p. 60)
 Religious, what are you for the Church?
- IX. Necrology and 1st Elenco for 1977** (p. 63)

S. G. S. - ROMA

I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Dear confreres,

This letter comes to you at a time when the work in preparation for the 21st General Chapter is becoming more intense by the day. This is a wonderful opportunity for me to issue not so much a doctrinal document as rather a brotherly invitation to reflection which I propose to you also in view of the fast approaching General Chapter.

The journey we travelled together

In the letters I sent you from time to time since the Special General Chapter, I dealt with a variety of topics. Some of these topics were suggested by special events, dear to our Congregation, as those treated in my letter written on the occasion of the Centenary of the approval of our Constitutions,¹ or in the one written for the Centenary of the Salesian Missions.²

Other topics, instead, were suggested by special problems that seemed to me to crop up as we advanced in the present delicate phase of the renewal of our Congregation. Thus I first summoned you to revive the missionary spirit in our Congregation and to rekindle that flame of charity and dedication which was afire in the heart of Don Bosco.³ I knew full well, however, that we would never have achieved any renewal unless we drew abundantly at the very wellsprings of charity — God himself.

¹ *Acts of the Superior Council* No. 274 (April-June 1974).

² *ASC* No. 277 (January-March 1975).

³ *ASC* No. 267 (July 1972).

For this reason the first letter was followed by others which dealt with prayer — vital indeed for our Congregation⁴ — and still by others which called your attention to particular points of the on-going renewal.

At a time when we were confronted with the delicate task of changing our structures, I felt it my duty to issue clear guidelines on “decentralization and unity”.⁵

At a time of a serious and alarming vocations crisis, I thought it necessary to discuss with you the vital problem of vocations.⁶ Later, when the mounting tide of secularism and materialism was threatening to engulf our religious values, I thought it my responsibility to call you to reconsider the absolute need for spiritual direction,⁷ to wage an all-out war on the “bourgeois mentality”,⁸ to joyously live our lives of Salesian chastity as men consecrated to the Kingdom of God,⁹ and then to dedicate ourselves to the urgent work of evangelization.¹⁰

Since we live in a world in which politics plays an increasingly large and often excessive role in our social lives, I then thought it opportune to fix the extent of the Salesians’ responsibility in this field.¹¹

Finally, in the midst of a social and ecclesial situation which under certain aspects is fraught with difficulties and frustrations and yet under others is full of high hopes and marvelous promises, I deemed it useful to exhort you to two typically Christian and Salesian virtues — trust and optimism.¹²

⁴ ASC No. 269 (January-March 1973) and No. 270 (April-June 1973).

⁵ ASC No. 272 (October-December 1973).

⁶ ASC No. 273 (January-March 1974).

⁷ ASC No. 281 (January-March 1976).

⁸ ASC No. 276 (October-December 1974).

⁹ ASC No. 285 (January-March 1977).

¹⁰ ASC No. 279 (July-September 1975).

¹¹ ASC No. 284 (October-December 1976).

¹² ASC No. 278 (April-June 1975).

The Chapter: an occasion for an assessment

The mere list of topics treated in the pages of the Acts in the past should give us a pretty comprehensive picture of the weighty problems which our Congregation has had to face over the last few years, and it should in a way have traced the road to be travelled in order to renew itself in spirit and in action. This was a tiring and at times painful journey indeed, but also productive of inner purification, new ardor and promising initiatives.

The new General Chapter will be a most timely opportunity for the whole Congregation to make a calm and serious-minded assessment of how much has been done and remains to be done, how much has been built up and, perhaps out of some excessive eagerness for renewal, has hastily been torn down without due concern for finding an adequate substitute, and, finally, how much of what was set down by the Special General Chapter was correctly interpreted and how much, more or less intentionally, was distorted or used to achieve objectives foreign to the mind of the Chapter itself.

In order to offer you an additional item for your reflection in this reassessment, I would like to dwell with you on a point that seems to me to be of great importance for the life and work of our Congregation. For here is the reef against which even the best efforts at renewal can get shipwrecked. Here is the sinister evil which can really undermine our Congregation. I am referring to individualism.

THE SINISTER EVIL OF INDIVIDUALISM

I would not want you to believe that, on the whole, the evil of individualism has popped up just now. Already in his own days Don Bosco sensed its danger clearly, even though he overlooked it just in order to establish in our Congregation a tradition of obedience, which would not be rigid and impersonal,

but, on the contrary, extremely personalized and wholeheartedly family-like, as it is fitting for members who are bound one to other by bonds of intimate brotherly love rather than by juridical bonds.

Wholehearted obedience willed by Don Bosco

When we read the documents regarding our traditional obedience, we see how Don Bosco really wanted a Congregation in which everyone would be ready to make great sacrifices — not sacrifices of health nor money, nor macerations and penances, nor extraordinary fasts, but sacrifices of the will: “The sacrifice that is needed”, he said, “is the sacrifice of the will”.¹³ Don Bosco wanted a Congregation in which none of its members would say, “I would like to have this or that job. Rather let each be ready to do whatever is entrusted to him, stay wherever his superiors place him, and perform his office diligently”.¹⁴

Don Bosco wanted people who would be easily and entirely available — ready to do any kind of works as the circumstances required (this in fact has remained one of the characteristics of his better sons). He wanted people who — to use one of his famous expressions — would “allow themselves to be decapitated”, that is, who would obey “without any sort of reservation, promptly, cheerfully and with humility”;¹⁵ people who would not only obey the given commands, but anticipate them. This is the obedience of the *vado io* (I volunteer) as opposed to the one Fr. Caviglia called a “Salesian blasphemy”, that is, the obedience of the *non tocca a me* (it’s none of my business).¹⁶

¹³ Don Bosco’s talk to his first helpers on January 20, 1862. *BM* 7:35.

¹⁴ Don Bosco’s talk on March 11, 1869, following the Holy See’s approval of the Constitutions. *BM* 9:269.

¹⁵ *Salesian Constitutions* 1966, art. 44.

¹⁶ See *Conferenze sullo spirito salesiano* (*Conferences on the Salesian spirit*), typewritten manuscript 1953, p. 62.

Needless to say, such wholehearted, willing and generous obedience is possible only when the relationship between the one who commands and the one who obeys is not merely formal or bureaucratic, but is truly heartfelt and brotherly. For this reason Don Bosco insisted that every effort be made to preserve the necessary subordination of one to the other, “voluntarily, not forcibly”.¹⁷ To obtain this, he exhorted the Superiors “to favor as much as they could the inclinations (of their subjects) when assigning them duties”.¹⁸

Don Bosco wanted that “each one (should) work according to his strength and capability”.¹⁹ He did not expect that one should be “bound to carry unbearable burdens”, but that he be “willing to do whatever (he could)”, whenever he was requested, whatever the particular need could be.²⁰

The superior according to Don Bosco

In the background of these recommendations we cannot but see Don Bosco’s fatherly image, which describes what a Salesian Superior ought to be like in the midst of his brothers, and this it does far better than any scholarly dissertation could do. For here we see a Salesian Superior not as a cold and impersonal bureaucrat who lays upon other people’s shoulders burdens which he himself would not lift with his finger. Neither do we see him as a business manager, who is merely preoccupied with efficiency and productivity. On the contrary, we see him as a person totally dedicated to the wellbeing of his brothers, as a “loving father”,²¹ who takes great pains to provide not only what is necessary, but “also what is useful”.²² The “fullest confidence” which each

¹⁷ MB 12:81.

¹⁸ BM 10:287.

¹⁹ BM 9:269.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 270.

²¹ *Salesian Const.*, 1966, art. 44.

²² *Id.*, art. 46.

confere is to have in him²³ and which alone can explain the kind of wholehearted and generous obedience mentioned above, is not a blank check that he could demand outright, but it is something that he has to win for himself by striving “to make people love (him) rather than fear (him)”.²⁴

Father Caviglia, a knowledgeable and authoritative witness of the Salesian spiritual tradition, assures us that this was the style of relationship Don Bosco wanted to exist between subjects and Superiors. “Don Bosco conceived a religious congregation of simple vows”, Father Caviglia says, “but he wanted it to be made up of alive and thinking men, capable of spontaneous action. The work which has been done and remains to be done by his Congregation is of such quantity and quality that it cannot be conceived without free-willed individual action, and cannot be reconciled with a lifestyle which, though meritorious before God under different conditions, could here become a handicap in the performance of our work”.²⁵

Father Caviglia concludes his remarks with a truly noteworthy statement: “I know I can state that Don Bosco, even though he demanded of his own men a loving and kind discipline as of Christian and religious people, nevertheless respected their wills and ideas to the highest possible degree, leaving, so to say, lots and lots of breathing space around each of them”.²⁶

Obeying for supernatural reasons

The exercise of this type of authority — so human and respectful of the individual — runs the risk of lacking supernatural motivation. Don Bosco himself, in a talk to the Rectors following

²³ *Id.*, art. 47.

²⁴ Don Bosco's counsels to Fr. Rua, first Salesian Rector, in *BM* 7:317.

²⁵ A. CAVIGLIA, *Don Bosco*, p. 25.

²⁶ *Id.*, 169.

the final approval of the Constitutions (September 25, 1875), acknowledged that “until now obedience (has) been more personal than religious. Let us avoid this serious error”, he said. “Never obey just because this person or that one is giving the command, but for reasons of a higher order, because it is God who commands us, no matter through whom his order is given. Let us begin to practice this religious virtue ourselves, and then let us try to instill it in others ever so slowly. We shall have accomplished little until we have attained it. Let us not do things because we like doing them or because we like the person who orders us to do them... Stress this principle in your conferences and sermons, when hearing confessions, and on every other possible occasion”.²⁷

Such transcendent dimension of religious obedience which is a sharing in Christ’s obedience to his Father,²⁸ had certainly to be safeguarded at all costs, lest the very essence of religious life be lost. But perhaps some of the Superiors in Don Bosco’s times found it more convenient to insist on this principle than to imitate Don Bosco’s fatherly goodness and kindness. Some of them found it easier to follow “the speedier and less onerous way” of issuing orders than that of helping their people to become mature through a truly adult and responsible obedience. That is why Don Bosco in his famed letter written in Rome in 1884 complained that “the warmth of charity” was gradually being replaced with “the coldness of regulations”.²⁹

This is the complaint of a man who feared that his work could be distorted. He was afraid of seeing in his work the signs of an organization in which greater emphasis would be placed on efficiency than on the person, thus running the risk of fostering legalism and formalism. He feared the disappearance of the family spirit — that fraternal communion in which not the

²⁷ MB 11:356

²⁸ See *Lumen Gentium*, 42a; *Perfectae Caritatis*, 14a.

²⁹ MB 17:111-112.

coldness of the law but “the warmth of charity is the rule”.³⁰

A delicate balance

Being a realist, Don Bosco could not ignore the difficulties and risks involved in keeping a delicate balance between divine and human elements, between individual and community needs. Any excessive unilateral emphasis on either could cause a dangerous unbalance and make people fall either into a disembodied spiritualism leading to an authoritarianism which would almost systematically sacrifice persons to principles, or into a purely earthbound humanism leading, in its turn, to gross individualism.

Whenever either the transcendent dimension of obedience or brotherly union with its inherent sense of belonging and solidarity should be lacking, the Congregation would then inevitably begin to fall apart.

The *Pia Salesianorum Societas qualis esse periclitatur* (Pious Salesian Society such as it threatens to become) of the Dream at San Benigno,³¹ on whose mantle nothing but a “moth-eaten gaping hole marked the spot previously covered by the diamond of obedience”, should make the sons of Don Bosco of all generations pause and reflect most seriously.

Today's 'reasons' for individualism

We have an assurance that in the past the pitfalls of a wrong conception of obedience have been avoided from Father Caviglia himself, who wrote that Don Bosco “instilled into his Congregation such sense of freedom and order and left it such a tradition of adaptability and independence and such spirit of

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Dream of September 10, 1881, in *MB* 15:183-187.

initiative and work that, barring human malice and forgetfulness of the Founder, it will last in spite of the storms that will break out”³².

I most willingly second Fr. Caviglia’s declaration, and I find it to be in agreement not only with my hopes, but also with my convictions. Nevertheless, I cannot overlook the precise conditions that go with its fulfilment and that demand of us a constant verification and a serious self-examination.

From the observation post where Divine Providence has placed me, despite the obvious fact that not everything can always be known in all its details, certain basic trends in our Congregation can, however, be discerned more clearly by me than those, such as you, dear Confreres, who are in contact with a necessarily more limited reality, and this is true whether such trends are for the better or for the worse. With regard to the issue at hand, I must state that the evil and the danger of individualism do exist in our Congregation, even if its manifestation, growth and gravity vary from place to place. (It will be the task of the General Chapter to check on the seriousness of this evil and to prescribe timely and adequate remedies).

Even if, as it was stated, this evil is not new, some reasons adduced for its justification — like having recourse to the documents of Vatican II or the Acts of the Special General Chapter — are quite new. We cannot but note that such attempts to justification — partially and unilaterally true and thus substantially false — make this evil even more dangerous inasmuch as it is not perceived and recognized as such.

When the individual becomes absolute

The basic motivation for modern-day individualism often rests on an overexaltation of the individual, who is viewed as

³² A. CAVIGLIA, *Don Bosco*, p. 41.

self-sufficient, independent, subject to no criticism or censure, to whom, however, everything must be subject. This becomes, so to say, a pathological defence not of authentic freedom, but of a freedom which is an end in itself, without substance and often without aims.

This way of thinking, which is widespread in present-day society, finds its way into our lives imperceptibly under the most specious pretexts, and manifests itself in the most varied aspects of our lives.

Individualism and apostolate

In the field of our apostolate we see this way of thinking reflected in the attitude of those who under the pretext of respecting everybody's conscience no longer dare to proclaim the Gospel message in its entirety, and limit themselves to stress only those points which are not so sharply opposed to current opinion.

We see it reflected in the fear of those who refrain from inviting the faithful to the reception of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of reconciliation; we see it in the fear of those who avoid setting before youth the ideal, the value and the beauty of the religious and priestly vocations, though this be done in the context of the common Christian vocation.

These people do not seem to realize that by so doing they violate that very freedom they vow to defend. Infact a man's choice can be perfectly free and responsible only when he is fully informed; but he cannot be so as long as, due to culpable omissions, only a partial and consequently faulty view of reality is presented.

Individualism and formation

Such an individualistic and myopic view is also projected into the field of formation where, on the premise that the Constitutions invite each member "to assume gradually the

responsibility for his own formation”³³ an individual claims total self-sufficiency in the field of formation from the moment that he knows what is good for himself and what he needs for his maturation.

Individualism and vocation

A view of this kind is also reflected in the very concept of ‘personal vocation’, that is a vocation to the attainment of one’s own life goals independently of others, outside the sphere of the vocation and mission of the Congregation, brought about at any cost, even in open opposition to the will and guidelines of those responsible.

To justify this view, an appeal is made to one’s conscience, which is understood as the sole judge on the matter — and an infallible and final one at that, — as though in-depth spiritual discernment were within everybody’s reach, and positive sciences would not give us enough warning about how easily man can be a victim of illusions and self-deception...as though the individual could dispense with his community and Superior in the discernment of God’s will and of his own charisms...³⁴ as though God’s gifts to the individual were not for “the common good”³⁵ but only for furthering one’s own ego...as though, finally, the vocation of a single member of Christ’s body could be fulfilled apart from the common vocation, independently of the other members.

Individualism and authority

It is inevitable that a person with such an individualistic cast of mind would collide head-on with any one in authority

³³ *Salesian Const.*, art. 105.

³⁴ *Id.*, art. 95 and 97.

³⁵ 1 Cor. 12:7.

who would but call his attention in gentle and general terms to the needs of the common good and brotherly union.

As a rule, such an individual has become afflicted with a kind of a sudden allergic reaction to every intervention — even a legitimate one — of his Superiors and denounces it as an undue authoritarian interference.

We emphasize that “authority means service”, without, however, going to great lengths to specify what kind of service it is. We seem to forget all too easily that within the Church we are all at each other’s service, and that the service to be rendered by authority is not that of becoming an automatic executor of the will of one’s brothers, but that “of serving in their brothers the design of the Father’s love”.³⁶ This “design of love” can, of course, be revealed through the opinions, wishes and deliberations of the brothers, provided they are docile to the Spirit and intimately united among themselves.

We must in fact realize that not every gathering of confreres is capable of spiritual discernment by the mere fact of being a gathering... If the individuals are not docile to the Spirit and not united in charity, their gathering is not an occasion for the discernment of God’s will, but one for contradiction, sterile contestation and abuse of power.

In a situation of this kind in no way does the individualist want the Superior to make decisions. He wants him simply to endorse what the majority has decided. He stands ready, however, to appeal to the unquestionable verdict of his own conscience, in case the opinion of the majority runs counter to his own.

Such a ‘liberated’ attitude towards local authority extends also to the central authority of the Congregation, and at times it goes as far as to contest, in the name of personal conscience and

³⁶ *Evangelica Testificatio*, 25 in *The Pope Speaks* quarterly, vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer '71), p. 117.

responsibility, the teachings and guidelines of ecclesiastical authority.

Individualism and Rule

We wonder how one with such basic attitude of distrust for any thought or decision not in agreement with his own would acknowledge and observe the Rule or, for that matter, any kind of norm. At best he would not contest the existence of rules and regulations; rather, if they happened to be to his advantage, he would willingly appeal to them. What he dislikes and contests is their binding force.

He claims that the new importance gained by the person with respect to the institutions which, according to him, always try to constrain and condition the person, necessarily implies a slackening in the observance of any rule. Rules are nothing but 'examples', 'suggestions', which each confrere or community could take up or drop at will, depending on whether they suit the circumstances or not. And the evaluation of the circumstances is usually left to the 'conscience' of each individual...

Individualism and belonging to the Congregation

It should be clear that such an attitude not only paralyzes the activity of the Congregation, but also break up its organism. The very first to feel these effects is the one affected by this evil. For it is inevitable that such person living under the banner of arbitrariness and phoney spontaneity slips sooner or later into a progressive crisis of his sense of belonging to the Congregation and into the ensuing crisis of his vocational, religious and priestly identity.

It is in the very nature of individualism that one affected with it drifts progressively away from the community whose values he no longer cherishes, whose rules he no longer observes,

whose Superiors he no longer recognizes, and in whose life he shares less and less.

All this may at first remain hidden not only to his confreres, but also (strangely enough) to the individualist himself, for the reason that he still feels a certain sentimental attachment to the values and the people of his past life. Or else, even if he no longer feels he can identify with the Congregation as is today, he may at times identify with an imaginary Congregation which may one day be more to his tastes, views and plans — tastes, views and plans which in reality are always further afield from the charism of our Congregation and always more foreign to its lifestyle. But sooner or later he will have to drop all pretenses, including his latest alibi, and reveal his condition in all its starkness, that is, the crisis of his Salesian vocation.

I would like you to take into serious consideration the fact that the itinerary, which I have attempted to describe, has been already covered by a number of Confreres of ours, of whom some have left us, and others, even though still in the Congregation, live in it not as brothers but as guests or, we could say, as outsiders.

I would also want you to realize that the attitudes described, despite their difference, are linked by a strict logic. This logic can be broken only if, helped by God's light and grace, we can become more aware in good time of the extreme consequences, both as individuals and as community, that this attitude foreign to our spirit can lead us to.

Salesian reasons for "vivere in unum", living in unity

As it looks today, the problem of individualism is so vast and complex that even a barely adequate exposition of it would require a much ampler consideration, one that would certainly go beyond the necessary limits of a Rector Major's Letter. Therefore, after briefly discussing this evil in its genesis and

development, I will only add a few more points for further reflection. Hopefully they will help us, not to foreclose the discussion, but to carry it on among us and thus overcome this serious obstacle which threatens to cripple our Congregation.

We are no longer private persons

After the Holy See's final approval of our Congregation,³⁷ Don Bosco on March 11, 1869 gave the Salesians a forthright and friendly talk — a memorable one indeed. "Tonight I shall tell you only a few things", he said, "but these must be borne in mind since they are, so to speak, the very basis of our Society. We are the ones who must set these principles on firm foundations so that those who come after us need only follow us".

After disclosing that "lacking ecclesiastical approval, our Society was, in many ways, somewhat suspended in air" and that "this precarious condition made it inevitable that some laxity should creep in", Don Bosco added, "But now, my dear sons, things are no longer the same. Our Congregation is approved; we are mutually bound: I to you, you to me, all of us to God. The Church has pronounced herself, God has accepted our services, and we have an obligation to keep our promises. We are no longer private individuals but a Society, a moral body with certain privileges".³⁸

The principle on which Don Bosco based his community life is the value of living together like brothers within the Church: "Oh, how good and delightful it is for all to live together like brothers' ".³⁹ Hence the need for "*vivere in unum*", living together in unity. The rest of Don Bosco's talk is nothing but a detailed and practical unfolding of this fundamental principle

³⁷ Decree of March 1, 1869.

³⁸ *BM* 9:268, 267.

³⁹ Psalm 132, 1.

in its three main aspects, that is, “habitare in unum locum, in unum agendi finem, in unum spiritum, unity of abode, unity of spirit and unity of will”.

The principle of “living in unity”

For Don Bosco “unity of abode and of spirit” means living and acting as a body, that is, being closely bound together one to the other and all to God by the bond of obedience. “Unity of spirit” points to what kind of bond there ought to exist among us, that is, one which is inspired by that divine charity that has been poured by the Spirit into our hearts.⁴⁰

A century has gone by since Don Bosco delivered his talk. Yet, even though today the cultural framework is vastly different, I believe that his words have lost nothing of their validity. On the contrary, when read in the perspective of the Church after Vatican II, they sound more timely today than in his time. In fact, by presenting the Church more like a “mystery of communion” than a “perfect society”, the Council helps us to understand more clearly how strongly we are bound one to the other and all together to God.

Made to God’s image, we are destined to share in God’s life in Christ, through the Spirit. Through Christ’s cross and blood which broke down the barriers between us and God and amongst ourselves, we have — already here on earth — the opportunity to build ourselves into God’s People and Body, into a brotherly communion, into the family of God’s children.

The bond of brotherliness that binds one to the other in the Lord Jesus does not rise from “flesh and blood”, but it is a most real one. Our brotherliness, therefore, is not imaginary, conventional and much less illusionary; on the contrary, it is

⁴⁰ BM 9:268-271.

grounded in the real, though mysterious, participation in God's only-begotten Son, for in Him we are truly reborn of God.

Our very vocation to the religious life within the Church is nothing else but a vocation to live more intensely and more meaningfully this brotherliness which was initiated by Baptism and is nourished and expressed by the Holy Eucharist. If we observe the various elements of our religious life attentively, we will notice that they have no other purpose. The renunciation to having our own private families, the sharing of our goods in common, the deep bond that ties us to our community, the observance of the same rule, the living together under the same roof and working together for the same end — these are elements whose only aim is to make of all of us who have been gathered in the Lord's name, one heart and one soul, one communion of life and love.

A common charism and vocation

To enable us to practice this Christian brotherliness within the Church according to our specific mission, the Spirit gave us a common charism and vocation.

The word *common* does not, however, mean *uniform* or *impersonal*. The common Salesian call is shared by every confrere for the fulfilment of his own task within the common mission.

It is said in the Constitutions that "as God has called each one to form part of the Salesian Society, so also has He given to each his personal gifts".⁴¹ The Congregation on its part must acknowledge and accept "this individual call" and "help each member to fulfil it",⁴² by offering him "the possibility of developing his gifts of nature and of grace"⁴³ and of "an adequate

⁴¹ *Salesian Const.*, art. 4.

⁴² *Id.*, art. 4.

⁴³ *Id.*, art. 52.

preparation to carry out the task God gives him to do”.⁴⁴

While we admit of a true personal vocation within the common Salesian vocation, we should not, however, become confused about the meaning of the word. From all that has been said above, it should be clear to all of us that we are not dealing here with an individualistic vocation, but with one which has to be fulfilled in intimate union with the vocation of the other confreres.

In the first place the very discernment of each confrere's personal vocation must be done “in communion”. For such discernment is not the work of the one concerned alone, but of all the community to which he wishes to belong: in fact it is the community that “accepts him”,⁴⁵ that “recognises him in his vocation”,⁴⁶ and “is responsible for the discernment and right use” of the abilities and special gifts each has.⁴⁷ And again it is the community to which “our mission is entrusted” in the first place,⁴⁸ and which sends, plans, verifies and acts “as the day-to-day interpreter of God's will”.⁴⁹

I think that no one should have any difficulty in understanding how in the back of these articles of our Constitutions there is not a vague ideology, but the very reality of the Church, of whose inner life our Congregation is a visible expression and participation.

Bound to each other and all together to God

The moment of profession, in which “a Salesian gives himself totally to Christ and his fellowmen” and in which the

⁴⁴ *Id.*, art. 99.

⁴⁵ *Id.*, art. 52.

⁴⁶ *Id.*, art. 4

⁴⁷ *Id.*, art. 97.

⁴⁸ *Id.*, art. 34.

⁴⁹ *Id.*, art. 91.

community of brothers “receives him with joy”,⁵⁰ is, if seen in its proper perspective, also the highest moment in the progressive discernment of the bond of brotherhood which binds a confrere to the others in God’s name; and it is precisely upon the acknowledgement of this bond that, in the last analysis, our entire commitment to each other rests.

Thereafter, by virtue of our mutual acknowledgement of the bond of brotherhood, the religious profession supposes that, as Don Bosco said, “we are mutually bound: I to you, you to me, all of us to God”.⁵¹

A religious community, being a deep communion in the Spirit, must live and act in accordance with its true nature, i.e. ‘in communion’.

a) *The Superior in communion with the brothers*

In the first place, he who exercises the service of authority must be bound to his brothers. He must live and act in communion with them. The authority which he exercises in the name of the Church⁵² and of God whom he represents,⁵³ was not given to him to dominate his brothers nor to shape them to his own liking; neither was it given to him that he become a mere echo of their opinions or a mindless and spineless executor of their wishes and wills.

His authority is in itself a limited one. Through it the Superior Authority, whose instrument he is, must shine. In fact the power, which he certainly has, was given him by God not to subjugate his brothers nor, strictly speaking, to serve them, but to serve in them “the design of the Father’s love”.⁵⁴ It was

⁵⁰ *Id.*, art. 73.

⁵¹ *BM* 9:267.

⁵² *Lumen Gentium*, 45a; *Acts of SGC*, 644.

⁵³ *Perfectae Caritatis*, 14a, c.

⁵⁴ *Evangelica Testificatio*, 25.

given to him to bind them together, not in any way whatsoever, but “in the service of the Father”.⁵⁵ He must, therefore, seek together with them “God’s will by fraternal and patient dialogue”.⁵⁶

In carrying out that will, it is his duty “to coordinate the endeavours of all, keeping in mind the rights, duties and capacities of each one”, and making every effort towards preserving his community “in unity”.⁵⁷

b) *The confreres in communion with the Superior*

While on one side the Superior is closely bound with his brothers, on the other they, too, must live and act in close communion with him, because he is “the sign of Christ uniting his followers in the service of the Father”.⁵⁸

For this reason he must place himself at the center of the community at the confluence of the wills of the individual confreres, so that he and they respond all together to the Lord’s call in a visible line of convergence determined by the Rule.

In fact within the community the Superior must be the visible bond of fraternal communion, the pivotal point in the community’s search for God’s will, and the sure guide to faithfulness to the Spirit.

c) *All bound together with God*

Lastly, all — Superiors and confreres — are bound together with God. In the final analysis, in a community there is no one who commands and no one who obeys, but all obey, “even though (they) have different tasks to perform”.⁵⁹ In other words,

⁵⁵ See *Salesian Const.*, art. 54.

⁵⁶ *Id.*, art. 94.

⁵⁷ *Id.*, art. 54.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*, art. 94.

all obey a will that transcends them, and that has entrusted them with a mission to be carried out in communion. In fact, the mystery of Christ's obedience to his Father is reflected and fulfilled in each confrere, taken not alone, but in intimate communion with his brothers.

Poverty and the value of the Rule

On account of the relationships and commitments that this bond of charity supposes, it tends by its own nature to pass from an interior bond to a visible and social one, and the Rule is the expression of the commitment we have solemnly taken upon ourselves with our religious profession. In the Foreword to our Constitutions the Rule is rightly defined as "a way that leads to love".

This definition, while underscoring the Rule as a means, indicates also its limitations and value.

First of all, it is "a way to love", not love itself. Love, though it is never set against the law, is by far superior to it, and reaches into the full freedom of the spirit and the kingdom of pure love where no law could ever reach. If love is not the foundation of the observance of the Rule, the spirit of its interpretation and its very goal, then even its most exact observance is nothing, is of no avail.⁶⁰

In reality the Rule is nothing but the codification of the spiritual experience of our Founder, a norm of life which today can bring us to the same love of God and of youth as it brought Don Bosco. This is in fact the most precious heritage of our Congregation — not a letter that becomes old and moldered, but a spirit that carries life and can be vitally transmitted from generation to generation.

The fact that the Rule is "a way to love", rather than belit-

⁶⁰ See 1 Cor. 13:2.

ting it, helps us to discover its true value. If in it our vocation's identity is contained and defined and our mutual commitments taken up on profession day are spelled out, then the Rule becomes for us the expression of the will of God, who calls us to live and work in such a way as to become "in our own Salesian way...signs and bearers"⁶¹ of his love for youth.

It is especially because the Rule contains so high values of communion with God and with our brothers, that these are unavoidably compromised whenever it is not observed faithfully. Evidently, not each breach of the Rule compromises those values to the same extent, because there is surely a hierarchy among the values fostered by the Rule. It is also true, however, that every willful, even small, non-observance, every arbitrary, though slight, interpretation is a weakening of the bond that unites us to God. For it is God himself who wills us to carry out the mission he entrusted to us "in brotherly communion", and it is precisely in the faithful and deliberate observance of the Rule that brotherly communion is made real and explicit.

Conclusion: Living a life of charity

Let us now conclude this reflection of ours on the deadly virus of individualism. As you may have noticed, our reflection was to a large extent supported by *Salesian* arguments — and this for a good reason.

It may be useful to call your attention to this point once again: Don Bosco, a man deeply knowledgeable of the human mind and enriched with an exceptional experience of the basic values needed by his sons for their lives and their activities, never ceased insisting on the need of union of minds and souls and the need of curbing one's own individualistic ways.

At the same time he, however, never tired of repeating that

⁶¹ *Salesian Const.*, art. 2.

“in order to become one in heart and soul” all the Salesians — Superiors and confreres alike — must practice that charity from which there derives a joyous and effective solidarity, understanding, cooperation and harmony among the community members.⁶² It is up to us, each of us, to accept our holy Founder’s teaching and example.

To all of you my warmest greetings and assurance of a constant memento in my prayers. I kindly ask you to pray for me and for the success of the forthcoming General Chapter.

Sincerely yours,
Fr. LOUIS RICCERI
Rector Major

⁶² MB 15:486.

II. INSTRUCTIONS AND NORMS

The Confreres's Pensions

The Rector Major on December 22, 1976 forwarded the following letter to the Provincials. In it he gave them detailed norms on the Confreres' pensions with regard to the vow of religious poverty.

Dear Father Provincial,

Of late we have had to deal with increasing frequency with a problem that has a direct bearing on our poverty and has been causing some perplexity and confusion (and may cause even more with the passing of time) to the detriment of our Salesian poverty. I am referring to the pensions which our elder Confreres receive from private or State agencies under the several titles contemplated by the law in various countries.

The opinion has been voiced by some that such pension monies belong to the religious pensioners and are to be used by the same as they please — and some do this.

I have therefore thought it my duty to intervene to clear up any misunderstanding and restate unequivocally the real nature of our Salesian poverty.

I invite you to be vigilant and to take firm action whenever necessary in order to remove and/or prevent abuses on the matter. The Confreres should be helped to form a correct conscience in such a delicate matter as our profession of poverty.

1. Salaries and pensions for service rendered

Let us consider first the pensions, so common today, which accrue to individuals from employers — either private, such as an individual person, a firm, an agency, or government-owned, such as

State or Public Schools, local, county or federal agencies — for work performed or services rendered.

These pensions demand the periodical payment of premiums or the regular withholding of a part of the salary to establish a pension fund. This fund and the deriving pensions payments are both dependent on work done. Thus in practice pensions are delayed payments of a salary previously withheld.

With regard to this pension and the vow of poverty, supposing that the work was taken up by the confrere by order of, or in agreement with, his competent Superior, Canon Law 580, 2 must be kept in mind which states: "Whatever a religious with simple vows acquires by his own industry, he acquires it for his religious institute". In other words, in the case of a religious with simple vows the recipient of the salary or pension is by law his religious institute, even though the latter acquires it only through the former.

Art. 84 of our Constitutions says: "Following the example of the first Christians, we place in common our material goods, the fruit of our work and the gifts we receive". More clearly art. 62 of our Regulations states: "The members cannot retain, but must hand over to the community whatever they have acquired by their own work or because of their membership in the Society".

A Salesian does not have nor may presume to have authorization to engage in any salaried work for his own personal financial benefit. Neither do the deriving monies — salary *and* pension — belong to him, nor may he, therefore, administer them at his own will.

For the sake of completeness, I will also say that this type of pension, like any other, ceases to belong to the Congregation when the pensioner is released from his vows. In other words, if he ceases to be a religious, he is no longer bound by Canon Law 580, 2 and by the Constitutions, and then the pension follows the person.

2. *Military service pension*

The Sacred Congregation of Religious intervened twice on the question of military service pensions. When, in 1922, at the end of World War I, some religious began receiving such pensions and the question of their ownership (not merely administration) was raised with reference to religious with public vows and members of institutes

of common life without vows, the Sacred Congregation issued a decree that military service pensions belong to the Congregation or Institute of common life to which the pensioner belongs (AAS 1922, p. 186f).

The second intervention was the *Militare servitium* Decree of July 30, 1957 (AAS 1957, p. 871f.), which is still binding. In this Decree the distinction between the religious who are bound by vows during military service and those who are not, was abolished; and in either case the pensions go entirely to the religious institutes.

To quote art. 5 of this Decree, "On Poverty", with reference to military service salaries and pensions paid to religious who while in service were either bound to or released from their vows:

"1.1 Whatever the member acquires by his own industry or because of his membership in a religious institute, he acquires it for the religious institute.

1.2 The member acquires by his own industry military salaries and in general whatever is given him *qua* serviceman.

2.2 Pensions given to the members for outstanding service or combat wounds or sickness are given to his religious institute and to it they belong as long as he remains in it; they become his, if he leaves the institute".

As you can see, military service for one's country is considered work done by a religious; his salary, logically, goes to his religious institute, and so do pensions and/or payments for special service or combat wounds or sickness.

The instructions and norms of the Decree of the Holy See are clear and explicit. There is no need to add any comment specifically for us Salesians.

3. Disability and/or old-age pensions

We still have to consider a third type of pensions — the one set by law in cases of disability and/or old age, regardless of any service rendered. This is the type of pension that has been and is more likely to be misunderstood and abused.

This pension derives from no work done through personal ability. On the contrary, it is given, as it would seem, "*intuitu personae*", i.e. in view or for the sake of the individual. It would then seem that it should be destined to the same...

But the nature and purpose of this pension need to be understood. This pension is given by law for the explicit purpose of meeting the needs of the disabled and/or elderly persons, and it must be used for their immediate benefit. Were it not so, that is, were this pension not intended for the needs of the pensioner, the State laws would not provide it. Therefore, in practice, a religious may not invest it — much less may he use it arbitrarily.

Since this pension must be used for the needs of the pensioner, it is logical that it should be administered by the Congregation, whose duty it is to provide for this service.

Here we should recall art. 51 of our Constitutions: “Poverty unites us in reciprocal giving and receiving”, while we have an assurance in art. 52 that the community will provide us with whatever we need and will sustain us in times of illness. Finally we are told by art. 121 that “the sick and the aged become centres of unity and blessing for the community...; (and that) the community responds by surrounding them with care and affection”.

To sum up this last point:

Keeping in mind the purpose of this type of pension, restating clearly the duty of the Congregation to provide for the needs of the disabled and aged confreres, and also recalling the norms of the *Militare Servitium* Decree, we must conclude that a confrere who receives a disability and/or old-age pension must not and may not keep it for himself. Such appropriation and use would certainly not be in accordance with equity and justice, since it would clearly be in contrast with the obligation of the Congregation to provide for the confrere’s needs and with the specific purpose of the pension and the intention of the law. A religious may not keep it nor invest it, and much less may he dispose of it at his pleasure.

Dear Provincial, this letter with its necessary clarifications — even juridical ones — is meant to be a sure aid and guide for you in dealing with eventual cases of pensions in your Province. You will then be able to act with a clear understanding, and demand with firmness mingled with charity: here it is a case of safeguarding the values of poverty and fraternal communion, which are essential to our consecration.

May Mary Help of Christians assist us so that we may be faithful

followers of Christ, and may Don Bosco's poverty be always before our eyes as an inspiration and rule for our lives.

May the New Year bring us abundant graces, especially through the 21st General Chapter.

Sincerely yours,
Fr. LOUIS RICCERI
Rector Major

III. THE 21ST GENERAL CHAPTER

1. Its preparation thus far

a) *In the Provinces.* According to news received at the Generalate the work of preparation for the 21st General Chapter is proceeding regularly in all the Provinces.

At the time that these Acts go to press, more than one half of the Provinces have celebrated their Chapters, more than one third have sent in their Minutes on the Election of Delegates to the General Chapter and about one fifth have also sent in the other documents requested by the Chapter Moderator.

b) *Proposals Tabulation Team.* In the meantime the Moderator is working on setting up a Proposals Tabulation Team, i.e. a work group that will meet at the Generalate during the month of May for the sorting out and tabulation of the proposals on the revision of the Constitutions and Regulations, submitted by the Provinces and by individuals.

Its task is to organize, to catalog and to transcribe on index cards all the contributions forwarded by the Provincial Chapters as well as by individual confreres. This is a purely technical matter, designed to assist in the preparation of two types of *schede* or information cards for those who will take part in the General Chapter.

The Proposals Tabulation Team will, first of all, proceed to divide all the articles of the Constitutions and Regulations into sections and number each of them.

Then, as it sorts out the proposals received, it will prepare a *scheda di osservazioni*, a card with remarks, which will consider *all* the proposals in *all* their various aspects: proposals of transposition, of addition, of clarification, of substitution (new wording), of combination of articles, of breaking-up of articles, of suppression, of new text drafting, etc.

This card will also record, next to each item, the vote scores in the Provincial Chapters, and will indicate the authors of the proposals, i.e. the particular Provincial Chapters and/or individual confreres. This will enable the members of the General Chapter to make an in-depth study of the proposals and their underlying motivations, whenever they would consider it useful.

Lastly, the Proposals Tabulation Team will draft a *scheda di sintesi*, a summary card, on which each article of the Constitutions and Regulations, divided in numbered commas, is summed up with all the emendations proposed and with the number of proposals received for each emendation.

c) *The Precapitular Commission*. The Rector Major will later, according to Regulations art. 101, name the Precapitular Commission, which will be charged with the drawing up of the reports or *schemata* on the topics of the General Chapter. The Commission will be at work during the months of June and July so as to be ready to forward its reports and *schemata* to the members of the General Chapter "in good time" (Reg. 101).

2. Provincial Chapters Documents to be forwarded to the Generalate

We deem it opportune at this time to remind the Provincials and the confreres responsible for the Provincial Chapters which documents they should forward to the Generalate and how they should draw them up.

The FOUR documents to be sent in are:

1) *The Minutes of the Election of Provincial Delegates to GC 21* (Document GC 21 0/5.0). All that is required is to fill out exactly the sample form which was sent to all the Provincials in August 1976.

2) *The List of all the Confreres in the Province*, with their juridical status with reference to the Province (Document GC 21 0/6.4 n. 7.3). The juridical criteria relative to this matter were published in Acts No. 284 (Oct.-Dec. 1976), pp. 72-75.

3) *A Copy in its original language of the Proposals* which the Provincial Chapters intend to present to GC 21 on the corrections to the Constitutions and Regulations, on the General Study Topic and other eventual topics. These proposals are to be:

— accompanied with the voting scores for each item in the Provincial Chapter,

— typed on *schede* or cards, according to the the sample *Scheda Ispettorale* or Provincial Card, which was sent along with Document GC 21 0/6.1; in other words, its format should be IOS (International Organization for Standardization) A4, 21 x 29,7 cm. or approximately 8 1/4 x 11 5/8 in.,

— authenticated with the Provincial seal.

4) *Ten copies in Italian language* of the *schede* mentioned above, at 3).

The FOUR documents listed above are to be sent to:

Segreteria del Regolatore del CG 21
Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco
Via della Pisana, 1111 - C.P. 9092
00100 Rome-Aurelio (Italy).

They should be received at the Generalate *no later than April 30, 1977.*

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Salesians and Slum-areas Apostolate Seminar

A Seminar on the Salesians and the Slum-areas Apostolate was held at the Salesianum in Rome on February 19-24, 1977.

Out of the 25 Provinces invited fifteen sent representatives. In all, 19 Salesians, 3 Salesian Sisters and 1 young lady Cooperator were present. They came from Brazil, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Italy, Macao, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Venezuela and Zaire.

They were the sons and daughters of Don Bosco who are totally dedicated to the slum-areas apostolate, and capable of contributing their own experiences and bringing back to their fellow workers a renewed spirit and a deepened awareness of their apostolic work.

The purpose of the Seminar was, in fact, to analyze and compare on-going experiences, to study the cause of social maladjustment and emargination, to search for ways and means for promoting human and Christian development in this field. The workshop activities consisted in presenting one's own experiences — many of them shocking! —, joining in group discussion and listening to experts.

A common note of the participants was their refusal to regard their work as exceptional, as if it required a special vocation or charism. They were agreed, instead, that their apostolate is a normal Salesian apostolate, the same to which Don Bosco dedicated the most exciting years of his life.

Pope Paul paid tribute to these Salesians, when in the February 23 General Audience he said: "We know, beloved sons and daughters, about your precious and at the same time difficult apostolate, and we know that you are carrying it out in the most desolate quarters of huge metropolises. In Brazil they call them *favelas*, and on one occasion we saw them ourselves, with great consternation... But we need not go to Brazil; we have some right here in Rome... God bless you", concluded the Holy Father, "and be assured of our great interest

in your work. Our prayers are with you. We are happy and proud to point you out as examples, and hope that others will imitate your special concern for the neediest”.

2. A Course for Parish Apostolate Workers

A Course for Parish Apostolate Workers was held at the Salesianum in Rome on January 4 - February 8, 1977. Taking part in the Course were 25 confreres coming from Belgium, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and Yugoslavia.

Proposed by the Salesian Parishes Central Committee since 1975, the Course was arranged by the Secretary of the Salesian Parishes Central Office Fr. Guglielmo Bonacelli. Its programming was entrusted to the UPS Canon Law Department under the chairmanship of Fr. Tarcisio Bertone. Lectures were given by several UPS Professors, Salesian experts, secular priests and laymen. The animator of the Course was Fr. Giuseppe Bongioni of Bologna.

The topics fell into three large groups: pastoral anthropology and theology, evangelization (its contents and theology), and Salesian characteristics of parish work.

The Course had three goals: 1st, a study of pastoral methods and services according to the Salesian vocation, spirit and mission; 2nd, the formulation of proposals on Salesian Parish work to be presented to the 21st General Chapter; and 3rd, the testing of a pilot course on parish pastoral work which could be used to spark off similar initiatives in other regions and Provinces.

The Course was concluded by the Vicar of the Rome Diocese Card. Ugo Poletti.

The participants attended the General Papal Audience on January 19, and Pope Paul had special words for them. “Our first greeting”, he said, “goes to a most varied and significant group, that of the Salesian priests engaged in parish work”. After stating the reason for their presence in Rome, i.e. their *aggiornamento* in the pastoral work they do in youth centers and in parishes, the Pope went on: “We are happy that you find in your parishes a crowd of young and mature people who inspire you to stand firm in your vocation

and to better yourselves in the art of pastoral care. Certainly you Salesians have no trouble finding an outstanding example of zealous care for the salvation of souls in your own Founder Don Bosco”.

“We bless you”, concluded the Pope, “and we assure you that we are very grateful for the ministry you render to the Church, and for the fine example of dedication, patience, endurance and pedagogy that you give us”.

3. The Salesian Cooperators' World Council

The Salesian Cooperators will in the near future — probably as early as June 1977 — have their stable World Council, that will take the place of the provisional one established by the Rector Major in 1975.

The new Council will be made up of 29 members — 20 lay persons and 9 SDB's and FMA's — and will provide world-wide leadership to the Cooperators' Association.

A brief history of the World Council. Art. 34, 1 of the new Cooperators' Regulations made provisions for the establishment of a provisional World Council for the purpose of preparing for the Association's World Congress and studying the need to organize a world-wide Cooperators' governing body. After the World Congress was held and the participants' favorable opinions were gathered, the Provisional World Council just before disbanding suggested to the Rector Major the desirability of creating a permanent body to head the Association. The Rector Major gave a mandate to the Cooperators' leadership to study how the new governing body should be organized.

The leadership, helped by a work team made from the outgoing Provisional World Council, carried on an inquiry on the matter among the Cooperators' Provincial and National Councils, and, where the Councils were not yet in existence, among the Provincial Delegates.

Data, gathered and processed and UPS-Rome, enabled the leadership to make a detailed proposal for a permanent World Council, which has been approved by the Rector Major and is now being implemented.

The tasks of the World Council. The new governing body will

have wider tasks than its predecessor. Among them there will be fostering and spreading the Association throughout the world, taking special care of the priest Cooperators, young Cooperators, workingman Cooperators, and promoting a missionary movement within the Association. It will also be its task to carry out the decisions approved by the recent Cooperators' World Congress and the Young Cooperators European Assembly, and, more proximately, to draw up motions and proposals to be submitted to the 21st General Chapter on behalf of the Association and to be available for consultation upon request.

The members of the World Congress. Out of the 29 members, 5 will be *de jure* members, other 9 (five of them from the laity) will be nominated by the Rector Major, and 15 (all lay persons) will be elected by the Association's membership. The Secretary General of the World Council will be chosen from among the lay members. The *de jure* members are: the Rector Major, the General Councillor for the Apostolate of the Adults, the World Delegate of the Cooperators, one General Councillor of the FMA's and the FMA Delegate of the Cooperators. The fifteen elective members will be chosen with somewhat elastic proportional criteria so as to ensure that all regions are adequately represented. Four members will be elected from the Italian and Middle East region, three from Spain and Portugal, and two each from Europe and Central Africa, the English-speaking countries, the Pacific and Caribbean Latin American region and the Atlantic Latin American region.

The election. The conditions required for anyone to be elected have been set down as follows: an adequate spiritual Salesian formation, a certain amount of time available, and some experience in the life and work of the Association. Elections will be held mostly through correspondence, and it is foreseen that they will be completed within the first half of May 1977.

4. The 8th Course on On-going Formation

With the 7th Course on On-going Formation completed in February, the 8th was begun at the Salesianum on March 1. It is scheduled to last three months. Both courses were reserved to the "third-

age” confreres, i.e. those over 55. The present course is attended by 35, coming from 24 Provinces and almost as many countries.

The over 250 confreres who have attended these courses during the past six years, have expressed generally highly appreciative opinions on them. “I leave this course enriched at the human, Christian, religious and Salesian level”, a participant wrote. “The course was for me a marvelous experience. It should be taken even at a great sacrifice for the Province and for the individual, because it is really beneficial. It should be more advertised among the Salesians”.

The initiative is quickly accepted by all the participants, even by those who at first are not too much in favor of it. “Even though I came somewhat against my will and with hazy and preconceived ideas about it”, wrote one of them, “once I got over the initial hurdles, I soon felt a remarkable change in me with regard to my participation. I am sure I will get much good out of it for my spiritual life and apostolate”.

Many have remarked that the experience will affect their communities as well as themselves. “I will share this enriching experience with the confreres of my community”, promised one.

5. The 107th Expedition and other missionary news items

A fairly good number of confreres have applied for the *107th missionary expedition*. Apparently their number is far from being adequate to the personnel needs in our African, Asian and Latin American missions. Are we going to see in the immediate future a more generous response to many anguished appeals for personnel from Provinces and churches in mission lands?

Meanwhile we are happy to announce that a Course of preparation for the new missionaries will take place at the Salesianum beginning with September 3rd and ending with the Farewell Ceremony (in Valdocco) on October 2, 1977.

The missionaries in transit through Italy during the month of September are invited to attend a Course organized by the Missions Department for those who have missionary experience and wish to

get updated. Information on the Course is available from the same Department on request.

Reports on Missions Centennial requested. In the last issue of the Acts (No. 285, pp. 64 and 71-72) the Missions Department requested all the Provincials to send in "a detailed and picture-documented report on all the initiatives", which were carried out during the Missions Centennial. As this issue goes to press, the count of provincial reports received stands at twenty-three.

While we thank the Provincials who have responded promptly to our request, we wish to urge the others to send in theirs without further delay.

News from Timor. The Missions Councillor during his visitations to the Far East would have liked to stop over in Timor, but he was denied a landing permit. Concerning the ten confreres of four nationalities who live on the island, we know that they are carrying on their work with courage and zeal not only in our three missionary foundations, but also in parishes left without priests. We were permitted to send these wonderful confreres some financial aid in the name of the Rector Major. They live in very difficult and trying conditions, but are safe and sound, and work very hard especially for the neediest. Their dedication is a cause for admiration and esteem in all who see them at work, including the civil authorities. Mail to and from Timor seems to have resumed with some regularity.

Invitation to prayer. Prayers are asked not only for the confreres in Timor, but also for those in *Vietnam*. About the latter very little is known at present through the short and rare letters which reach the Generalate. Prayers are likewise requested for our confreres in *Mozambique*, whose presence and work in that country are a source of deep and constant concern.

A much appreciated aid. In his recent visits and visitations to Asian missions the Missions Councillor has had an opportunity to see firsthand how greatly appreciated is the aid given them — as to brothers by brothers — through the Solidarity Fund. (A report on it — the 22nd — follows immediately).

Let the confreres' acts of selfdenial, especially those performed during the Lenten season, continue to support to an even greater extent this fund which is proving truly providential in many a mission.

6. Solidarity Fund (22nd report)

a) CONTRIBUTING PROVINCES (Nov. 11, 1976 - Jan. 9, 1977)

AMERICA

Argentina, from the five Provinces	Lit.	1,593,000
Argentina, Bahía Blanca		450,000
Brazil, Belo Horizonte		3,319,322
Brazil, São Paulo		1,000,000
Mexico, Mexico		1,440,000
U.S.A., San Francisco (from Edmonton for Ethiopia)		450,000

AUSTRALIA

942,000

EUROPE

Austria		521,800
Belgium, North		3,000,000
Italy, Generalate		300,000
Italy, Novarese		4,800,000
Italy, Novarese (for Zagreb)		700,000
Italy, Southern		1,000,000
Italy, Venetian-St. Mark (from Udine)		1,319,000

<i>Total</i>		<u>20,835,122</u>
<i>Cash on hand</i>		41,387
<i>Total amt. for distribution</i>		<u>20,876,509</u>

b) DISBURSEMENT (Nov. 11, 1976 - Jan. 3, 1977)

AFRICA

Congo-Brazzaville: for a small building at St. Charles' Mission		1,000,000
Ethiopia: for social works at Makallé		450,000

AMERICA

Antilles, Jarabacoa: for medicinals	500,000
Antilles, Jarabacoa: for a youth center hall	1,000,000
Argentina, Bahía Blanca: for pastoral works at Carmen de Patagones	1,000,000
Brazil, Manaus: for the Santa Isabel native colony	1,000,000
Brazil, Manaus: for the Jauareté native colony	1,000,000
Central America, Guatemala: for social works	1,000,000
Chile, Talca: for pastoral work equipment	1,000,000
Colombia, Bogotá: for the promotion of the Bible apostolate	1,000,000
Ecuador: for cultural promotion among the Shuars	1,000,000
Peru, Yucay: for various works among the mission natives	1,000,000

ASIA

India, Madras: for various projects at Braha- manakodur	1,500,000
India, Madras: for housing for the poor at Jalarpet	1,000,000
India, Madras: for digging a well at Chingleput	500,000
India, Madras: for pastoral works at Poonamallee	1,000,000
India, Madras: for housing for the poor at Sagayatottam	1,000,000
India, Shillong: for the printing of trade- school textbooks	500,000
India, Shillong: for the spreading of literature among the Khasis	1,000,000
India, Tura: for the building of a chapel at Rongjeng	1,500,000
Philippines, Calamba: for the building of a chapel	1,000,000

EUROPE

Italy, to the FMA's for the apostolate among the shanty-dwellers at Ostia	200,000
Yugoslavia, Zagreb	700,000
	<hr/>
Total	20,850,000
Cash on hand	26,509
	<hr/>

c) FUND AS OF JANUARY 3, 1977

Income	523,803,023
Disbursement	523,776,514
	<hr/>
Cash on hand	26,509

7. Three books and a documentary

We are happy to bring to your attention three books and a documentary which have just been published and hopefully will interest many confreres.

Fr. Pietro Brocardo, ed., *La Formazione Permanente interpella gli istituti religiosi (On-going Formation Challenges Religious Institutes)*, Editrice LDC, Turin 1976, pp. 464, Lit. 6,000 (ab. USA \$ 7.00).

For the communities and the religious striving towards renewal in the spirit of Vatican II, On-going Formation has become a fundamental, almost necessary concern. The first part of Fr. Brocardo's volume sets out "*le idee*", the ideas for a right understanding of On-going Formation, and the second part "*i modelli*", the forms or patterns according to which On-going Formation is presently carried out in nine different Congregations. The third part illustrates "*le strategie*", i.e. it gives a detailed description of the various ways and means and initiatives used.

The meaty volume — the result of the collaboration of 22 Salesian and non-Salesian experts — has already won high praises, including the special approval of Cardinal Gabriele Garrone, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education.

Guido Bosio, *Martiri in Cina: Mons. Luigi Versiglia e D. Callisto Caravario nei loro scritti e nelle testimonianze di coetanei (Martyrs*

in China: Msgr. Louis Versiglia and Fr. Callistus Caravario, in their writings and in the testimonies of their contemporaries), Editrice LDC, Turin 1977, pp. 500, Lit. 5,500 (ab. USA \$ 6.50).

This is the most recent and updated historical study on the topic. Around the two great Salesians — recently declared martyrs by the Church — the author sketches out the history of the Congregation and of the missionary Church in China during the first three decades of the 20th century in an appealing way.

Forze vive, Atti del Congresso del Centenario Cooperatori Salesiani (Living Forces, Acts of the Salesian Cooperators' Centennial Congress), Rome 1977, pp. 232, with 16 out-of-text plates, Lit. 3,000 (ab. USA \$ 3.50). (Copies are to be requested from: Ufficio Centrale Cooperatori, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Via della Pisana, 1111 - C.P. 9092 - 00100 Rome-Aurelio, Italy).

The volume, which contains a report on the Cooperators' World Congress as well as on the young Cooperators' European Assembly — both held in late October and early November 1976 in Rome —, is an indispensable source of information on the modern trends of this important branch of the Salesian Family. At the same time it is a veritable treasure chest of ideas, initiatives and proposals for the Salesians who are working with the Cooperators.

Salesian Cooperators' World Congress, a 16 mm color documentary, edited in Italian, English and Spanish. It is a 25-minute long pictorial portrait of the salient moments of the World Congress. Requests are to be made from the Ufficio Centrale Cooperatori, at address indicated above.

8. Saving on Telegrams

With reference to telegrams or cablegrams sent to the Generalate it has been noticed that there could be a significant saving of money if words were reduced to the minimum necessary.

We, therefore, suggest that:

a) the name of the addressee be kept "plain" (v.g., Rector Major), and

b) the address be stripped down to the essentials (v.g. Salesiani-

pisana Rome). This name, besides being listed in the Elenco Generale, is also registered at the Rome Central Post Office. If used as indicated, it would speed up delivery, avoid confusion with other Salesian houses in Rome, and save money.

V. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND INITIATIVES OF GENERAL INTEREST

April brings to an end the 8-month long period of visits and visitations made by the Regional Councillors to their Provinces. During the same period the other Superiors, with the Rector Major, remained at general headquarters and carried on their ordinary, yet always intense and exacting work.

The RECTOR MAJOR was chosen to be one of the 10 Superiors of Religious Institutes who will take part in the forthcoming Bishops' Synod to be held in Rome in October 1977. The presence of our Rector Major at this august gathering is all the more meaningful inasmuch as the Synod's general theme is one of deep concern for all Salesians: "Catechesis in our time, especially catechesis of children and young people".

The SALESIAN FORMATION DEPARTMENT has recently been severely tried with the sickness and death of two of his most active members. The death of Fr. Miguel Solinas and the sickness of the distinguished Fr. Pietro Brocardo gave the Generalate Community a firsthand experience of the truth contained in articles 121 (Trials of sickness) and 122 (Death of Confreres) of our renewed Constitutions.

Despite the hardships created by this situation, the Formation Department Councillor was able to keep up with the scheduled activities in several Italian, German and Spanish Provinces.

The meeting of the European Educational Science Teachers held at UPS on January 2-5 and that of the UPS-Theology-Department-affiliated Theological Studentates' Presidents to be held at Benediktbeuern (Bavaria) on April 21-25, round up a long series of specialized consultations organized for the purpose of analyzing, evaluating, and researching for, the best thought-out and updated programs of studies for the early stages of Salesian formation.

The results of these meeting will enable the Formation Depart-

ment to plan better programs and make more practical suggestions to be presented to the GC 21 Preparatory Commission.

FR. GIOVENALE DHO with his Department is gathering data and documents for an overview on the Salesian Youth Work as is today, for presentation at the General Chapter.

FR. GIOVANNI RAINERI, Councillor for the Apostolate of the Adults, presided over the Course for Parish Apostolate Workers (p. 35).

In February he also visited the Bilbao Province. He spent three days with the participants in the Course of On-going Formation in Urnieta, and met with most of the confreres, clerics, novices and aspirants of the Province. In his many meetings he dealt with matters and problems of Salesian life.

His Department has many activities programmed for the coming months. With regard to the *Salesian Cooperators* there will soon be the first meeting of the newly-created World Council. (For details see Communications, p. 36).

With regard to the *Past Pupils* the Department is cooperating in the preparation of three important Continental Congresses: the Latin American to be held in Panama City in 1978, the European to be held in Madrid the same year, and the Asian-Australian to be held in Manila in 1979.

Still with regard to the Past Pupils a meeting of the European Committee at the European Community and another meeting of the OMAAEEC Committee in Paris with the participation of the representatives of the Past Pupils' Confederal Board of Directors are in the planning stage.

In the field of *Social Communications* various initiatives for the celebration of the Salesian Bulletin Centenary (August 1877-1977) are presently under consideration. A Social Communications Center (*Centro di Comunicazioni Sociali*) at the Generalate, connected with national and Provincial Salesian centers, is now being organized and will soon be operational.

In view of the forthcoming GC 21, the Department is gathering data and documents on its various activities, to be used by the Rector Major in the preparation of his Report on the State of the Congregation to the participants in the General Chapter.

FR. BERNARD TOHILL completed his long journey through the missions in eleven Asian countries. During this time he was able to get in touch with confreres who live and work in some of the remotest Salesian missions, such as Imphal in North-East India, Negombo and Kandy in Sri Lanka. For a report on other activities of his Department see Communications, pp. 38-39.

FR. LUIGI FIORA has spent the last few months making the canonical visitation of the Sicilian and Subalpine Provinces. In March he presided over the Meeting of Provincial Missions Directors. He has a National (Italian) Assembly of Salesian *Cineclubs* (movies discussion and appraisal clubs) scheduled for April, a Conference of Italian and Middle-East Provincials for May, and a Meeting of Pastors and Youth Centers Directors for June at the Salesianum.

FR. ANTONIO MÉLIDA concluded his series of extraordinary visitations to the Provinces of his region with the visit to the Valencia Province. At the end of May he will preside over the Iberian Conference, that will meet in Madrid for the last time before the General Chapter. Before his six-year term is over, he will visit the communities in Portugal.

FR. GIOVANNI TER SCHURE completed the canonical visitation to the Central African Province, and held several meetings with the confreres in Marocco, Belgium and North Germany.

FR. JOSÉ HENRÍQUEZ presided over meetings of several kinds in Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela. He is presently winding up his extraordinary visitation to the Bogotá (Colombia) Province.

FR. JUAN VECCHI completed the visitation to the Argentine Provinces of Bahía Blanca and la Plata.

FR. GEORGE WILLIAMS, who since last August has been making his fourth round-the-world trip in order to meet with his confreres, completed the canonical visitation to the Chinese Province in January. After short stopovers in Bangkok and Rangoon, he then went to Calcutta to begin his visitation of that Province. Before getting back to Rome by the end of April, he will have visited several other foundations in India, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

With the return of the Regional Councillors to headquarters in late April, there will be a PLENUM OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL. Their time will be taken up with two major things on the agenda: first, the examination of the Regional Councillors' Reports on their visitations and visits, and second, the immediate preparation for GC 21.

VI. DOCUMENTS

To build together our Congregation for the young generations

On October 11, 1976 the Rector Major Fr. Louis Ricceri who according to the Statutes is the Grand Chancellor of UPS (the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome), spoke to the non-students confreres of the UPS-Gesù Maestro Community gathered at the Generalate.

Since his address touched upon a variety of matters which are of general concern for those in charge of the training of young confreres, it is here reported in full.

After welcoming the UPS confreres, the Rector Major reminded them of their special mission, i.e. teaching which, he said, "is formation", — a mission that is all the more important in these days in which "the cultural authority of ideas is more highly regarded than juridical authority".

The Congregation — he went on to say — is certainly an organism alive and at work for the implementation of its mission in the world. Day by day we see more clearly how important and powerful ideas are for the fulfilment of our mission.

You, UPS Professors, can with your intellectual knowledge respond to the need for clear, strong, effective ideas which is keenly felt today in our Congregation. For the growth of this organism you can build a think tank — a kind of brain which is not impaired by illnesses or anomalies, but is healthy and efficient.

When I think of the many UPS (formerly PAS) graduates I have met in the various continents and of your present pupils of the various departments belonging to over fifty Provinces, I become fully aware of the tremendous constructive and unifying opportunities that you hold in your hands, and the consequent responsibility towards the whole Congregation. I clearly see how the UPS is to be a center of light, life, unity for the cultural life of our Congregation and of the

Church, in other words a *higher center of formation* in its widest and fullest sense.

This is indeed what the Provinces are asking and expecting. This is the service that all of us, each in his own sphere, must try to offer them. This is also the sure way to overcome obstacles and difficulties, which are possibly due to a shortage of Salesian personnel (which in turn is due to a lack of vocations and to certain new criteria used in early formation), and also (let's not be afraid to say it!) to some unhappy experiences and unpleasant results of the past few years, which have engendered some feelings of mistrust and fairly widespread prejudice against the UPS.

This makes it all the more necessary to establish and maintain open contacts between the Center of our Congregation and the UPS, between the UPS and the Provinces. The latter need to be informed about the UPS as it is today, and to look up to the UPS as an effective factor of unity and clear-thinking, which is so necessary in our Congregation, and indeed in the Church and in the world, in the midst of much confusion and deviation on account, among other things, of a misunderstood and arbitrary pluralism. Thus will we be able to carry out our common mandate: *to build together our Congregation for the young generations.*

THE SERVICE OF THE UPS TO OUR CONGREGATION

You and we, all of us in fact, have not only a common, but a sole interest — that of serving our Congregation, that it may adequately fulfill its mission and meet its needs of today. This, of course, involves also serving the Church in its present needs, as it has been clearly stated in the document approving the Statutes and in the other raising the Athenaeum to the rank of University.

Your service to the Congregation is rendered, first of all, within your own institution. This implies some serious commitments from each of you as individual Professors as well as the UPS as a whole and in each of its component faculty and institute.

This kind of service in turn demands no little commitment, effort and investment — both in personnel and in money — from the Congregation. We at the center of the Congregation are making every

effort to overcome these difficulties with steady endurance, hopeful courage and sound realism. I would like you to be aware of this. Your cooperation is absolutely necessary for overcoming these great obstacles — and your cooperation is shown in the expert cultural, spiritual, catechetical, pedagogical and Salesian service you render within the University itself, in the Salesian Provinces and regions and in many other sectors.

The unanimous chorus of appreciation and gratitude for the many courses, lectures, and services of various kinds given by the UPS Professors, that we have received from various parts of the Salesian world, are indeed a source of much pride, joy and trust in you and your work.

We are convinced that your highly competent service, supported by personal witnessing to the values that you expound, is a particularly effective way to overcome objections and prejudices from some quarters and win credibility and trust from them.

The UPS as work of the Congregation

Let me go back, if you will, to what seems to me to be the mission rather than the service of your institution. For I believe that the UPS will all the more easily overcome its present difficulties the more faithfully it will carry out the tasks which were since its inception assigned to it by the Congregation and were recognized and approved by the Church. Even with the elevation of the Athenaeum to the status of University by the Church, the UPS remains always an organism of the Salesian Congregation, and the latter still feels fully responsible for it.

For this reason the Congregation in its upper echelons shows its deep concern that the UPS be in everything faithful to its original mandate and achieve the objectives for which it was founded. For this reason the UPS Statutes state: "The Rector Major of the Society of St. Francis de Sales is the Grand Chancellor of UPS" (art. 6,2), and assigning him the duties, "first, to watch over everything that concerns the government and the studies of the UPS according to the norms of the Holy See", and "secondly, to see to it that the directives of the Holy See be fully observed".

These are serious responsibilities which I feel I must carry out,

with the assistance of the Superior Council, as I have done in the past, — more so today at the vigil of the 21st General Chapter, which will certainly want to check on the situation at the UPS as well as in the entire Congregation, in the light of the guidelines set up by the Special General Chapter and the report presented to the same General Chapter by the Commission charged with the study of the problems of the UPS.

For this reason I think it would be helpful to offer you a few reflections, and I will take them from the three features which spell out, without any room for doubt or misunderstanding, the three chief characteristics of the UPS.

FIRST OF ALL THE UPS IS A UNIVERSITY

The UPS is first of all a University, a center for superior studies. He who is called to it receives a formal mandate — as important as it is delicate.

Such mandate — obedience, in the classical terminology, for such it is — demands a number of things of the one who receives it.

First of all, *study* — as an adequate preparation for fruitful teaching. A methodical, continuous, in-depth, updated, professional study leads to *research*, which is the characteristic trait of a university professor: without research his work would be lacking in quality and productivity. Then *teaching* — to which study and research lead. Teaching at a level that would be academically high and, with regard to the students who are entitled to teaching at this level, suited to their maturity. On this point it will be well to keep in mind that your teaching will have reverberations in unforeseeable places and circumstances. Here there is no need for me to bring up specific cases; I rather leave them to your own consideration, and simply invite you to examine how you respond to your *apostolic commitment* at all levels required of you by article 2 of your Statutes.

This apostolic commitment involves cooperation in the field of the means of social communication in such a way, however, that it is not to the detriment of or in contrast with your primary responsibilities mentioned above. The same needs to be said of other initiatives, which, of course, should be entered upon in agreement with the

Superior in charge, since, in a contrary case, they would not only be detrimental to the University's mission, but would also foster a climate of harmful individualism.

A University Community

The fact that this is a university demands a number of things in its organization, which are more necessary today than ever before. I mean, first of all, *sharing* and *co-responsibility* for all who in various degrees work in the university. (I am thinking at this moment of our capable and dedicated Coadjutor Brothers, who render a much appreciated service at the UPS).

There are on this matter some authoritative and very interesting documents (v.g. "*L'Université catholique dans le monde moderne*"), that make proposals and set forth guidelines for creating a *university community* that cannot be overlooked. Also the UPS Statutes expressly speak of this matter.

"If a Catholic University wants to achieve its objectives and fulfill its academic tasks to its best", the abovementioned document says, "it needs to make every effort to foster a university community within itself. For education is not achieved merely through academic activity, but also through the life of the community. Its educational value derives from two elements: first, the extent according to which each participates in the community and is open to others, and secondly, mutual respect. It is precisely by this spirit that relationships among university members must be characterized, whether they are professors or administrators or students or non-academic personnel. The community spirit is to be promoted with suitable means of communication available to all and with the opportunity for each to share, according to his office, in the decisions that affect the community and to contribute to their implementation. To a great extent the human influence of the university will depend on the community life it will be able to promote" (pp. 18-19).

These are not the ideas of a dreamer or an overenthusiastic novelty-seeker, but the result of a study done recently by a 100-odd Delegates of Catholic Universities from all over the world.

Now in the light of this document, do our UPS Statutes show to be lacking? How can we in practice make the non-academic

personnel feel coresponsible and involved in the decision-making process according to its capacities?

The Academic Community

The Statutes are clear on this matter. They state that the UPS and its Departments are like a community. Consequently, "all the individual members cooperate, each in his field, in pursuing the aim of the university and of each of its Departments" (art. 3,1). They underscore the duty of community *coordination* for developing better community forms: "All the Departments are united among themselves through a necessary coordination, safeguarding, however, the autonomy of each" (art. 3,2).

Coordination brings to *cooperation* among the various Departments within the UPS: "In the organization of studies those forms of permanent or temporary cooperation will be promoted which concern the various disciplines or Departments, and that seem more suitable for the organic promotion of research and formation, and for the achievement of the goals and objectives of the UPS" (art. 3,3).

Now a few questions. Can we really say that all the UPS Departments form a true community? Don't they possibly look at times like a conglomeration of institutes, each pursuing its own policy, each using its own staff to make its own voice heard by those who allocate personnel and funds?

Furthermore, can we really say that the various Departments form one integrated moral body, a veritable community, called the UPS? Is their community life such that the various Departments complement each other, thus avoiding needless duplication both in organization and in operation? Has the time not yet come to bring about the interdisciplinary program which has already been accepted in principle?

These are questions that concern all of us, particularly in view of the need for a sound economy and a full use of personnel, in order to avoid waste in both areas and the burden of bodies which would appear outdated or in any way no longer respondent to the needs of our Congregation and of the University itself.

Another question. On the matter of the *relationship with other Salesian communities*, how does the UPS relate with its affiliated

institutions and with other Provincial communities? Has there been perhaps a shift from tension to indifference? How could we achieve a more active and mutually beneficial brotherly cooperation?

Still another question, and this one with regard to the *cooperation with non-Salesian institutions*. The invitation of extern professors into the University is regulated by the Statutes. Is the same true with regard to our professors being invited into other universities? Are the competent authorities in control of this matter? Is there a policy to be followed or is the matter left up to the initiatives of every professor?

THE UPS IS A PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY

Ours is proud to be a Pontifical University. This title, of course, bears with it special implications and important practical consequences for all its members, in the first place for the teaching Faculty. It might be opportune here to remember that teaching is done not only from the podium in the classrooms, but in many other ways as well, such as books, magazines, newspapers, meetings and gatherings and the like, where the audience is normally much larger than in a classroom.

Here again as Professors of a Pontifical University you should ponder some questions. How does God's word affect your teaching? Do you sincerely accept the teachings of the authentic Magisterium, in particular the guidelines of the Holy Father, in your research and teaching? Moreover, how is your ecclesial sense affecting your professional dedication? Are you trying to find scientific foundations for the Church's stand in the areas of your competence? What is your contribution at scientific or professional level to the teachings of Christ on such topics as, for instance, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, celibacy, social justice and human development, politics, pornography, violence and class struggle?

In particular, do you have an in-depth knowledge of the teachings of Vatican II on Catholic education? As everybody knows, Catholic education is going through a profound crisis, and a solution based on both the data of Revelation and the needs of the times should come from... whom else if not Catholic universities?

THE UPS IS A SALESIAN UNIVERSITY

Lastly, the UPS calls itself a Salesian University, because it is a prolongation of the Salesian Congregation which — it bears repeating it — is responsible for it; because in fulfilling its task as a Center for Superior Studies, it makes its own the concerns, the goals, the objectives, the spirit and the style of Don Bosco's charism, as it was stated in Pope Paul VI's document elevating our highest Center of ecclesiastical studies to the status of University.

By underscoring its Salesian dimension, the Holy Father showed that this is far from being a marginal attribute. It affects, instead, its main goal — “the Christian education of youth” —, and its methodology — “in full agreement with the spirit of the Holy Founder, which is called ‘Preventive System’, and which by a special disposition of Divine Providence derives its nature and strength from the Gospel”.

The UPS Statutes, in complete harmony with the thinking of the Holy Father in art. 2, after declaring “the apostolic dimension at university level” as a third goal of the University, speak of the particular character of the Salesian mission. “This goal is determined by the character and mission proper to the Society of St. Francis de Sales”, says art. 2, paragraph 2. “Therefore the UPS will take special care not only to promote scientific progress, but also to solve the *problems of youth* and of their education following the spirit and the teachings of St. John Bosco”.

It is therefore natural that the teaching and the formation of the students be entrusted almost entirely to the Salesians of Don Bosco.

Let its Salesian spirit be a visible sign!

This calls for some reflection.

First of all, you who teach at the UPS, are Salesians, are members of the Congregation, are men totally consecrated to God with the three vows according to the Salesian Constitutions. You certainly understand the implications of this consecration, which is in your case all the more demanding on account of the higher standing which in the Congregation the mandate and the trust of the Superiors have conferred on you. Be, therefore, true Salesians at all times, in all your activities.

Let me say quite openly how happy and proud I have felt many times when, travelling around the world, I have heard the most lavish praises of many of you from many qualified sources. They praised not only your professional competence, but also the *consistency of your lives* with the religious and Salesian ideals. Often have I heard it said: "He's a fine professor and also, in word and deed, a worthy son of Don Bosco", or, "He edified us by what he was even before he taught us what he knew", or similar statements.

If I rejoice in such cases — fortunately numerous —, I confess that I suffer more than I could tell you when I happen to hear opposite remarks on some attitudes and ideas which are evidently in contrast with the name of Salesian.

I would, therefore, wish that each of you, my dear confreres, be deeply conscious of your great and vast responsibility as a Salesian, and make every effort in every situation to be a true son of Don Bosco in conduct, in action, in life.

In brief, a Salesian at the UPS should live his Salesian consecration in order to enliven all his work with that Salesian spirit which makes him a visible sign to men. Such *Salesian spirit* is not limited to one's conscience and private life, but it extends to the whole institution, since, as the 20th General Chapter put it, it involves the very nature and mission of the University.

Our University is, therefore, distinguishable from other universities because of the Salesian characteristics, without which it would fail the expectations both of the Congregation and of the Church.

The Community has a soul: prayer

I would like to make two concluding considerations.

The Salesian profession and consecration require that the confreres live a *community life* or, as it is said today with a deeper meaning, a life of communion.

The General Chapter and the renewed Constitutions speak with clarity of this community life as a *brotherly, prayerful and apostolic* life. Community life is most certainly an essential part of the Salesian values. Besides, community life is a *sine-qua-non* requirement of a university — and a Catholic one at that, as we have said.

Don Bosco wanted us to be *community men*, and our mission

community-centered — the very antithesis of aloof and sterile individualism.

This community has a soul. Without this soul you could have more or less people eating at the same table, living and working under the same roof, and even sharing some pleasant moments together, but you could not have the truly alive brotherly community spoken of in our Constitutions and required by our consecration.

You are living together for a *reason of faith*, out of a supernatural motive. For this reason the element which animates and truly binds the members together is community prayer or, if you will, communion in prayer.

If this is true of every Salesian, it seems to be even more so of you, because of your special condition and demanding mission. It, therefore, ought to be your special effort to come together for common prayer, and so to build up that prayerful community which gives meaning and strength to a brotherly and apostolic community. There arise situations, of course, which present difficulties to community prayer; but, aside from those exceptional occasions which are concerned with your ministry, take the time to renew the vigor of your souls and of those of your brothers with community prayer. It is a right and a duty and at the same time an act of charity and solidarity to pray with your confreres.

Absenteeism from prayer

Absenteeism from community prayer is more harmful than absenteeism from work, about which we hear so much today.

Least community prayer becomes merely "prayer in common", effort and method are needed. You have to work at it to make it succeed. Besides, you have many opportunities to make it succeed. It is also true that community prayer cannot substitute private prayer, which is the foundation of the other.

"Do not forget", said Pope Paul in *Evangelica Testificatio*, "the witness of history: faithfulness to prayer or its abandonment is the test of the vitality or decadence of the religious life". (E.T. 42, see *The Pope Speaks* magazine, vol. 16, no. 2, p. 123-124), and we could add: of the life of each religious.

The Holy Father's words have a universal value. They ring true

and awesome for us here at the Generalate, for the few confreres living anxious hours in Timor and Mozambique, for the confreres working in the rough-and-tumble slum areas, and for you who are carrying on a mission which perhaps more than any other is threatened on many sides and for diverse motives by the deadly danger of horizontalism, as some sad experiences have brought to light.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you in my name and that of the Superior Council that we are very confident that through your work the UPS will continue to render a precious and irreplaceable service to our Congregation and to the Church.

I would also like to assure you on the basis of my long experience that the coming General Chapter will place its trust in you, all the more readily and generously the more fully you will have proved yourselves worthy of it through your achievements and new projects, and responsive to the delicate mission entrusted to you by the Congregation — that of being true and worthy "*Universitari*", coherently and practically "*Pontifici*", and sincerely and really "*Salesiani*".

VIII. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

Religious, what are you for the Church?

On November 6, 1976 Pope Paul VI received in audience the Council for Relations between the Sacred Congregation for Religious and the Secular Institutes and the International Union of Male and Female Superiors General. To them he posed the question: "What are you for the Church?" His triple reply: You are Christ's followers, Gospel witnesses and workers of charity, was the substance of his address, which appeared on L'Osservatore Romano, English Ed., Nov. 18, 1976, p. 3, and which we here reprint for personal reflection.

Christ's followers

If we ask: *what are you for the Church?* the answer is immediate and obvious. You are *followers of Christ*, and to each of you as to each of the Religious scattered throughout the world, Christ's words: *Vos... secuti estis me* (Mt 19, 28), are applied "ad litteram", as a sign of recognition and identity. These are the words that make authentic your following, which you have freely chosen, and urge you to faithfulness and to consistency, stimulating you to "walk straight in the footsteps of Christ", without slipping or deviating.

Nor is it difficult to delineate the further determinations of this following of Christ: if Jesus is a Master, in fact the Master (cf. Mt 23, 10; Jn 14,6), as followers you are disciples together. If Jesus is the exemplar of life, in fact the Life (cf. Mt 11, 29; Jn 14, 6), as followers you must be his imitators. If Jesus is the Lord (cf. Jn 13, 13; Phil 2, 11) as followers you are also his servants. It is a question, however of a service — as you well know — which goes beyond the differences or labels that are in use among men, to open up to the brotherhood of friendship and the warmth of charity: *You are my*

friends... (Jn 15, 14-15). You are, therefore, lovers of Jesus who, having left everything of the world (cf. Lk 5, 11), have the possibility and the duty of engaging in contemplation and prayer, in union with him.

Gospel witnesses

But all this is not enough. If we repeat that question, we find a second answer: for the Church you are *witnesses to the Gospel*. If this title applies to every Christian, it applies in a very special way to you. The essential fact of following is not expressed only “ad intra”, it cannot be limited to the sublime and personal relationship with Christ, but must necessarily be reflected “ad extra” and expand naturally in an action in favour of what He said and did. It was for this reason that, in our special Exhortation to Religious on the renewal of consecrated life according to the directives of the Second Vatican Council, we considered it opportune to focus attention, right at the beginning, on this concept: *Evangelica testificatio*. In fact, it is this very testimony which makes you apostles and missionaries of the Gospel in the midst of the world, which looks and judges, even when it seems indifferent and distant.

How can it be denied, moreover, that today, for the most part, this testimony is presented through the lives of consecrated persons, from whom works and deeds of genuinely evangelical style are expected, rather than words? And those who have made a profession of life of certain ethical and religious ideals, certainly cannot evade it, under penalty of an intrinsic contradiction which would be equivalent to a “false testimony”. The latter, in the most serious cases, would be confusing and scandalous for others.

What form does this apostolic and missionary testimony take, in practice? Essentially, it is expressed by the example that you offer at the individual and community level. We think again, in this connection, with admiring gratitude of the religious Saints who, with the exercise of asceticism, by embracing poverty, and with rigorous penance, constitute fixed points of reference, so luminous as almost to be identified with the virtues practised. And on a plane of more direct contact with souls, we will mention preaching and spiritual

direction. How many religious have been and are courageous proclaimers of God's Word, wise masters of the spirit, counsellors listened to and venerated!

Workers of charity

In this way, from the personal following of Christ and from the witness borne to him "coram hominibus", there flows, more convincing and more sublime, that virtue which he himself proposed as the "mandatum novum", that is, the specific commandment of his followers (Jn 13, 35; 15, 12): charity. You are the *workers of charity* and, to the the extent that you dedicate yourselves with increased energy to exercise it as Christ exercised it, you become living examples of his Gospel, exact copies of a high and elevating model of life.

We have sketched here, beloved Sons and Daughters, the characteristic features that make up the figure of those who, with the formal acceptance of the evangelical counsels, have set out, not out of foolish presumption, but out of obedience to the Lord's interior voice, along the narrow way to Christian perfection.

We trust that our words will be accepted and meditated on by all the members of the Religious Orders and Institutes in the multifarious variety of the respective groups, and will stimulate them in edifying and generous dedication to Christ the Lord.

IX. NECROLOGY

Fr. Andrew Anelli

* Misano di Gera d'Adda, Bergamo, Italy, 30.7.1911; † Chumphon, Thailand, 10.1.1977; 65 years old, 40 prof., 32 priest.

From the aspirantate of Ivrea he set out for the Land of the Free, where he completed his studies, and then he gave himself entirely to the work of the Lord in parishes. Such was his dedication to work that he gained the esteem and affection of all through his gentleness, simplicity and service. On the cover of one of his notebooks we found written: "Mary, make me a saint: I desire nothing else".

Fr. Jean Baptiste Antoine

* Bonnerue, Belgium, 15.1.1908; † Celles-les-Tournai, Belgium, 18.10.1976; 68 years old, 48 prof., 39 priest, 15 Rector.

Stamped by the austerity of the land that gave him birth and the environment of his early years of schooling, this man of God offered his whole life to the work of evangelization in Africa. Initially he was taken up with the teaching of young people, but his later years were entirely spent in the formation of the future priests in the minor seminary at Sakania. Even when he was already a sick man, he continued teaching catechism to young people in small jungle villages. His selfless life brought honor not only to the Salesian Congregation, but also to the young Church in Africa.

Fr. Philadelphius Arce

* Ubierna, Burgos, Spain, 24.5.1910; † Madrid, Spain, 22.11.1976; 66 years old, 47 prof., 37 priest, 15 Rector.

He was indeed a Salesian in the front lines: a struggler and at the same time an optimist. He was a born organizer of youth activities, especially the Sodalities; a teacher and catechist for many years at the Provincial House in Madrid. He also showed a particular talent for the theater. As Rector, he knew how to get newly-opened houses established on a solid footing. Through his jovial character and winning ways he was able to draw the support of others. In the final years of his life he

was industrious parish priest and an expert director of souls. “He was a true friend”, one of his parish catechists recalled, “he had the vivacity of a youngster, the adventurous spirit of an adolescent, the work capacity of an adult, the joyfulness of a son of Don Bosco and the audacity of today’s men”.

Fr. Maurice Billiet

* Nieuwpoort, West Vlaanderen, Belgium, 14.1.1912; † Halle, Brabant, Belgium, 23.10.1976; 64 years old, 45 prof., 36 priest.

The greater part of his Salesian life was dedicated to parish work. Both as an assistant and as parish priest, he became the pastor as outlined by Jesus in the Gospels: concerned for every one of his sheep, ready to give even his life for them. In the simplicity of his heart he was a great Salesian.

Fr. Harold Bleach

* London, Great Britain, 17.3.1902; † Bedford, Great Britain, 8.2.1976; 74 years old, 55 prof., 48 priest, 3 Rector.

He was baptized in the first Salesian Church in England, by the first Salesian Provincial Fr. Charles Macey. After joining the Salesians, he worked in South Africa, Malta and England. For more than twenty years he was active among the Salesian Cooperators, and at the same time he carried out the duties of Chaplain in the Royal Air Force. He nourished a great love for Don Bosco and the Congregation. Death came to claim him after a surgical intervention.

Fr. Mario Brusca

* Alvito, Frosinone, Italy, 18.11.1907; † Macerata, Italy, 6.1.1977; 69 years old, 49 prof., 41 priest.

He entered a Salesian house at the age of 10, and remained with Don Bosco for the rest of his life. An intense interest and profound knowledge of music (to which he dedicated a great part of his life and talent), and a deep-rooted and strong attachment to genuine Salesian traditions were the outstanding qualities of his life. In the latter years of his life he was tried by prolonged spiritual sufferings, which made him similar to the suffering Christ and gave him the impression of being misunderstood and forgotten by those close to him.

Fr. John Busato

* Arsiero, Vicenza, Italy, 27.2.1912; † Verona, Italy, 29.9.1976; 64 years old, 43 prof., 34 priest, 7 Rector.

Search for and abandonment to the will of God was the characteristic of this Salesian during the various stages of his life. He was a Law Professor, Rector of various houses, animator of the Sodalities, in charge of the Cooperators and Past Pupils, and Rector of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. Youth care was the scope of his very existence, the source of his joys and at times sorrows. He was intensely interested in lay vocations and social apostolate. He was an avid reader: the most acceptable present for him was that of a book. There was within him a continuous struggle between the need to work and the need for contemplation.

Fr. Joseph Dufour

* Liège, Belgium, 12.10.1891; † St. Vaast, Belgium, 9.12.1976; 85 years old, 66 prof., 57 priest, 3 Rector.

His whole life was taken up in a variety of tasks — teaching, the direction of many activities, parish work, and the organization of propaganda for and care of Cooperators and benefactors. As any good Salesian, he had a deep love for youth. The last stage of his life was, perhaps, that which had most merit in the eyes of God, as he suffered much from the inactivity that illness brought upon him. He was avid to hear news of the confreres of the Province and of the entire Congregation. Comforted by the prayers of his community, he serenely accepted God's will and final call.

Fr. John Dzik

* Zdzarzec, Kraków, Poland, 6.2.1888; † Callao, Peru, 10.12.1976; 88 years old, 65 prof., 56 priest.

His arrival at the aspirantate of Ivrea (northern Italy) in order to realize his vocation was something of an adventure. Peru was to become, however, the area of his most fruitful apostolate. The early years of his priesthood were taken up with teaching, but the greater part of his life was given over to the care of souls in a number of parishes. He administered God's grace in the traditional Salesian style. A sincere love for the Congregation and an intense life of prayer were the characteristics of his long life spent for the good of souls.

Fr. Peter Ferrero

* Conzano, Alessandria, Italy, 8.6.1910; † Turin, Italy, 25.11.1976; 66 years old, 50 prof., 40 priest, 9 Rector, 6 Master of Novices.

Born of a deeply Christian family that gave the Salesian Family three of its children (2 Salesians and one Daughter of May Help of Christians), he set as his ideal "to work with Don Bosco", and dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the tasks and offices entrusted to him by obedience. He was Director of the Festive Oratory, teacher, Prefect of Studies, Rector of the Aspirants, Novice Master, in charge of Adult Vocations, Chaplain of the Salesians Sisters, and confessor of young people. Though seemingly of harsh and rugged character he so controlled himself as to be able to show extreme kindness. He had a distaste for sentimentalism whether in his personal life or that of the people entrusted to his care. In his educational work he stressed the basics. He was outstanding for his punctuality, exactness, fulfilment of duty at any cost, and obedience to the Rule.

Fr. Otto Fonseca

* Catalão, Goiás, Brazil, 9.1.1920; † Goiania, Goiás, Brazil, 28.12.1976; 56 years old, 35 prof., 25 priest, 3 Rector.

He was distinguished by his piety, affability and love of the young. His life-long motto was "to be all things to all men". He worked untiringly in his priestly ministry, caring especially for the infirm and his confreres. He sought to keep himself up-to-date in the affairs of the church, particularly by reading and studying pontifical documents. To be of greater service to the Congregation he pursued studies continuously. (Only a few days prior to his death he graduated in English at the University of Goiás). His community, Past Pupils, students and numerous friends were preparing to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of his priesthood, when a sudden heart attack ushered him into the presence of the Eternal High Priest.

Fr. Florentius Giacomelli

* Mathi, Torino, Italy, 16.10.1908; † Córdoba, Argentina, 2.12.1976; 68 years old, 48 prof., 40 priest, 3 Rector.

He spent a great part of his Salesian life in Don Bosco College at San Juan, where he carried out his duties of teacher and Catechist with a sense of responsibility and drive. The main thrust of his priestly ministry was, however, that of confessor to the confreres, where he manifested the great gift of Counsel. He was of a cheerful disposition, and during

the last four years of his life he was an example of serene and courageous acceptance of suffering.

Fr. Jesús González Hernández

* Aldeadávila de la Ribera, Salamanca, Spain, 8.10.1916; † San Juan de Manapiare, Amazonas, Venezuela, 1.1.1977; 60 years old, 44 prof., 34 priest, 3 Rector.

He was the figure of a Castilian Conquistador — rugged, strong-willed, resolute. His pioneer ability served him in good stead when he was sent to set up missions, which he governed with a firm hand and served with utter dedication. His natural gifts were enriched with his spiritual and religious ones: saintliness, apostolic zeal and faithfulness to the Congregation and his Superiors.

Fr. Edward Guit Gutiérrez

* Plasencia, Cáceres, Spain, 31.12.1886; † Shillong, India, 8.10.1976; 89 years old, 70 prof., 63 priest, 18 Rector, 4 Master of Novices.

After his ordination in 1913 he worked in various houses in Spain until 1929, when his missionary dream turned into reality. His was an exceptional personality: a great son of Don Bosco, the patriarch of the Salesians in India, the pride and joy of the Gauhati Province. His life was modelled on Gospel simplicity and the avoidance of any pretense in piety and of any popularity-seeking. Whoever came to him found him readily available for consultation on moral, scriptural, liturgical and spiritual-life problems. He was indeed a veritable encyclopedia at the disposal of everyone: his answers were remarkably clear and incisive. Whether as a Catechist or Rector or Professors of Theology, he sought God's will in all things. Docile and open-minded, he accepted without difficulty, notwithstanding his 80 years of age, the changes brought about by Vatican II. He kept his outlook young and his spirit ready to move in harmony with the new times and ideas. He carried out his work as teacher, preacher and writer right up to the end. Throughout his final illness he suffered much, but his was indeed the death of the just. Now he lives on in the memory of numerous generations of Salesians who passed through his hand during the 47-years long period of his wonderful apostolic work.

Fr. Richard Hauffen

* Sackisch, Germany, 18.1.1899; † Lohfelden, Germany, 23.10.1976; 77 years old, 53 prof., 46 priest, 19 Rector.

After his priestly ordination in Turin, he exercised his apostolate as Chaplain in Munich, Catechist at Benédiktbeuern, and Rector in Berlin,

Kassel and Sannerz. Since 1949 he was parish priest at Lohfelden, in a region with characteristics of a genuine 'diaspora'. He dedicated his cares especially to the East German refugees. He was esteemed by the faithful as an untiring priest and good friend. He was constantly happy and an enthusiastic son of Don Bosco.

Fr. Francis Jagodic

* Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, 9.9.1909; † Trstenik, Yugoslavia, 2.6.1976; 66 years old, 42 prof., 33 priest.

As a young priest and promising educator, not long after his priestly ordination he was seized by an attack of asthma, so violent that he was sick for the rest of his life. In his sickness he accepted his inactivity with serenity and a missionary spirit, offering to God his sufferings for the Congregation.

Fr. Joseph Kirschner

* Barzdorf am Roll, Czechoslovakia, 17.7.1903; † Neuberg, Donau, Germany, 4.1.1976; 73 years old, 50 prof., 44 priest.

At the age of 19 he entered the Salesian house of Fulpmes, Austria, to prepare himself for the priesthood. After his religious profession in 1926 he left his country, his parents and five brothers to go to Peru as a missionary. He was ordained priest in Lima in 1933. As Catechist, teacher and confessor he worked in Peru and Bolivia. After 42 years of missionary work he returned to his native land to recover his health, but a long sickness forced him to be hospitalized. From his hospital bed he went to the reward which his fidelity to Don Bosco merited him.

Fr. Matthew Knevels

* Neeroeteren, Limbug, Belgium, 12.9.1908; † Kortrijk, West Vlaanderen, Belgium, 13.1.1977; 68 years old, 49 prof., 41 priest.

A man of a great heart, an artist of the word and music, a good Salesian and a good priest, simple and spontaneous, he was happy with the young, and loved his confreres with genuine love. He was a confessor much appreciated not only by his pupils. He had to overcome very harsh experiences, but he was able to remain approachable as a child to his old age. He died in great simplicity, just as he had lived.

Fr. Anthony Logar

* Sujica, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, 12.10.188; † Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, 2.1.1977; 88 years old, 68 prof., 59 priest, 3 Rector.

He was called "the Slovenian Don Rua" for his serenity, seriousness and profound spiritual life. In a car accident in 1933 he ruined one leg, which caused him pain all his life. He bore his cross without complaining. He was always faithful to his duties as Provincial Economist, organizer of the Salesian printing press, writer, translator of books on Salesian spirituality, and always punctual at his confessional — and this for 40 years.

Fr. James O'Donnell

* Effia, Limerick, Ireland, 13.9.1904; † Limerick, Ireland, 5.1.1977; 72 years old, 53 prof., 43 priest, 20 Rector.

An expert administrator, prudent in managing business, he also served as Rector for many years in England and Ireland. He gained the respect and love of all. In his last years he was confessor in the Studentate of Maynooth, where he was greatly appreciated by the young confreres because of the way, wholly Salesian, in which he adapted himself to their mode of life and took to heart their interests. With edifying courage and cheerfulness he bore the sickness that took him to his Divine Master.

Fr. Marius Peronino

* Carmagnola, Turin, Italy, 10.7.1883; † Turin, Italy, 10.2.1977; 93 years old, 74 prof., 65 priest.

He was diligent and generous in carrying out the various duties assigned to him by obedience. During the long period of inactivity to which he was reduced by his poor health, he was an example of resignation to his confreres. Great part of his day was dedicated to prayer. His characteristic cheerfulness accompanied him to his grave.

Coad. Bro. Michael Perotti

* Caraglio, Cuneo, Italy, 19.9.1888; † Del Valle, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30.11.1976; 88 years old, 58 prof.

Agronomy was his specialty: to it he gave his energy, his studies, his work, practically all his life in the Agricultural School of Del Valle, Argentina, from its foundation. Indefatigable worker, a man of deep and simple faith, after work and the assistance of the boys, he spent many hours before the Blessed Sacrament. Late at night or early in the morning

you would find him kneeling before the locked door of the chapel. If asked why he was doing that, he would answer that he had become a Salesian “to pray more and to be closer to the Lord”. At the end of a long life God called him to the reward reserved to the good and faithful servant.

Fr. Maximilian Schmeing

* Wanne-Eikel, Westfalia, Germany, 13.1.1900; † Trier, Germany, 3.12.1976; 76 years old, 47 prof., 39 priest, 23 Rector

After working with enthusiasm in the Oratory of Essen, he was called to direct the community of Marienhausen. Here he manifested his prudence and courageous firmness in facing difficult situations in which the community found itself, when it was persecuted and even driven out by the Gestapo. In the years that followed, in humble obedience he took upon himself the important duties assigned to him: he was again Rector for 20 years, and Master of Novices from 1959 to 1964. We could say that he was the personification of Salesian optimism which never left him even during his serious illness.

Coad. Bro. Matthias Sluga

* Monte Capodistria (presently Yugoslavia), 15.12.1913; † Opicina, Trieste, Italy, 21.2.1976; 62 years old, 25 prof.

He entered the Congregation at 30 years of age, and for 30 years he worked as a jack-of-all-trades in the Venetian Province of St. Mark; the rest of his life was spent in the Slovene Province. He had acquired a solid and genuine theological and Salesian culture. He loved Don Bosco with his whole heart, and was faithful to him even in the least details, both in his piety and his daily work. He came on strong as a defender of the Church and the Religious Life, when he happened to hear disrespectful remarks or notice lax attitudes in some confreres.

Fr. Miguel Solinas

* Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 27.11.1911; † Rome, Italy, 4.2.1977; 65 years old, 49 prof., 41 priest, 22 Rector.

His Salesian vocation matured in Santulussurgiu, the hometown of his parents — the first vocation from the place. Intellectually gifted, he gave himself to the study of music, philosophy and theology, in which he received a licentiate from the Gregorian University. He had a great knowledge of the hearts of men. Rich in common sense and humor, a born optimist,

he was trustful and serene. Very sound in his faith and Salesianity, he made himself loved — a quality which helped him in his long years as Rector and molders of men in studentates, as Provincial Secretary, and finally — in the Generalate — as secretary of the Councillor for Formation. His last mission was suffering, when cancer of the stomach brought him low at the height of his productivity. He was aware of his condition, which he accepted with serenity and trust in God. He asked for the Anointing of the Sick and before receiving it he made a moving profession of faith and an act of thanksgiving to God, to the Church, to the Congregation, to Don Bosco and to the Community.

Fr. Adalbert Straisel

* Borislawitz, Silesia, 13.12.1888; † Schwandorf, Oberpfalz, Germany, 20.1.1977; 88 years old, 67 prof., 60 priest.

He worked in several houses in Austria and Germany as professor of philosophy, parish priest and spiritual director. After the last war he was organ teacher at Ensdorf, and up to a short time before his death he played the organ for Mass as a real master. Despite his advanced age he showed great understanding and interest in the revised liturgy. With his noble and cheerful manners, with his good religious spirit he was a model to the confreres and to youth. He was well prepared for death, and surely God has given him a place at Don Bosco's side.

Fr. Joseph Tkalec

* Lendava, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, 9.2.1897; † Zelimlje, Yugoslavia, 11.10.1976; 79 years old, 50 prof., 51 priest, 18 Rector.

He was a true educator according to the spirit of Don Bosco, a spiritual guide to the young and to the confreres, an organizer of the Salesian foundations in Slovenia and Croatia, an animator of Cooperators, the builder of two Salesian churches in Zagreb. In his last years of life, he accepted with serenity the amputation of one leg. He was a man of great, noble, serene and firm spirit. He was sensitive to the needs of the confreres and of the young. He trained in the Salesian apostolic life whole generations and followed them up with fatherly concern.

Fr. Harold von Schweinitz

* Berlin, Germany, 27.11.1910; † there, 25.1.1977; 66 years old, 42 prof., 34 priest.

After his priestly ordination he worked in Munich, where he was also Director of the Oratory. Most of his work was in the field of adminis-

tration. Notwithstanding the many difficulties he had to face in the performance of his duties, he never lost his optimism and cheerfulness; rather, he was the first to bring comfort to the confreres and boys. His priestly spirit caused him to live intensely the virtue of hope, in the manner of St. Francis de Sales and of Don Bosco.

1st Elenco for 1977

- 1 Sac. ANELLI Andrea † a Chumphon (Thailandia) 1977 a 65 a.
- 2 Sac. ANTOINE Giovanni Battista † a Celles-lez-Tournai (Belgio) 1976 a 68 a.
- 3 Sac. ARCE Filadelfo † a Madrid (Spagna) 1976 a 66 a.
- 4 Sac. BILLIET Maurizio † a Halle, Brabant (Belgio) 1976 a 64 a.
- 5 Sac. BLEACH Aroldo † Bedford (G. Bretagna) 1977 a 74 a.
- 6 Sac. BRUSCA Mario † Macerata (Italia) 1977 a 69 a.
- 7 Sac. BUSATO Giovanni † Verona (Italia) 1976 a 64 a.
- 8 Sac. DUFOUR Giuseppe † a St. Vaast (Belgio) 1976 a 85 a.
- 9 Sac. DZIK Giovanni † Callao (Perù) 1976 a 88 a.
- 10 Sac. FERRERO Pietro † Torino (Italia) 1976 a 66 a.
- 11 Sac. FONSECA Ottone † Goiania, Goiás (Brasile) 1976 a 56 a.
- 12 Sac. GIACOMELLI Fiorenzo † a Córdoba (Argentina) 1976 a 68 a.
- 13 Sac. GONZALES Hernández Gesù † San Juan de Manapiare (Venezuela) 1977 a 60 a.
- 14 Sac. GUTIERREZ Edoardo † Shillong (India) 1976 a 89 a.
- 15 Sac. HAUFFEN Riccardo † Lohlelden (Germania) 1976 a 77 a.
- 16 Sac. JAGODIC Francesco † Trstenik (Jugoslavia) 1976 a 66 a.
- 17 Sac. KIRSCHNER Giuseppe † Neuburg, Donau (Germania) 1976 a 73 a.
- 18 Sac. KNEVELS Matteo † Kortrijk, West-Vlaanderen (Belgio) 1977 a 68 a.
- 19 Sac. LOGAR Antonio † Ljubljana 1977 a 88 a.
- 20 Sac. O'DONNELL Giacomo † Limerick (Irlanda) 1977 a 72 a.
- 21 Sac. PERONINO Mario † Torino (Italia) 1977 a 93 a.
- 22 Coad. PEROTTI Michele † a Del Valle, Buenos Aires (Argentina) 1976 a 88 a.
- 23 Sac. SCHMEING Massimiliano † a Trier (Germania) 1976 a 76 a.
- 24 Coad. SLUGA Mattia † Opicina (Trieste-Italia) 1976 a 62 a.
- 25 Sac. SOLINAS Michele † Roma (Italia) 1977 a 65 a.
- 26 Sac. STRAISSEL Adalberto † Schwandorf, Oberpfalz (Germania) 1977 a 88 a.
- 27 Sac. TKALEC Giuseppe † Zelimlje (Jugoslavia) 1976 a 79 a.
- 28 Sac. SCHWEINITZ Aroldo von † Berlin (Germania) 1977 a 66 a.

