



# acts

of the general council

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year XCIII

january-april 2012

**N. 412**

official organ  
of animation  
and communication  
for the  
salesian congregation

Direzione Generale  
Opere don Bosco  
Roma



# acts

of the General Council  
of the Salesian Society  
of St John Bosco

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

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Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco  
Via della Pisana, 1111  
Casella Postale 18333  
00163 Roma

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Tipolitografia Istituto Salesiano Pio XI - Via Umbertide, 11 - 00181 Roma  
Tel. 06.78.27.819 - Fax 06.78.48.333 - E-mail: [tipolito@pcn.net](mailto:tipolito@pcn.net)  
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## «LET US MAKE THE YOUNG OUR LIFE'S MISSION BY COMING TO KNOW AND IMITATE DON BOSCO»

First year of preparation for the Bicentenary of his birth.

### *Strenna 2012*

PREMISE: Some significant events in the second half of 2011 – COMMENTARY ON THE STRENNA FOR 2012: 1. Knowledge of Don Bosco and a commitment on behalf of the young. – 2. Rediscovering the story of Don Bosco. – 3. Reasons for the study of the history of Don Bosco. – 4. Function of history in bringing things up to date. – 5. Over a hundred years of historical writing “at the service of the charism”. – 6. Towards an interpretative reading of Salesian history. – 7. What image of Don Bosco today. - 7.1. *Evolution of the works and those for whom they are intended.* - 7.2. *Abandoned youth.* - 7.3. *Response to the needs of the young.* - 7.4. *Flexibility in responding to needs.* - 7.5. *Poverty of life and tireless work.* – 8. Suggestions for putting the Strenna into practice. – 9. Conclusion. «*The boy of the dream*» - “*And our music continues*”.

25 December 2011

*Solemnity of the Birth of the Lord*

My Dear Confreres,

I am happy to be able to be in touch with you on this solemnity when we celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, the highest expression of the love of God, who «loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life» (*Jn 3,16*). It is God's great yes to man. Here then the beautiful and good news, which becomes not only the subject of our evangelisation but also the educative pastoral plan, because it invites us to make mankind our field of work and to carry out the Salesian mission as a task to make the world a more human place.

Even though you will find in the chronicle of the Rector Major the many and varied activities of these recent months, and you may perhaps have followed them on our *web* site, I am going to comment briefly on some of the more significant events.

In chronological order, in the first place I will say something about the *VI International Congress of Mary Help of Christians*. At the sanctuary of Jasna Góra at Częstochowa, in Poland, in a joyful and very fraternal atmosphere, between 3 and 6 August, 1,200 members of the Salesian Family from over 50 countries gathered together to celebrate this significant event. Promoted by the Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA) and jointly organised with the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Poland, for the first time the Congress was an event for the whole Salesian Family, for which devotion to Mary Help of Christians is one of the constitutive features of its charism. In fact, eleven groups of the Salesian Family were officially represented, in addition to various participants belonging to other groups. The theme of the Congress, entrustment to Mary, well expressed in the motto "*Totus Tuus*", was developed on the various days with well-prepared celebrations, talks, life experiences and testimonies of holiness. In particular, accounts of life experiences of entrustment to Mary as lived by families, by young people freed from delinquency, by youth groups engaged in the Missions and coming from different parts of the world was an encouragement to want to be involved today in the families. The culmination was the act of entrustment of the Salesian Family to Mary Help of Christians, made at the beginning of the three year period of preparation for the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco. Inspired by the witness of faith and Marian piety of the Polish people for the Mother of God, there was the renewal of the commitment to be "all for Mary" so as to live with ardour and apostolic passion the educative and evangelising mission, in the style of Don Bosco. In my concluding address, pointing out how the Association of Mary Help of Christians is something alive and spread throughout the world, an Association "younger and more Salesian", a popular expression of the Salesian charism, I set some tasks, among which that of giving particular attention to the family, as primarily responsible for education and the first place for evangelisation. «Youth ministry cannot be continued if it is not linked to family ministry. The presence of families and

young couples who, having Mary as a guide, share a plan of life, containing formation, dialogue and prayer, is really a providential gift of Mary Help of Christians who takes care of the new generations». Everyone returned home agreeing to meet again at the next Congress which will be held in Turin and Colle Don Bosco in 2015, on the occasion of the second centenary of the birth of God's great gift to the young – Don Bosco.

In the second place I want to share with you my reflections on *World Youth Day*, which was held in Madrid between 16 and 21 August. If there is one expression that can really describe what went on in those days, I would say that it was *a festival of faith*, not just a mere 'happening' or a rock concert. Arriving from all the continents, indeed from all corners of the earth, of very different races, languages, cultures and backgrounds, the one feature that united those two million young people was that of being "a new generation". A generation made up of young people who were normal, cheerful, peaceful, generous, dreamers, enthusiasts, bearers of hope for the future, prepared, called to be not simple consumers of products, sensations or experiences, nor spectators of the history of the world, but rather protagonists in the current process of the transformation of humanity, followers of Jesus, proud to proclaim their faith and their belonging to the Church. The WYD was seen to be a real manifestation of the faith, and of the Church, and a significant expression of the 'new evangelisation', precisely because World Youth Day is no longer just an event, even a spectacular one, but a faith journey, with the incredible power to bring people together. It represents the ever-more valuable discovery of the value of synergy, not only to overcome the loneliness with which the young can find themselves, in living and bearing witness to the faith, but above all to launch the disciples of the Lord Jesus towards shared objectives so as to verify the identity given by Jesus to his disciples: "to be the salt of the earth, the light to the world, a city built on a hill-top". This will be possible to the extent that they make the beatitudes their charter and become poor in spirit, thirsty for justice, pure of

heart, lovers of peace. Obviously, everyone whether as individuals or in groups or movements has their own sensitivities, their own view of the world, a way of understanding and living the faith, their own spirituality and therefore their way of understanding and carrying out the 'new evangelisation' today. Without denying the importance and the need for the kerygmatic way of pre-catechesis, I am convinced that without education there is no worthwhile evangelisation that is capable of giving reason for one's hope; that nowadays you cannot help the young to come to maturity without the inculturation of the gospel; that religious language needs to correspond to today's youth culture to prevent the message being incomprehensible or irrelevant and therefore sterile. I conclude by affirming the great value of the WYDs, which reawaken in the young feelings of enthusiasm, being prophets, courage and joy which any society needs that harbours the dream of being able to create an awareness of the meaning of life and give quality to life. Likewise I reaffirm the pastoral insights that World Youth Day such as that in Madrid offers: it is not possible to evangelise the modern world except by means of people who have had a profound spiritual experience that has transformed their lives, who have experienced the grace of communion and so become one heart and one soul, nourished by the Word and by the Eucharist, and sustained by prayer, so as to become the model for a cultural alternative.

I also recall that on 15 October I took part, as a member of the Commission, in the meeting "*New evangelisers for the new evangelisation*", organised by the new Pontifical Council to which this important topic has been entrusted. In its attempts to become involved in a pressing appeal to the whole Church, the Union of Superiors General has begun a study of those perspectives typical of Consecrated Life and has elected the 10 representatives for the XIII General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held between 7 and 28 October 2012 to study the subject "The New Evangelisation for the transmission of the Christian faith". Naturally, there can be no 'new evangelisation' without 'new

evangelisers' who have learned to be disciples who, living with Jesus and in close intimacy with Him, make their own His passion for humanity and, as impassioned apostles give themselves to the building of the Kingdom until their Lord returns. If there can be no true evangelisation that is not accompanied by a commitment to human development and an interest in culture, that has to be said even more so with regard to the 'new evangelisation'. The difference between evangelisation in its classic expression, and this 'new' kind is to be found perhaps in the fact that the proclamation of God has to be more explicit, more unselfish, radically gratuitous. In the end, the one humanity has to listen to is the Son of God, accepting his Gospel, not us and our institutions or teaching. Therefore what matters, in the final analysis, is that man "has life and has it to the full", and here it is a question of something that only God can give and ensure. Hence, therefore, the need to give God and not only speak about Him. For this reason the 'new evangelisation' requires peoples' conversion (evangelisers and evangelised) and that of pastoral structures, to prevent them obscuring the face of God, but rather enable them to contemplate the strength of the living God.

Religious life, understood in its essentials, as a group of men and women who feel themselves called, drawn, seduced by the living God to follow Jesus Christ in a community of disciples, who are sent into the world to serve humanity and to act in His name, had its origin in the Gospel, and this simple fact has made it always evangelical and evangelising. Without having to "do" anything else, simply by the fact of "being" this: life consecrated to God and to one's neighbour.

For this reason, Religious Life is called to undertake a fundamental role in the 'new evangelisation', above all because this has as its basic task the proclamation, the making visible and credible what is said in the 'mini-gospel' that is the text of *Jn* 3,16s quoted above: «God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to

condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved». The 'new evangelisation' ought above all to be good news for mankind, consisting in the assumption of all that is really human, capable of raising questions which re-awaken the search for God, marked by the friendliness of someone who welcomes the other without prejudice and seeking to understand him, is ready to be open to real dialogue without that becoming the renunciation of what is non-negotiable, fully engaged in the causes to which men and women nowadays are more sensitive (the conservation of nature, concern for justice, freedom, personal dignity and human rights, shared sustainable development...), with the ability not only to read history and to interpret the signs of the times, but also to create new signs of the times and put energy into society.

It is necessary to know how to proclaim Christ in very different situations which often co-exist. People who have never heard God spoken about, and who feel no need for him because they are accustomed to living without his presence. People who have given up religion and have become practical atheists, agnostics, perfectly at ease in the present world with no other aspirations than unlimited development, lacking any sense of there being another. People who are living according to popular religious ideas, the result of a culture that makes them believe in God without this faith always being translated into a life that is coherent. People, finally, who have an adult faith, who have discovered in God the Truth, and with the gift of faith in Christ, have found in the Church their family home, called to be "light to the nations", "sacrament of communion among peoples", "sacrament of salvation".

So, to do all this, nowadays Religious Life is fully prepared. In fact, its first great task has been and continues to be that of bearing witness to God, to His Absolute nature, seen as *Verum, Bonum et Pulchrum*. And the first contribution to be offered to the world of today is precisely that of giving it God. The second task of Religious Life is to be "the expert in communion", that area in which men and women, of different ages, cultures, formation,

sensitivities, mix together in community in the way of the first Christian community, and having everything in common, forming “one heart and one soul”. And this new kind of relationship produces those “creative minorities” which incarnate a cultural model, an alternative to the predominant one. The third great task of Religious Life lies in its capacity to go to the social, cultural and religious frontiers and to take root there where are to be found the men and women who are the poorest, suffering from any kind of poverty (material, affective, moral, spiritual), those marginalised or deprived of their dignity and of their rights, in order to work together in the building of the ‘civilisation of love’.

Throughout the history of the Church this is what the various Orders, Congregations and Institutes have done, changing their own mission to specific ends according to the charism, so as to correspond to the plan of God and to the needs of mankind.

In this period, there have been other events which I consider important, even though I shall not stop to comment on them. I am referring to the *Team Visits*, of which the only ones still to be made are those to the Africa Region, to Italy-MOR and the UPS, to the 142<sup>nd</sup> *Missionary Expedition*, to the *Year of Faith*, to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Vatican Council II*.

All that I have written is connected with the *Strenna for 2012*, since the invitation to return to Don Bosco is best understood in relation to our having to return to Christ. The commentary on the *Strenna* I am offering you is a little special with a particular cultural significance, which asks us to give more attention to a knowledge of our history, and also indicates the change of mentality we have to make in interpreting history. Especially important is the perspective of relevance to be assumed in reading history. The *Strenna* is intended to encourage personal study, a commitment to finding time for moments of public historical reflection. But this study has then to be effectively brought alive. From another point of view, the events of this year – the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Congregation, the centenary of the death of Don Rua, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Unification

of Italy – have increased our historical way of thinking which needs in any case to be re-acquired. Even though they may seem to you to be too technical, points 5 and 6 in my commentary on Salesian historical writing, in other words on the interpretation of our history, are absolutely necessary. It is for all of us an occasion to come into contact with the great work undertaken this year. Finally, point number 7 explains the need to have an up-to-date idea of Don Bosco. It is my hope that you will all be able to read this carefully and with profit.

Here then is my **Commentary on the Strenna for 2012.**

\* \* \*

*«I am the good shepherd.  
The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep»  
(Jn 10,11)*

My Dear Confreres,  
Daughters of Mary Help of Christians,  
All the Members of the Salesian Family,  
Young people,

Just a short time ago we began the period of three years of preparation for the Bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco. This first year offers us the opportunity to draw closer to him in order to know him from close up and always better. If we do not know Don Bosco and we do not study him, we cannot understand his spiritual journey and his pastoral decisions; we cannot love him, imitate him, and invoke him; in particular, it will be difficult for us to inculturate his charism these days in the various contexts and in the different situations in which we find ourselves. Only by strengthening our charismatic identity will we be able to offer to

the Church and to society a meaningful and fruitful youth service. Our identity is directly linked to the image of Don Bosco; in him the identity becomes credible and visible. For this reason the first step that we are invited to take in the three years of preparation is precisely coming to know the history of Don Bosco.

## **1. Knowledge of Don Bosco and a commitment on behalf of the young**

We are being invited to study Don Bosco and, through the events of his life, to come to know him as educator and pastor, founder, guide and legislator. It is a matter of a knowledge which leads to love, to imitation and to invocation.

For us members of the Salesian Family, he ought to be what Saint Francis of Assisi was and continues to be for the Franciscans, or Saint Ignatius of Loyola for the Jesuits, that is to say, the founder, the spiritual teacher, the model for education and evangelisation, especially the one who began a world-wide Movement, capable of bringing to the attention of the Church and of society, with a powerful outcry, the needs of the young, their circumstances, their future. But how can we do this without turning to history, which is not the custodian of a past already buried in time, but rather of a living memory that is within us and challenges us about the present?

An approach to Don Bosco, using the methods proper to historical research, leads us to understand and appreciate better his greatness as a human being and as a Christian, his practical talents, his skills as an educator, his spirituality, his work, fully understood only if deeply rooted in the history of the society in which he lived. At the same time even with a fuller knowledge of his life story, we are always aware of God's providential intervention in his life. In this historical study there is no *a priori* rejection of the valid and respected image that generations of the Salesians, Salesian Sisters, Salesian Cooperators and members of the

Salesian Family have had of the Don Bosco they knew and loved, but there is and must be a presentation and re-working of an image of Don Bosco for today, one that can speak to today's world, making use of a new language.

The image of Don Bosco and his activity should be seriously re-constructed, beginning from our cultural horizons: the complexity of life today, globalisation, post-modern culture, and the difficulties of the apostolate, the decline in vocations, the "questioning" of consecrated life. Radical, or epochal changes, as my predecessor, Fr Egidio Viganò called them, force us to re-think and revise the image in another light, in view of a fidelity that is not mere repetition of formulas or formal allegiance to tradition. The historical significance of Don Bosco also has to be re-discovered, beyond his "works" and certain relatively original pedagogical elements, but especially in his practical and affective perception of the universal, theological and social *problem of 'neglected' youth*, and his great ability to communicate this to large crowds of co-workers, benefactors and admirers.

Being faithful to Don Bosco means knowing him through his life-story and in the history of his times, making his inspirations our own, letting his motivations and choices become ours. Being faithful to Don Bosco and to his mission means cultivating within ourselves a love for the young, especially the poorest, which is constant and strong. This kind of love will lead us to respond to their deepest and most urgent needs. Like Don Bosco, we feel moved by the difficulties they face: poverty, child labour, sexual exploitation, lack of education and vocational training, trying to find their place in the work place, their lack of self-confidence, their fear about the future, the absence of any meaning to life.

With deep affection and self-less love, we try to be present among them, discretely yet confidently, offering sound suggestions for them to follow on their way as they make their choices in life, and experience happiness in the present and in the future. In everything, we become their companions on the journey and

competent guides. In particular, we try to understand their new way of living their lives; many of them are “digital natives” who through the new technologies are seeking opportunities for social mobility, the possibility of intellectual development, the possibility of economic progress, instantaneous communication, the chance to take the lead. In this area too we want to share their lives and their interests; animated by the creative spirit of Don Bosco, we educators approach them as “digital immigrants”, helping them to overcome the generation gap with their parents and the world of adults.

We take care of them throughout their journey of growth and as they mature, giving them our time and our energy, and staying with them as they grow through childhood to become young adults.

We take care of them when difficult situations such as war, hunger, lack of future opportunities, lead them to abandon home and family, and they find themselves facing life alone.

We take care of them when, after completing their studies and qualifications, they are looking out anxiously for their first place of employment, and setting about fitting into society, sometimes without much hope or prospect of success.

We take care of them when they are building up their world of affections, their family, accompanying them, especially when they become engaged, and in the early years of their marriage, and when their children arrive (see GC26, 98.99.104).

We are particularly anxious to fill the deepest void of their hearts, helping them seek and give meaning to their lives, and above all offering a way for growth in knowledge and friendship with the Lord Jesus, in the experience of a living Church, in real commitment, and to experiencing their lives as vocation.

Here then is the spiritual and pastoral programme for the year 2012:

**Let us make the young our life's mission  
by coming to know and imitate Don Bosco**

Already the many groups in the Salesian Family are fully committed to this task, which will prove to be of great help to all of us as together we look at our dear Father Don Bosco. Therefore let us continue to move ahead together more and more as a Family.

## **2. Rediscovering the story of Don Bosco**

Over a century after his death, Don Bosco continues to be of interest to many people in many countries. Also outside Salesian circles, he is considered a person of significance. In spite of the fact that, of necessity, the exaggerations that were attached to him for many decades, and which captured the attention of the public, have been removed, Don Bosco still remains a person highly esteemed and popular. A long line of Popes and Cardinals, Bishops and priests, scholars, Catholics and non-Catholics, politicians of different persuasions, in Italy, in Europe and in the world recognised him and still recognise him as someone with a message – one which is modern, prophetic, historically conditioned, but open to many contemporary possibilities, potentially relevant in the most widely varied times and places.

The centenary of his death, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Salesian Congregation, and now the preparation for the Bicentenary of his birth, and other special occasions, have triggered a considerable number of publications and newspaper articles. As well as high quality academic studies and research projects, other more modest ones have appeared, which leave themselves open to reservations regarding their interpretations, because of unfounded critical premises in some, and insufficient historical analysis in others.

In fact Don Bosco's is a fully rounded personality which cannot be reduced to simple formulae or newspaper headlines; his is a complex personality shaped by circumstances at one and the same time ordinary and exceptional, by concrete, ideal and hypothetical projects, with an everyday style of life and activity, but at

the same time with a special rapport with the supernatural. Such a person can only be adequately understood by considering his many-sided and pluri-dimensional personality; otherwise, presenting one or other of these aspects, perhaps consciously or unconsciously, instead of a complete profile, one runs the risk of giving a false picture.

Sometimes one can remain perplexed faced with books in which apologetics and the idealistic descriptions of Don Bosco are given excessive space, in which the adulation of his memory prevails at the expense of his real personality, at times limited to certain stereotypes to which Don Bosco can never really be reduced. This applies particularly at the present time when the number of lives of saints written with a new critical approach are multiplying; a new kind of hagiography in fact has come to the fore, based itself on well-founded historical interpretations and on a renewed theological interpretation of the spiritual experience of the Saints. For this reason, it is my hope that a modern "hagiography" of Don Bosco will be prepared. While this has to be based on recent historical studies, it ought to give rise to love for him, the imitation of his life, the desire to follow him on his spiritual journey; and the same can be said for a new hagiography directed to the young.

### **3. Reasons for the study of the history of Don Bosco**

There are undoubtedly quite a number of reasons leading us to study Don Bosco. We need to know him as our Founder, since our fidelity to the institution to which we belong demands it. We need to know him as Legislator, in so far as we are bound to observe the Constitutions and the Regulations which he directly, or his successors, have given to us. We need to know him as Educator, so that we may live the Preventive System, the most precious heritage he has left us. We need to know him, in particular, as our Teacher of the spiritual life, since as his sons and disciples we draw on his spirituality; in fact he has given us a key to the

understanding of the gospel; for us, his life is the criterion for our following the Lord Jesus in a particular manner; in this regard I wrote a letter to the Salesian confreres in January 2004 "*Looking at Christ through the eyes of Don Bosco*" (AGC 384).

Nowadays we are growing more aware of the risk we are running if we do not strengthen the links that keep us united to Don Bosco. Historical knowledge, well-founded and affectionate, helps to keep these links alive; initial and ongoing formation ought to foster Salesian studies. More than a century has now passed since Don Bosco's death; all the generations who came in direct or indirect contact with him, and with those who knew him personally have passed on. As the chronological, geographical and cultural distance increases between us and him, so too, more and more does the affectionate climate, that familiarity even psychological, that made Don Bosco and his spirit, simply by seeing his picture, something spontaneous and familiar to us. What has been handed down to us can be lost; the vital link with Don Bosco can be broken. Should we no longer see things in terms of our common Father, of his spirit, of his praxis, of the criteria that inspired him, as the Salesian Family we shall no longer have citizens' rights in the Church and in Society, being deprived, as we would be, of our roots and of our identity.

In addition, keeping alive the memory of one's own history is the guarantee of having a sound culture; without roots there is no future. Therefore it is quite important to work on the historical memory and to make use of it, as a reminder of our common roots which urge us to re-think the problems of our own times with a more mature awareness of our past. That is the guarantee, while taking into account historical transformations and inevitable changes, that our Family will continue to be the bearer of the charism of the origins, and to make itself the vigilant and creative guardian of a fruitful tradition.

Obviously knowledge of the past should not become a form of conditioning. It is necessary to know how, in a critical manner, to

distinguish between the essential historical significance and gratuitous exaggerations and unfounded subjective interpretations; in this way, attributing charismatic historical truth to reconstructions which have little to do with “real history” will be avoided. A similar way of approaching history is sometimes used in order to avoid the serious problem of the reconstruction of the historical context. A healthy process of discernment is needed in the interpretation of the history of Don Bosco. The warning of Pope Leo XIII will always be valid for us: the historian should never say anything untrue nor be silent about the truth. If a saint has a weak point it has to be honestly recognised. Recognising the imperfections of the saints has the three-fold merit of respecting historical accuracy, of emphasising the absolute nature of God and of encouraging us poor vessels of clay, showing us that in the heroic follower of Christ, blood was not water.

The urgent need for a deeper and more systematic knowledge of Don Bosco has been emphasised in recent decades by the official documents and authoritative statements of my two predecessors. This is how I expressed it myself in a letter at the end of 2003 (AGC n. 383, p. 14-17):

*“But Don Bosco succeeded in staying young and hence in harmonizing with the future through being always among his boys. ...In the Valdocco experience there was clearly a maturing of the mission and hence a transition from the joy of “staying with Don Bosco” to “staying with Don Bosco for the young”; from “staying with Don Bosco for the young in a stable manner” to “staying with Don Bosco for the young in a stable manner with vows”. Remaining with Don Bosco does not exclude a priori a study of the times that modelled or conditioned him, but it requires us to live with his commitment, his options, his dedication, his spirit of enterprise and pushing ahead [...]. All this makes of Don Bosco a fascinating person, and in our case a father to love, a model to imitate, but also a saint to invoke. ...We are well aware that the more the time separating us from our Founder*

*increases, the more real is the risk of speaking of Don Bosco only on the basis of well known incidents and anecdotes without any real knowledge of our charism. Hence the need to know him through the medium of reading and study; to love him affectively and effectively as our father and teacher through the spiritual legacy he has left us; to imitate him and try to reproduce him in ourselves, making of the Rule of life our personal life plan. This is what is meant by returning to Don Bosco, to which I have invited the whole Congregation – myself included – from my first “good night”, by means of a process of study and love that tries to understand, the better to throw light on our life and present-day challenges. Together with the Gospel, Don Bosco is our criterion of discernment and our goal of identification”.*

What I have in mind is not very different from the reflection of Fr Francis Bodrato, the first Provincial in Argentina, who on 5 March 1877 wrote in a letter to his novices:

*«Who is Don Bosco? What can I say to you about him? I can tell you the truth as I know it and have heard it from others. Don Bosco is our beloved and most loving father. We who are his sons all say this. Don Bosco is a man of Providence for these times. This is what the learned people say. Don Bosco is a philanthropist. This is what the philosophers say. And I say, while agreeing naturally with what these people have told us, that Don Bosco is truly that friend that Holy Scripture describes as a great treasure. Well then, we have found this true friend, this great treasure. Mary Most Holy has given us the light by which to recognise him and the Lords allows us to have him. Woe, therefore, to any one who loses him. If you only knew my dear brothers how many people there are who envy us our lot [...] And if you come to believe with me that Don Bosco is that true friend of Holy Scripture, then you will see to it that you keep him for ever, and take care to imitate him in yourselves».* (F. BODRATO, *Letters*, edited by B. Casali, Rome LAS 1995, pp. 131-132).

Not for nothing does the introduction, as well as articles 21, 97, 196 of the current Constitutions of the Salesian Congregation present Don Bosco to us as “guide” and “model”, and the Constitutions themselves are described as his “living testament”. Similar expressions can also be found in the Rule of Life of the other groups of the Salesian Family. For all of us who see in Don Bosco our point of reference, he continues to be the founder, master of the spirit, the model for education, the one who began a Movement on a world-wide scale capable of very effectively turning the attention of the Church and of society to the needs of the young, to their situation, to their future. We cannot but ask ourselves whether nowadays our Family is still the force it was; whether we still have the courage and the imagination that Don Bosco had; whether at the dawn of the third millennium we are still capable of taking up his prophetic stance in the defence of the rights of man and those of God.

The urgent need for the knowledge and the study of Don Bosco by the Salesian Family, by the single groups, communities, associations and individuals having been pointed out, the path has still to be followed; the path indicated is not yet the path followed. It is up to each one to identify the steps to be taken, how and in what way opportunities are to be created so that this task may be carried out in the course of this year. We cannot arrive at the celebration of the Bicentenary without coming to know Don Bosco better.

#### **4. Function of history in bringing things up to date**

To achieve this aim, it is not sufficient that within each one of us there be an awareness of the greatness of Don Bosco. The indispensable condition is to know him well, over and above the very attractive anecdotes which surround our dear Father and also the edifying literature on which entire generations were brought up. It is not a question of going in search of cheap reme-

dies to face, as a Family, the current “crisis” in the Church and in society, but of coming to know him in depth so that he can be “made relevant” at the dawn of this third millennium, in the mild cultural climate in which we are living, in the various countries in which we are working. What is needed is a knowledge of Don Bosco which is to be arrived at in the continuously striking the right balance between our asking ourselves questions about the present, and our seeking answers which come from the past; only in this way will we be able once again today to inculturate the Salesian charism.

Attention has to be paid to the fact that at the moment of “changing historical times” a charismatic Movement can grow and develop only on the condition that the founding charism is “reinterpreted in a vital manner” and does not remain a “precious fossil”. The Founders experienced the Holy Spirit in a precise historical context; on this account, it is necessary to identify the contingent elements of their experience, in so far as the response to a determined historical situation has value for as long as that contingency lasts. In other words, the “questions” posed by today’s ecclesial community and those of the current socio-cultural situation cannot be considered as something “extraneous” to our historical research; this has to determine what is transitory, and what is permanent in the charism, what needs to be left aside, and what needs to be taken up, what is at some distance from our present circumstances context and what is close to them.

It is not possible to start putting this into practice without looking at history, which – as I have already said – is not the custodian of a past already buried in time, but rather a living memory that is within us, and which challenges us about the present. Any updating that is undertaken ignoring the progress of historical studies, would be of little real use. In the same way, research and writing undertaken in an amateurish-fashion without clear theories, appropriate methods and sound working instruments, and without a vital and up-to-date approach to historical writing, do not produce good results from neither the historical nor the

updating points of view. The writing of history implies a constant process of a critical revision of previous judgements made, a revision that is necessary since we have to recognise that the past cannot be set up as a sort of monument only to be looked at, precisely because it is linked to the persona one wants to come to know.

Nor should we undervalue the fact that the life-story of Don Bosco is not only “ours” but belongs to the Church and to the human family, and therefore should not be missing from the ecclesiastical and civil history of individual countries, even more so since Salesian history is a history which consists in dynamic interaction, in relationships of dependence and collaboration and sometimes of conflicts with the social, political, economic, ecclesial and religious, educational and cultural worlds. Now we cannot expect “the others” to take into account our “history”, our “pedagogy”, our “spirituality” if we do not offer them modern instruments of knowledge. Dialogue with others can only occur if we have the same linguistic code, the same conceptual methods, the same skills and professional approach; otherwise we shall be on the fringes of society, removed from the cultural debate, absent from those places in which solutions are found for current problems. Exclusion from the cultural debate taking place in every country would also be an indication of the historical insignificance of the Salesians, their social marginalisation, the absence of their contribution to education. For this reason I look forward to a renewed commitment in the preparation of qualified people for study and research in the field of Salesian history.

Salesian literature, Salesian publications, Salesian preaching, the circulars of those in positions of responsibility at various levels, communication within the Salesian Family all need to be on top of the situation. The traditional popular nature of Salesian literature, its widespread dissemination, ought not to mean superficiality in its contents, disinformation, the repetition of an untrustworthy past. Whoever has the gift or the opportunity to write, to form, to educate others needs to ensure that he is con-

stantly updated regarding the subject he talks or writes about. Popular media products need to be of a high quality and of the greatest possible reliability.

The study of Don Bosco is a necessary condition in order to be able to communicate his charism and to propose its relevance. Without knowledge there can be no love, imitation or invocation; and then only love urges us to that knowledge. It is a question therefore of a knowledge which comes from love and which leads to love: an affective knowledge.

## **5. Over a hundred years of historical writing “at the service of the charism”**

Salesian historical writing in over 150 years of life has made considerable progress, from the first modest biographies of Don Bosco in the seventies and eighties of the XIX, to the encomiastic biographies inspired by a interpretation of his life and of his work which was theological, anecdotal and concerned with wonder-working, which from the eighties well into the XX century were distributed widely. The solemn occasions of Don Bosco’s beatification and canonisation were naturally the occasions for a series of writings and works of a spiritual and edifying nature. Similarly, in the area of pedagogy one could mention the valuable series of writings and discussions on Don Bosco the educator, following the introduction of Don Bosco’s preventive method of education in academic programmes in Teacher Training Colleges in Italy.

In the period immediately after the war and in the 50s of the last century, the new generations of Salesians began to express a sense of unease with the hagiographical literature of the past. The need arose for an hagiography of the Founder which was not aimed merely at edification or being an *apologia*, but rather at the truth about him in all its many aspects: a hagiography, in other words, that would place him in his historical context, and as such would observe all the necessary critical requirements. In some way

this meant breaking out of a by-now consolidated circle, in order to encourage the taking of a fresh look at the history of Don Bosco, philologically informed and with the sources thoroughly examined, conducted according to up-to-date historical methods. It was necessary to go beyond the point of view of the first Salesians, which undoubtedly was that of the providentially-inspired, theological, wonder-worker, in which the concrete circumstances and the forces at work at the time tended to disappear.

Similar approaches to the study and further understanding of Don Bosco, which for some time had been promised, were given a strong impetus by the invitation of the Second Vatican Council to return to the genuine human and spiritual circumstances of the origins and of the Founder in view of the necessary renewal of consecrated life (Cf. *Perfectae Caritatis, Ecclesiae Sanctae*). This demanded, as an indispensable requirement, a knowledge of the historical facts. Without going back to the roots, updating in fact runs the risk of becoming arbitrary and uncertain speculation. And so in the new cultural climate of the seventies, making use of assumptions, trends, methods, modern research tools, as used in the most serious historical research projects, further study was undertaken into a knowledge of the patrimony and heritage of Don Bosco, full of events and guidelines. The historical significance of the message was identified, the inevitable personal, cultural and institutional limitations were described, which almost paradoxically indicated the reasons, then as they do now, for the vigorous growth in the present as in the future.

## **6. Towards an interpretative reading of Salesian history**

As a first requirement of renewal, the Second Vatican Council asked for a return to the sources. In this regard the Congregation published dozens of volumes of the "Published Works" and those unpublished of Don Bosco; the Centre of Don Bosco Studies at the UPS and the Salesian Institute Historical made themselves

responsible for them. Thanks to their work thousands of pages of Don Bosco's writings are available to us, in editions which are academically produced and revised, so as to make possible the necessary *philological analysis*. How, in fact, is it possible to understand the famous "letter from Rome" which Don Lemoyne drew up on behalf of Don Bosco, without fully knowing the difficult disciplinary situation in Valdocco at the time, and which in the same years produced the "circular on punishments"? Has a letter written in Don Bosco's own hand, laboured, full of corrections, additions and postscripts, the same value as a circular, perhaps even written by a collaborator of his, and simply signed by Don Bosco? What significance should be given to work-contracts signed by Don Bosco, if we compare them with earlier ones or contemporaneous ones drawn up by others in Turin?

To the philological analysis needs to be added the *historical-critical analysis*, which takes into account both the explicit contents of the sources, and also what a superficial reading of them does not reveal, but what they do imply. No text, and even less those of Don Bosco, a well-known person "incarnated" in history, can be explained without reference to the time in which it was written, within a certain context, in reference to certain particular people, for a certain purpose. As I have said, writings by Don Bosco and about Don Bosco contain an interpretation of the gospel influenced by the period, its ideas, mental structures, perspectives, language and values.

The two preceding operations lead to the third and more important one: the *vital and updating analysis*, capable of re-expressing, re-thinking, re-presenting the contents of the sources. In this regard it is necessary to adapt some hermeneutical criteria, without which the interpretation of Don Bosco's expressions, his theoretical and practical positions, of the practical ways of living a relationship with God and with society, could indeed prove to be counter-productive. The simple repetition of Don Bosco's phrases could in fact lead us to betray the Salesian identity. In fact, it is a question of texts and testimonies of a "culture" very much of the

past, of a tradition and of a theology which are certainly no longer ours, and therefore not immediately intelligible to us.

In the 70s and 80s of the last century, the Salesian Congregation made a great effort for renewal, and the renewed Constitutions are the mature fruit of this. The Salesians produced an historical-spiritual reflection, which in itself was an interpretative study of Salesian sources, and at the same time of the "signs of the times". If we run through the analytical index of these Constitutions we are in for a welcome surprise: the name of Don Bosco appears about forty times. In the first seventeen articles it is present a good 13 times; but even where the name is not explicitly used, the reference to his thought, to his praxis, to his writings is constant. And just to think that in the XIX century, the Holy See insisted on there being no mention in the Constitutions of the name and the writings of the Founder! The same applies to the other Constitutions, Regulations, and Plans of Life of the other groups of the Salesian Family.

Forty years after the Council, it necessarily has to be recognised that historical research on the life and work the human and spiritual experience of Don Bosco has made notable progress thanks to studies which have adopted the changed frames of reference, have taken due account of the new ways of enquiry and the modern categories of evaluation, have had recourse to new perspectives, starting from the analysis of the unpublished documents or new interpretations of documents already well-known. The new critical hagiography has had at least two positive effects: above all that of showing us the real face of Don Bosco and the true greatness of our Father; in the second place that of taking into account Don Bosco in secular history.

Until a few decades ago, in fact, secular historical writing displayed something of an allergy to Don Bosco, and did not devote space to him, perhaps on account of the sugary tones, the miraculous sensationalism, which filled the edifying biographies over indulgent towards the marvellous. Nowadays, on the contrary,

Don Bosco is taken seriously. Naturally the person presented in these cases cannot but reflect the historical criteria of the various authors, their mentality, their ideological presuppositions, their aims, the quantity and the quality of the available sources, the way these are examined and then variously interpreted, the cultural climate of the time.

All of this corresponds to the new sensitivity in our Family which has a greater love for its vocation and mission. As I indicated earlier, the approach to Don Bosco, using the methods appropriate to historical research has led us to better appreciate his greatness, his practical talents, his gifts as an educator, his spirituality, his work, fully understood only if deeply rooted in the history of the society in which he lived. We do not reject *a priori* that which is valid in what we have received concerning Don Bosco's image, handed down by generations of Salesians and members of the Salesian Family. Nowadays we need a re-think and further reflection which gives us an image of Don Bosco that is relevant, which speaks to the world of today in a new language. The validity of the image offered depends, in fact, on the extent to which it is accepted and shared

## **7. What image of Don Bosco today**

In the face of this Salesian literature which is necessarily still evolving, it is clear that nowadays too we have to answer a series of questions.

Who was Don Bosco? What did he say, do and write? With what style of life and action did he succeed in expanding his charitable works? What connection is there between his thought and his action? Where did his ideas come from; how did they developed and what was new about them? What understanding did he have of himself and of his message at the beginning of his work, and what perception did he gradually acquire as the years passed? What perception of him, of his work and of his message did his

first lay and ecclesiastical collaborators have, the first Salesians, the FMA, the Cooperators, the pupils and Past Pupils? How was he understood and judged by his contemporaries: the Pope, bishops, priests, religious, political and civil authorities, those wielding economic and financial power, believers and non-believers, the crowds?

What was the image of Don Bosco that was constructed and handed down by “historical tradition”, by the contemporary chroniclers and biographers, by the witnesses at the processes, by the commemorations and the apotheoses of the anniversaries and significant dates (1915, 1929, 1934, 1988, 2009)? What interpretations were given to his historical “mission”? That it was a providential response to the needs of a Church under persecution? A Catholic response to what the times demanded? A solution to the “problem of poor and abandoned boys”, to the social problem, to cooperation among the “classes”? The promotion of the popular masses, while respecting the established order? A missionary and civilising activity?

What was special about Don Bosco? That he was the inventor of a “pedagogy” suitable for dealing with boys “in danger and dangerous”? That he was a teacher of spirituality for young people at risk, for the lower classes, for the developing peoples? That he was the saint of joy, of human values, of encountering everyone without discrimination? Or perhaps all this and more besides?

Today this image of Don Bosco needs to be reconstructed; for a fidelity that is not repetition, respected for established formulae or personal detachment, it is necessary to see him in another light. It is not sufficient to limit ourselves to some spiritual reading or some article by an academic; it is necessary that we examine Salesianity more deeply, all together, in order to arrive at a shared view that is learned, professional, profound, which knows how to give due weight to the historical, pedagogical, spiritual patrimony inherited from Don Bosco, that is familiar at some depth with the youth situation, which has a clear understanding

of the characteristics of the Christian in the society of today and of tomorrow, with the relevant commitments “according to the needs of the times”. In other words it is a question of re-examining the institutions and structures of associations and education, of re-interpreting the Preventive System in contemporary terms, of presenting to the world and to the Church a particular style of Salesian educator.

Nowadays, rather than a crisis of identity it is perhaps a question of a crisis of credibility. We seem to be held under the tyranny of the *status quo*, an unconscious rather than intentional resistance. While convinced of the truth of the theological values with which our Christian and consecrated life is imbued, we experience the difficulty of reaching the hearts of those to whom we are sent, for whom we ought to be signs of hope; we are shaken by the irrelevance of the faith for them as they build their lives; we are aware that we are not in touch with their world, of a remoteness, not to say exclusion, from their plans; we see that our signs, gestures, languages do not appear to have any impact on their lives.

Perhaps there is a lack of clarity about the role we have in the mission to which we dedicate ourselves; some perhaps are not convinced that our mission is useful; perhaps they are unable to find work which matches their aspirations, because we don't know how to bring about renewal; perhaps they feel imprisoned by emergency situations which are more and more pressing; perhaps there is more lack of esteem *ad intra* than *ad extra*. History can come to our aid in the process of bringing the charism up to date; I limit myself to indicating just some aspects, in particular giving more attention to the first.

**7.1. *Evolution of the works and those for whom they are intended.*** For Don Bosco the opening of new works was determined by the demands of the situation. The poor cultural preparation of the boys led at Valdocco to the opening of an elementary school on Sundays, and then in the evening and then on a daily basis, especially for those who could not attend the public school;

then other schools, various work-shops, and in this way to the complex of the “house attached” at the Oratory of St. Francis of Sales. This first work, from being simply a place for the boys to gather together on feast days for catechism and for games, becomes a place of all-round formation; for a certain number of boys without visible means of support it becomes a home, a place to live. To the playground and the church in which a programme had developed with the possibility of the sacraments, of elementary religious instruction, of recreation, of interesting activities, of religious and civil celebration, of gifts, other structures were added to offer the opportunity of learning a trade, and so avoiding having to go into factories in the city, too often immoral and dangerous for boys already burdened with a previous difficult past. Then later other Salesian houses were founded, other colleges – boarding schools, other junior seminaries entrusted to the Salesian Society which had just begun.

Mixed in together at the first oratory were former reformatory boys, young immigrants, and in general boys without any strong links to their own parishes. Then a little higher up the scale, accepted in the oratory and the hostel there were students and artisans far from “home”, who went into the city to learn a trade, or to do their studies, which prepared them for employment. To a certain number of boys belonging to this category, or those with particular difficulties, or else with greater economic means, the possibility was given of learning a trade in organised workshops, or of doing their studies in schools and colleges. This group normally included two different social categories: the “poor working class” and the “middle class”. Then particular needs led to the setting up of schools: elementary, technical, grammar, vocational training, agricultural, day, colleges also for the upper-middle class, where it was a question of providing an alternative to similar lay or protestant establishments, or to ensuring a fully Catholic education according to the preventive system.

Don Bosco considered that the option for the poorest was compatible with the large-scale provision of schools and colleges for

the “middle classes”. He did not reject anyone, but he preferred to give his attention to the middle and the working class, as being the ones most in need of help and assistance. However, the way the process of paying “fees” worked out, did not leave much room for the extremely poor or the moderately poor, except in the case of limited groups of youngsters supported by public or private charity. Then a separate category consisted in those young people, among the most poor and most at risk to be found in mission lands, lacking the light of faith. Naturally missionary activity does not stop at the young, but tries to involve everyone in the vicinity, nor is it limited just to straightforward pastoral action, but extends to all aspects of civil, cultural and social life, according to what Don Bosco himself said in a letter of November 1886: bringing “ religion and civilisation to those peoples and nations which so far are without them”. Without taking account of class, special consideration is also given to boys who show an inclination towards the ecclesiastical or religious state; this is the most precious gift that can be given to the Church and to civil society.

Finally account has to be taken of the large areas of marginalisation of “ poor and abandoned youth “ in situations which are particularly serious, sometimes tragic, which remain outside Don Bosco activities: the emerging group of young people more and more engaged in new industrial activities who needed to be assisted, protected, formed socially and in the context of trade unions; the world of real juvenile delinquency existing in Turin; works for the care of minors already or on the way to becoming delinquents, with some of whom moreover he was to some extent in contact; the immense continent of poverty and indigence, not only in the city but also, and often worse, in the countryside; the vast world of illiteracy and of progress through arts and trades; the world of unemployment and of emigration; and again the world of mental and physical handicap.

Now this page of history obliges us to reflect from the *current perspective*. Who nowadays are the ones for whom our works are primarily intended? Which works suit their needs? Has the dis-

appearance in the renewed Salesian Constitutions of the list of typical Salesian works which had the oratories in the first place, perhaps contributed to the reduction in the number of our classic oratories, even replaced by high schools and universities ?

**7.2. *Abandoned youth.*** As I said at the beginning, the historical importance of Don Bosco needs to be investigated, in addition to the works, and some relatively original ways of doing things, his intellectual and emotive perception of the universal, theological and social significance of the problem of « abandoned youth », and his great ability in communicating this perception to large numbers of collaborators, benefactors and admirers.

Let us ask ourselves then: are we his faithful disciples today? Are we, like Don Bosco, still experiencing that inner conflict between the ideal and its fulfilment, between an intuition and putting it into practice in the social circumstances in which he found himself working?

**7.3. *Response to the needs of the young.*** Considering the fact that Don Bosco's activities in assisting and educating the young developed on the practical level with a certain degree of "opportunism", it also needs to be said that his "response" to problems was not based on a particular "plan" put into operation on the basis of a preconceived overall view of the social and religious situation in the 1800s. Coming up against particular problems he responded in an equally immediate and localised way, until gradually the variety of youth situations led him to look at the overall "problem of youth" everywhere. In the heroic life of Don Bosco there were no long-term plans or strategies worked out at his desk – all of the things quite rightly nowadays considered indispensable – but effective solutions emerged to immediate problems, often unforeseen.

What does all this mean for us today as we are living in a "global village", where everything is known in real time, where we have available to us a whole variety of specialised sciences?

How does one pass from a policy of emergency to a planned policy? On the basis of what precise criteria can we make our practical decisions within history as it unfolds, and not from outside? How can we avoid the twofold risk of losing unity and identity, by wanting to do everything, by abandoning stable works and moving on to others which are transitory and not well-thought out, using up resources on short-term projects; and the risk of giving an absolute value, and making permanent, features of the Founder which were contingent, finishing by being satisfied with what we have already had, already known, with a fossilised tradition, defended, in all good faith, as being fidelity to the past?

**7.4. *Flexibility in responding to needs.*** From the historical analysis we discover the genius and the ability of Don Bosco, in pursuing his vocation to “save” the young, in coordinating educational works aimed at the boys of the urban working-class populations with a variety of further activities with other objectives. Around the small Oratory at Valdocco Don Bosco succeeded in gathering together thousands of boys, in winning over the agreement and the support of the Church authorities to an ever greater extent, almost complete. And the closure of some works such as the Guardian Angels Oratory in Turin, of some isolated Salesian houses such as Cherasco, Trinità, was not a sign of retreat but of a reorganisation and a re-launching. Proof of this is the expansion of his mission with works aimed at the formation of youth: the founding of the FMA, the missions, the Cooperators, the Salesian Bulletin. These various initiatives highlight the constant process of reorganisation, re-launching, and further development.

So now, is it not clear that in all that we do, what must be considered important is not only or not mainly the appearance, but the reality of what is re-launched and developed in a wise reorganisation? Is there perhaps a risk that often the forced closing of so many of our works appears to be a simple matter of cutting back, rather than a decision taken in view of further development?

**7.5. Poverty of life and tireless work.** In those notes which tradition has called his “Spiritual Testament”, Don Bosco wrote: “From the time that comfort-seeking once appears in individuals, in rooms and in houses, the decline of our Congregation will begin [...] When the desire for ease and comfort grows up among us, our pious Society will have run its course” (P. Braido (ed.). “*Don Bosco educatore, scritti e testimonianze*”, Rome LAS 1992, pp. 409, 437).

Nowadays, drawing our inspiration from Don Bosco, do we not have to have the courage to say that when a religious community becomes absorbed in the TV and in the newspapers for hours on end it is a sign that at least in that particular place we have run our course? What can be said when a Salesian centre is reduced to four small boys with a football and a TV, and cannot find the time to bring youngsters together to involve them in the work being done, but can do so in order to go on cultural outings? Perhaps that work has already run its course too, given that the number of young people in a local Salesian work is not everything, but that it does remain the thermometer to indicate the reason for there being a house in that particular place.

## **8. Suggestions for putting the Strenna into practice**

Starting from the knowledge of the history of Don Bosco, the main focal points and the tasks arising from the Strenna for 2012 could be the following. Each group of the Salesian Family can make further practical applications.

8.1. *Pastoral charity* is a particular feature of the whole of Don Bosco’s life-story and is the guiding force of all his many activities. We could say that it is the concise historical perspective through which to read his whole life. The Good Shepherd knows his sheep and calls them by name, he quenches their thirst with

clear water and allows them to graze in green pastures; he becomes the gate through which the sheep enter the sheepfold, and gives his own life so that the sheep may have life in abundance. (cf. *Jn* 10,11 sq.). The greatest power of Don Bosco's charism is the love drawn directly from the Lord Jesus, imitating him and remaining in Him. This love consists in "giving everything". From this stems his apostolic vow: "I promised God that until my dying breath I would dedicate myself entirely to my poor boys". (BM XVIII, 216; cf. *C. SDB* 1). This is our trade mark and our credibility with the young!

8.2. In Don Bosco's story we come to know of much *hardship, self sacrifice, privation, suffering*, and of the many sacrifices he made. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Through the needs and requests of young people, God is asking each member of the Salesian Family to sacrifice him or herself for them. Living the mission is therefore not a vain activity for activity's sake, but rather conforming our hearts to the heart of the Good Shepherd who does not want any of his sheep to be lost. It is a deeply human and deeply spiritual mission. It is a path of asceticism, for there is no animating presence among young people without asceticism and sacrifice. Losing something, or rather, losing everything to enrich the lives of our young people is what gives support to our dedication and our commitment.

8.3. Through the minutes of the founding of the Salesian Congregation, and especially through the historical development of the multifaceted work of Don Bosco, we can come to know the purpose of the Salesian Family, as this purpose was detailed little by little. We are called to be apostles of the young, of popular settings, of poor and mission areas. Today more than ever, we commit ourselves to a critical understanding of media culture, and we use the media, in particular new technologies, as potential multipliers of our activity in being close to and supportive of young people. While we are in their midst as educators, we involve them as our first collaborators, as did our Father Don Bosco, and we

give them responsibility, help them to take the initiative, enable them to be apostles of their peers. In this way we can open up the great heart of Don Bosco more and more; he wanted to reach and serve young people throughout the world.

8.4. Our good intentions cannot remain empty declarations. Our knowledge of Don Bosco needs to be translated into a *commitment with and for the young*. As with Don Bosco, God awaits us in today's youth! We therefore need to meet them, and stay with them in the places, circumstances and frontiers where they await us. This is why we need to go out to meet them, always taking the first step, walking with them. It is heartening to see how the Salesian Family throughout the world is doing its best for the poorest young people: street children, excluded children, young workers, young soldiers, young apprentices, neglected orphans, exploited children, but a heart that loves is always a heart that asks itself certain questions. It is not sufficient to organise activities, initiatives, institutions for the young; what is needed is an assured presence, contact, a relationship with them: it is a matter of taking up the practice of assisting again, and rediscovering that presence in the playground.

8.5. Even today, Don Bosco asks questions. By getting to know his story we must listen to the *questions Don Bosco* addresses to us. What more can we do for poor young people? What are the new frontiers in the areas where we are working, in the country in which we are living? Besides the above-mentioned poverty, how many other kinds of poverty weigh down today's young people as they struggle on their way? What are the new frontiers where we must become involved today? We must think about the reality of the family, the educational emergency, the confusion in affective and sexual education, lack of social and political involvement, a retreat into one's personal private life, spiritual weakness, the unhappiness of so many young people. We hear the cry of young people and offer answers to their deepest and most pressing needs, their practical and spiritual needs.

8.6. From the experience of his personal life, we can know the *responses Don Bosco gave* to the needs of young people. In this way we can better consider the responses that we have already put in place and which others still need to be created. Of course there are difficulties. We have to “deal with the wolves” who want to devour the flock: indifference, ethical relativism, consumerism that destroy the value of things and experiences, false ideologies. God is calling us, and Don Bosco encourages us, to be good shepherds in the image of the Good Shepherd, so that young people will still find Fathers, Mothers, Friends; and above all can find Life, True Life, the abundant life offered by Jesus!

8.7. The *Memoirs of the Oratory of Saint Francis of Sales*, written at the explicit request of Pius IX, are an essential point of reference for coming to know Don Bosco’s spiritual and pastoral journey. They are written so that we might come to know the prodigious beginnings of the vocation and work of Don Bosco, but especially, so that taking up Don Bosco’s motivations and choices, we as individuals, and as each group of the Salesian Family, may continue along the same spiritual and apostolic journey. They were regarded as “memories of the future”. So in the course of this year, let us commit ourselves to getting to know this text, communicating its contents, disseminating it, and especially putting it into the hands of young people: it will become an inspirational book as they make their vocational decisions.

## 9. Conclusion

As usual I want to conclude this presentation of the Strenna with a very telling anecdote. Before this however, I would like to recall here the “dream at nine years of age”. In fact, it seems to me that this page of autobiography provides a simple, but at the same time, a prophetic presentation of the spirit and the mission of Don Bosco. In it the field of work entrusted to him was described: the young; the aim of his apostolate was pointed out: to

make them grow as individuals through education; a method of education which would be effective was offered him: the Preventive System; the context in which all that he did, and today all that we do, was presented: the marvellous plan of God, who, first of all, and more than anything else, loves the young. It is He who enriches them with all kinds of gifts and makes them responsible for their development, so that they can take their rightful place in society. In God's plan, not only are they assured of success in this life, but of eternal happiness too. Let us therefore listen to Don Bosco, and we will hear the 'dream of his life'.

### «The boy of the dream»

*It was at that age that I had a dream. All my life this remained deeply impressed on my mind. In this dream I seemed to be near my home in a fairly large yard. A crowd of children were playing there. Some were laughing, some were playing games, and quite a few were swearing. When I heard these evil words, I jumped immediately amongst them and tried to stop them by using my words and my fists.*

*At that moment a dignified man appeared, a nobly dressed adult. He wore a white cloak, and his face shone so that I could not look directly at him. He called me by name, told me to take charge of these children, and added these words: "You will have to win these friends of yours not by blows but by gentleness and love. Start right away to teach them the ugliness of sin and the value of virtue".*

*Confused and frightened, I replied that I was a poor, ignorant child. I was unable to talk to those youngsters about religion. At that moment the kids stopped their fighting, shouting, and swearing; they gathered round the man who was speaking.*

*Hardly knowing what I was saying, I asked, "Who are you, ordering me to do the impossible?"*

*"Precisely because it seems impossible to you, you must make it possible through obedience and the acquisition of knowledge".*

*"Where, by what means, can I acquire knowledge?"*

*"I will give you a teacher. Under her guidance you can become wise. Without her, all wisdom is foolishness".*

*"But who are you that speak so?"*

*"I am the son of the woman whom your mother has taught you to greet three times a day".*

*"My mother tells me not to mix with people I don't know unless I have her permission. So tell me your name".*

*"Ask my mother what my name is".*

*At that moment, I saw a lady of stately appearance standing beside him. She was wearing a mantle that sparkled all over as though covered with bright stars. Seeing from my questions and answers that I was more confused than ever, she beckoned me to approach her. She took me kindly by the hand and said, "Look". Glancing round, I realised that the youngsters had all apparently run away. A large number of goats, dogs, cats, bears, and other animals had taken their place.*

*"This is the field of your work. Make yourself humble, strong, and energetic. And what you will see happening to these animals in a moment is what you must do for my children".*

*I looked round again, and where before I had seen wild animals, I now saw gentle lambs. They were all jumping and bleating as if to welcome that man and lady.*

*At that point, still dreaming, I began crying. I begged the lady to speak so that I could understand her, because I did not know what all this could mean. She then placed her hand on my head and said, "In good time you will understand everything".*

*With that, a noise woke me up and everything disappeared. I was totally bewildered. My hands seemed to be sore from the blows I had given, and my face hurt from those I had received. The memory of the man and the lady, and the things said and heard, so occupied my mind that I could not get any more sleep that night. (Memoirs of the Oratory of Saint Francis of Sales, critical edition by ANTONIO DA SILVA FERREIRA, LAS Rome 1991).*

Don Bosco writes in the "Memoirs of the Oratory" that this dream "remained deeply impressed on my mind for the whole of

my life”, so that today we can say that he lived in order to change the dream into reality.

Well then, what our dear Father took as his plan of life, making the boys his purpose in life. and devoting all his energies until his last breath for them, is what we are all being called to do.

The anecdote which this time I take from history, illustrates very eloquently Don Bosco’s desire to be for his boys a sign of love that would never fail. I heard it told for the first time by a confrere from the Australian Province, Fr Lawrie Moate, in an introductory address on the occasion of a celebration of Jubilees of Salesian life, at Lysterfield on 9 July 2011:

### “And our music continues”

*“Imagine the courtyard of a prison in an 18<sup>th</sup> century European colony. It is dawn and while the sun begins to fill the eastern sky with golden colours a prisoner is brought out into the yard to be executed. He is a priest, condemned to death for his opposition to the cruelty with which the natives in the colony were being treated. He is standing against a wall and gazes at the firing squad, his fellow countrymen. Before blindfolding him the officer asks him the traditional question about his final wishes. The reply surprises everyone: he asks to be able to play his flute for one last time. The soldiers are put “at ease” while they wait for the prisoner to play. When the notes begin to fill the silent morning air the whole prison is flooded with music which, sweet and enchanting, fills with peace that place a daily witness to violence and sadness. The officer is worried because the longer the music lasts, the more absurd his task seems to be. He therefore orders the soldiers to open fire. The priest dies instantly, but to the amazement of all present the music continues its dance of life; death outfaced”.*

*Where does this sweet music of life come from?*

*In a society totally committed to silencing Christ’s message, I think it is our vocation to be among those who continue to make*

*the music of Life heard. In a world doing everything it can to prevent the young hearing the insistent invitation of Christ to “come and see”, it is our privilege to have been drawn to Don Bosco and to have been encouraged to play the music of the heart, to bear witness to the transcendent, to exercise a spiritual fatherhood, to lead youngsters in a direction which corresponds to their dignity and to their most genuine desires.*

*This is the dance of the Spirit! This is God’s music!*

My dear brothers, sisters, all the members of the Salesian Family, friends of Don Bosco, all young people, I wish you all a happy New Year for 2012 full of God’s blessings, and with a renewed commitment to continuing to make the music heard, our music, which fills the lives of the young with meaning, and makes them discover the source of joy.

With my best wishes to everyone and a remembrance in my prayers,

Rome, 31 December 2011.

  
Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva  
Rector Major

## 4. ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 4.1 Chronicle of the Rector Major

#### – August 2011

After the conclusion of the summer plenary session of the General Council, on 29 July 2001 (cf. chronicle of the Rector Major in AGC n. 411), Fr Pascual Chávez had a three days break at the FMA house in Sant'Agnello, in Campania.

Having returned to Rome in the afternoon of 1 August, he resumed his ordinary work with some interviews. On the morning of 3 August, with his Vicar, Fr Adriano Bregolin and his Secretary, Fr Juan José Bartolomé, he left for Poland to take part in the *VI International Congress of Mary Help of Christians* being held in Częstochowa, until Saturday 6 August. During these days, in addition to the talks he gave at the Congress, Fr Chávez met the Provincials of Poland and of the EST Special Circumscription, gave interviews for the press radio and television, met the Superiors and representatives of the groups of the Salesian Family who were present at Częstochowa and spoke with some confreres.

On Sunday 7 August, the Rector Major arrived in Lyon, in France in the early hours and was taken to the “Saint Joseph” Guest House of

the Archdiocese, where from that day until Thursday 11 there was the *Team Visit to the West Europe Region*. During these days, in addition to presiding at Mass each day, giving the Good Night and several talks Fr Chávez met the various participants. On Thursday morning 11 he gave the closing address of the Team Visit, presided at Mass and after lunch left for Rome.

He spent Friday 12 to Sunday 14 with his usual work in the office, and a number of visits and interviews. Among these could be mentioned those with Fr Roberto Colameo and later with Mr. Angelo Orsini, from the “Auxilium” Association on 12, and with Fr Zelindo Trenti, Assistant to the VDB, on Saturday 13.

On Monday morning 15 August with his Vicar, the Rector Major went to Castelgandolfo to celebrate with the Holy Father in our parish of “Saint Thomas of Villanova” on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Assumption.

On the evening of the same day 15 August he left for Turin, where he was welcomed by the Provincial, Fr Stefano Martoglio. On Tuesday morning 16, he was taken

to *Colle Don Bosco*. There he presided at Mass, *starting the three year period of preparation for the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco*. In the evening he left for Madrid, to take part in *World Youth Day*.

He spent Wednesday morning 17, with Mother Yvonne Reungoat, at a meeting with the representatives of the Salesian Youth Movement at CES Don Bosco; in the evening at Atocha, he took part in a prayer vigil with all the members of the SYM who had come to Madrid.

On Thursday 18, Fr Chávez visited the vocation stand in the Parco El Retiro and afterwards took part with the young people in the pilgrimage to welcome the Holy Father at Cibelles.

On Friday evening 19, he had another meeting with the young people of the SYM from Italy at Atocha.

On Saturday he took part in the pilgrimage to Cuatro Vientos, the site of the WYD Vigil.

On Sunday after World Youth Day came to an end the Rector Major returned to Rome.

From Rome, the following day Monday 22, he left again for Rimini to take part in the traditional and significant *Meeting* organised by "Communion and Liberation".

Between Tuesday 23 and Monday 29 August the Rector Major took a few days rest.

Having returned to Rome on Tuesday 30, on the two following days he had a series of meetings with the Councillors in residence, with Fr Francesco Cereda, with Fr Pier Fausto Frisoli, with Fr Václav Klement, and with Fr Valentín Viguera, Bishop Valerio Breda, and with Fr Erminio De Santis, former Superior of the Vice Province of Madagascar.

#### – *September 2011*

On Thursday morning 1 September, the Rector Major left to visit the *Slovacchia* Province. At the airport in Vienna he was met by the Provincial of Austria, Fr Rudolf Osanger, with some confreres and youngsters and by Fr Karol Manik, Provincial of *Slovacchia*, who drove him to Žilina. Here he met the confreres of the Province. Mass followed, at which 4 Salesians and 3 Daughters of Mary Help of Christians made their perpetual profession. Then after supper there was a meeting with the representatives of different groups of the Salesian Family.

On Friday 2, at Levoča Fr Chávez met the youngsters to whom he spoke about vocation. Then he presided at Mass. At

Košice he blessed the pastoral centre for the Gypsies at Lunik IX. From there he was taken to Drienica, where he was welcomed by the Salesians-Cooperators.

On Saturday 3, Fr Chávez went to Prešov, where he blessed the Salesian Centre. Then he left for Krakow, in Poland where in the afternoon the *Team Visit to the Provinces of Central and Eastern Europe* began.

The Visit lasted from the afternoon of 3 until Wednesday 7 September. In the afternoon of 7, when the Team Visit was over, Fr Chávez went to the Marian Sanctuary at Szczyrk, where he was welcomed by the Rector Fr Marek Kaczmarczyk, and by the confreres with a group of youngsters and by the Deputy Mayor.

On Thursday 8, at Częstochowa, the Rector Major received the first profession of the novices from the two novitiates of Poland and the EST Circumscription.

On Friday 9 he returned to Rome, where he combined his ordinary work with some interviews including one with Dr Carola Carazzone, President of VIS.

On Sunday morning 11, Fr Chávez presided at Mass in the parish of the Nativity of Mary at Selva Candida, served by three confreres from the Generalate,

with whom he then stayed for lunch.

On Monday morning 12, he had a meeting with a group of the missionaries on the 142<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Expedition, with whom he later had lunch. In the afternoon he saw the Provincial of Great Britain, Fr. Martin Coyle.

The three following days were devoted to the ordinary work in the office. On Thursday morning 15, he gave an interview in connection with the CSC/CNOS Congress to be held in Rome at the end of September, and then met the Commission for Salesian Schools in Europe.

On Friday morning 16, accompanied by his secretary, Fr Juan José Bartolomé, the Rector Major left for *Slovenia*. At the Trieste airport he was met by the Provincial Fr Alojzij Slavko Snoj, and the Provincial Economist Fr Blaz Cuderman, who took him to Ljubljana - Rakovnik. In the early afternoon they left for Maribor, and a short visit to the Don Bosco Centre in Celje. At Maribor the Rector Major presided at Mass and blessed the preliminary construction work on the Don Bosco Centre. After supper and the Good Night they returned to Ljubljana.

On Saturday 17 Fr Chávez was at Sticna, site of the *Youth Festi-*

val. Here he took part in the workshop, the 30<sup>th</sup> in the series, for those engaged in youth ministry (priests, religious men and women and lay animators) and took part in the Mass at which a Bishop presided, and gave the homily. In the evening he returned to Ljubljana, where a concert in his honour was given by the Slovenian Octet, which concluded with his Good Night.

On Sunday 18, the Rector Major met the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, and then went to the parish of Ljubljana - Kodeljevo, where he blessed the new premises for street children. Afterwards he was taken to Trstenik, where he met the elderly confreres and in the afternoon, to Ljubljana - Rakovnik for the introduction of the Cause of Beatification of the Slovenian Servants of God including that of Fr Andrei Majzen, a Salesian missionary in Vietnam, at the Mass at which the Archbishop Anton Stres of Ljubljana presided, at the end of which he gave a message. Then at Zelimje, he presided at the festivities for the twenty years of the Grammar School before returning to Ljubljana. The following day he went back to Rome.

In the afternoon of Tuesday 20, Fr Chávez went to Turin where he

was welcomed by the Provincial, Fr Stefano Martoglio, who took him to Les Combes. He stayed there for three days.

On Saturday morning 24, he met the youngsters at the middle school of Châtillon and then had lunch with the Salesian community. In the afternoon, at Valdocco, he was involved in the filming of the presentation of the Strenna for 2012.

On Sunday morning 25, he met those taking part in the *Harambée* and then in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians he presided at the Mass for the 142<sup>nd</sup> Salesian missionary expedition. In the evening he returned to Rome.

He devoted the following days to the ordinary work in the office, interspersed with some interviews. Among these was that with Bishop Fernando Bascope SDB, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of El Alto, in Bolivia, on Monday 26, and with Archbishop Tito Solari SDB, of Cochabamba, in Bolivia, on Wednesday 28.

### – **October 2011**

On Saturday morning 1 October, the Rector Major took part in the *Curatorium* of the UPS. Afterwards he saw Mother Mother Yvonne Reungoat, who with two of her Council, Sr Maria Luisa Mi-

randa and Sr Giuseppina Teruggi, came to offer him their condolences on the death of his sister Ofelia.

Early on Monday morning 3, he made a videorecording and later opened the *intermediate session of the General Council*, which - with two meetings each day - will last until Tuesday 11 October. In the afternoon of the 3 he received the Ambassador of Luxemburg to the Holy See, accompanied by our Economer General Bro. JeanPaul Muller.

The following days from 4 until 7 October, are dedicated to the work of the General Council, interspersed with some visits and interviews.

On Friday morning 7, the Rector Major presides at a meeting of the Council and then after lunch leaves for Bruxelles for the celebration of the *120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Salesian presence in Belgium*. He is welcomed by the Provincial Fr Joseph Enger, and his Vicar, who takes him to Liège.

On Saturday 8, the Rector Major presides at Mass during which four young confreres from the France-South Belgium Province make their perpetual profession. After lunch, with Mother Yvonne Reungoat, Fr Chávez takes part in a meeting with young people. In

the evening after a concert by the vocal and instrumental group "Pour quelle Fête", they go to Farnières, for a Vigil with the young people, of the SYM from France and Southern Belgium.

On Sunday 9 October the Rector Major returned to Rome, where on the following day the work of the intermediate session of the General Council, which would close on 11, was resumed.

On the following days among various interviews on Thursday 13 he met Bishop Carlos Maria Colazzi SDB of the diocese of Mercedes, Uruguay. At midday on Friday 14, Fr Chávez went to the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples where he met the Secretary, Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, and then the Prefect, H. E. Archbishop Fernando Filoni.

The whole of Saturday morning 15, at the Vatican, in the Synod Hall, Fr Chávez took part as a Consultant in the first meeting of the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelisation. In the afternoon at the Generalate he met the missionaries who are following an updating course.

On Monday 17 October the Rector Major began the journey to Central America. In the afternoon, accompanied by his secretary, Fr Juan José Bartolomé, he arrived in

San Salvador, where he was welcomed by the Provincial Fr Alejandro Hernández.

On Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 October the Rector Major visited *Honduras*, which was *celebrating the centenary of the presence of the Salesians*. On the first day, arriving at Tegucigalpa, he was officially welcomed at the airport of the Airforce Base. The Mayor, Mr. Ricardo Álvarez, gave him the keys of the city. Afterwards, Fr Chávez went to the parish of Mary Help of Christians in Comayagüela, where he met the local Salesian community, some young volunteers and animators from the parish and various Salesians from other works who had come for the occasion. Early in the afternoon he visited Campo Cielo, an area of the parish where the Salesians are developing a social work for those in need. Towards the end of the afternoon he met the young people of the SYM in the parish, presided at Mass and then went to the residence of H. E. Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez who offered him supper. On the second day, in the morning he presided at Mass for the young people from the Salesian schools and from some other Catholic schools. He then met the youngsters from the Vocational Training Centre, visited a photo-

graphic exhibition and had lunch with representatives of groups of the Salesian Family. In the evening he presided at another Mass for the Salesian Family, which was followed by a supper with the civil, military and religious authorities and the Past Pupils.

On Thursday 20 and Friday 21 October the Rector Major was visiting *Nicaragua*, which is also *celebrating the centenary of the arrival of the Salesians*. On his arrival in Managua, Fr Chávez was welcomed by the Chancellor, Samuel Santos, by other civil and military authorities and by H. Em. Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, and then by the educative community of Masaya. At Catarina he had lunch with the confreres and the FMA. In the afternoon he was taken to Granada, where he was given the keys of the city; in the evening he presided at Mass for the Salesian Family, which was followed by supper and a concert. The following morning he went to visit the birth place of Blessed Maria Romero Meneses, and was then taken to Managua, where he had a meeting with the young people from the centres of the Salesians and of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, followed by lunch. In the afternoon he presided at Mass in the parish of Saint John Bosco,

followed by a formal ceremony at La Casa de los Pueblos, where the President of the Republic, Daniel Ortega, presented him with the "Ruben Dario" Decoration. The visit ended with supper with the confreres at the Don Bosco Youth Centre.

On Saturday 22, Fr Chávez made the return journey to San Salvador, where in the evening he received a *Doctorate honoris causa*, from the Don Bosco University.

At midday on Sunday 23 October, he presided at Mass in the Church of Mary Help of Christians in Santa Tecla and in the evening opened the *Team Visit to the Inter-america Region*, which continued until Friday 28. During the days of the Visit the Rector Major met all the Provincial Councils and spoke with some of the Provincials and confreres. He also met the young Salesians in initial formation from the Central America Province, the young people of the SYM in El Salvador and the Salesian Family.

At the end of the Team Visit, he travelled to Mexico and went to the city of Saltillo, where he stayed until 3 November visiting his family.

### – **November 2011**

On Thursday evening 3 November, the Rector Major arrived in

Guadalajara, where he was welcomed by the Provincial, Fr Salvador Cleofas Murguia. He spent the 4 having a medical check up.

On Saturday 5, the Rector Major, accompanied by the Provincial and by Fr Juan José Bartolomé, went to San Luis Potosí, where he met Fr José Carlos Contreras, and then had lunch with the confreres of the two communities. Afterwards he returned to Guadalajara. Here on Sunday 6 he presided at Mass and had lunch with the confreres of the Province.

On Monday morning 7, after a further medical check up with a specialist the Rector Major travelled to the City of Mexico, where he was welcomed by the Provincial Fr Miguel Agustín Aguilar. On Tuesday 8 he went to the headquarters of the Mexican Bishops' Conference to give a conference. In the evening he presided at Mass for the Salesian Family.

On Wednesday 9 November he began his return journey to Rome, where he then resumed his demanding work and was visited by a number of people.

On Tuesday morning 15, the Rector Major went to the Vaticano for a meeting with the Substitute Secretary of State Archbishop Angelo Becciu. In the afternoon he

left for Verona, where he stayed until midday the following day.

On Thursday morning 17, accompanied by Fr Juan José Bartolomé, he left for Warsaw in Poland, where he was welcomed by the Provincial, who took him to the Provincial Missionary Centre where he greeted the confreres and the collaborators, visited the house and had lunch. In the afternoon with the Provincial and his secretary he went on to Lublin, where he met the confreres of the two communities and had supper with them.

On Friday morning 18, the Rector Major went to the "John Paul II" Lublin Catholic University. He was welcomed by the Rector, Dr. Stanislaw Wilk SDB, and by the Archbishop and Grand Chancellor Archbishop Stanislaw Budzik, and then took part in the opening of a Congress on the formation of the "Upright citizen and good Christian". At midday during the Mass at which the Bishop from the Polish Bishops' Conference responsible for education presided, he gave the homily. After lunch he took part in a press conference and later received a *Doctorate honoris causa*. In the evening he returned to Warsaw.

On Saturday morning 19, he met the Superior of the Circum-

scription of the East, Fr Giuseppe Pellizzari; then he went to the airport for the return journey to Rome.

In Rome, at the Generalate, the Rector Major celebrated the solemnity of Christ the King on Sunday 20 November.

On Monday 21, at the Headquarters of the Friars Minor there was a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Union of Superiors General.

On Tuesday 22 Fr Chávez received the missionary Fr Eduardo Marroquin, and at supper Bishop Luc Van Looy S.D.B.

On the following days Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 November, at the Salesianum, there was the Half-yearly Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (USG), at which Fr Chávez presided. On Friday 25 they held their General Assembly.

In the afternoon of 25 November, accompanied by Fr Adriano Bregolin and Fr Marek Chrzan, the Rector Major left for London for a meeting – between 25 and 27 – with the Provincials and Vice Provincials of the Provinces in the Atlantic Zona: GBR, IRL-Malta, BEN-Holl, GER, AUS. On their arrival they were welcomed by the Provincial Fr Martin Coyle, who took them to the St Columba

Retreat and Conference Centre at Woking, where the meeting was held.

On Sunday afternoon 27, after the meeting ended the Rector Major and his Vicar were taken to Farnborough where they met conferees from the communities of Farnborough, Chertsey and Battersea.

On Monday 28 the Rector Major returned to Rome and resumed his office work also in preparation for the beginning of the plenary session of the General Council about to start. Among a number of meetings he had was one on the morning of 29 November with Bishop Clement Mulenga, the new Salesian Bishop in Zambia.

He spent Wednesday 30, in the office.

## 4.2 Chronicle of the General Council (*intermediate session*)

Between 3 and 11 October 2011 the *intermediate session of the General Council* took place with the presence, in addition to the Rector Major and his Vicar, of all the Councillors for Sectors and

two Regional Councillors concerned with the agenda. The main subject of the meetings was a careful examination of the two Regions: the East Asia - Oceania Region, and the Africa and Madagascar Region

With regard to the **East Asia - Oceania Region** the following challenges were identified: continuing the process of the inculturation of the Gospel and of the charism and cultivating an intercultural mentality; continuing to proclaim the Gospel to the young in such a way that they are able to understand and accept it; paying attention to animation and the practice of vocational discernment, providing the possibility for personal accompaniment; opposing individualism, activism and the lack of a profound and personal conviction about Salesian identity; fostering a deeper knowledge of our Founder; accepting the validity and the relevance of education, particularly in schools, as a means of evangelisation; with our Catholic pupils there ought to be the promotion of a knowledge of and an opening up to the Salesian vocation in its two forms of religious priest and religious layperson; fostering a witness to evangelical poverty through solidarity

and transparency, encouraging the young to become protagonists to respond to the needs of the new frontiers; encouraging fidelity to the Salesian vocation and with clarity and loyalty facing up to any cases of indiscipline.

With regard to the **Africa and Madagascar Region** the following lines for action were identified: to give better opportunities to the more disadvantaged young Africans, giving birth to a new Africa through education, giving rise to a new man in Africa; creating a Consecrated Salesian Life which is coherent and eloquent, especially through giving the primacy to God and the witness of the communion of our communities (cf. GC25); continuing to make communities and confreres grow and progress according to the spirit and the guidelines of the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation for Africa; making Provincial and local animation and government more consistent and better structured; inculturating the Preventive System and initial formation in Africa; forming the young confreres to be competent missionaries of the young people of Africa, in each one of the various sectors of youth ministry; promoting a more fruitful and more consistent

vocation ministry; consolidating and making the Salesian Family increase in numbers and quality (cf. GC24); promoting a more credible and more prophetic style of religious poverty in the context of Africa.

### 4.3 Chronicle of the General Councillors

#### The Vicar of the Rector Major

After the end of the summer plenary session of the General Council, on 29 July 2011, the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr Adriano Bregolin, had a short break.

Afterwards in **August**, on the 3, with the Rector Major he went to Poland to take part in the *VI International Congress of Mary Help of Christians* being held in Częstochowa. On this occasion, also with the Rector Major, he had a meeting with the Provincials of Poland and representatives of the 14 Groups of the Salesian Family present at the Congress. On 6 August, in the absence of the Rector Major, who had gone to France where the "Team Visit" to the West Europe Region was taking place, he

presided at the solemn Concelebration, on the esplanade of the Sanctuary of Jasna Góra in the presence of all those taking part in the Congress and many other pilgrims. The Mass was broadcast on television, across Poland.

On 7 August he returned to Rome.

On Monday morning 15 August, with the Rector Major he went to Castel Gandolfo to assist at the Mass of the Holy Father in our parish of "Saint Thomas of Villanova", on the Solemnity of the Assumption.

The evening of the same day, 15 August, again with the Rector Major, he left for Turin. On Tuesday morning 16, at *Colle Don Bosco*, he took part in the solemn Concelebration at which the Rector Major began the three year period of preparation for the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco. In the evening he left for Madrid, to take part in the *World Youth Day*.

On Wednesday 17, he took part in the meeting with the representatives of the Salesian Youth Movement, at CES Don Bosco; in the evening, at Atocha, with the Rector Major, he took part in the Prayer Vigil with all the members of the SYM who were in Madrid.

On Thursday 18 he accompanied Fr Pascual Chávez on a visit to the

vocation stand located in the El Retiro Park and, afterwards, he took part in the pilgrimage with the young people to welcome the Holy Father at Cibeles. Likewise he accompanied the Rector Major, on 19, for another meeting with the young people of the SYM from Italy at Atocha and on 20 he took part in the pilgrimage to Cuatro Vientos, the site of the WYD Vigil.

On Sunday 21, when the celebration of World Youth Day was concluded the Rector Major returned to Rome. Between Monday 22 August and Monday 29 August the Vicar took a few days break, returning to Rome on 30 August.

In **September**, on the morning of 2 the Vicar of the Rector Major left for Krakow, in Poland, where on 3 September the *Team Visit to the Provinces of Central and East Europe* began.

The Visit lasted between the afternoon of the 3 and Wednesday 7 September. The same day 7 when the Team Visit was over, Fr Adriano Bregolin returned to Rome. From 8 he spent some days with his family and then returned to the Generalate on 12, where he remained until 16. He then left for Ethiopia, for a formation meeting for the Provincial Delegates of the Salesian Family. Taking part in the

meeting were also the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Having arrived in Addis Abeba, the Vicar of the Rector Major had a meeting with the Rectors and the Economers of the Vice Province. Afterwards with all the Rectors and the Economers he left, accompanied by Fr Roberto Bergamaschi and other confreres for Dilla, where he arrived late on the evening of 17 September and met all the local community.

The following morning Sunday 18 September, after the celebration of morning prayer, with the priests of the community he concelebrated the principal parish Mass, in Amaric. At the end, Fr Adriano Bregolin greeted all the faithful gathered in the parish church.

After the Mass he also met the local community of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. In the afternoon on the return journey to Addis Abeba, they stopped first for a short visit to the Salesian presence at Adamitullu and then the community of Zway. Here he met the confreres and visited their work and the Centre for Social Development managed by the "Friends of Sidamo". He also visited the local community of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, going to see their primary

school, high school and new para-university institute. On 19 he returned to Addis Abeba and on 20 made a courtesy call on the Provincial Community of the FMA and then visited the Salesian centres in Addis Abeba: Mekanissa and Bosco Children, where he had lunch with the Salesians of the two houses and met the young people living in the reception centre.

Between 21 and 25 September he took part in a Formation Meeting for Delegates of the Salesian Family, with members of the team for the Salesian Family Sector and the FMA team led by Sr Maria Luisa Miranda. At the end of the meeting on Sunday 25 Fr Adriano Bregolin left for Italy and was back at the Generalate on the morning of 26.

At the beginning of **October**, on Saturday morning 1, the Vicar of the Rector Major took part in the *Curatorium* of the UPS. Between 4 and 11 October he took part in the work of the intermediate session of the General Council during which the situation was examined in the two Salesian Regions *East Asia - Oceania* and *Africa - Madagascar*.

On Monday 17 October the Vicar of the Rector Major went to the

Dominican Republic. In the afternoon of the same day he was welcomed by the Provincial Fr Víctor Pichardo who accompanied him to the Provincial House. On 18 October in the morning he had a meeting with the Provincial Council. The main item dealt with was religious discipline. In the afternoon of the same day he had a meeting with the Provincial Formation Commission. On 19 he met all the Rectors and the Economers of the Province speaking with them about issues related to the animation of the community the accompaniment of the confreres and care for religious discipline. In the afternoon he celebrated Mass for the Salesian Family, and in the Don Rua formation community met the postnovices.

On the morning of 20 he went to Panama. He was welcomed by the two Rectors of the Salesian houses in Panama City. At the Don Bosco Technical Institute he visited the various sectors from the primary school to the high school and the Vocational Training Centre. Then he met all the confreres of the two communities and had a festive lunch with them. In the evening he celebrated Mass for the Salesian Family in the Basilica dedicated to Saint John Bosco, who is particularly venerated in this city.

On 21 October he left for San Salvador. On his arrival he was welcomed by the confrere Fr Caffarelli who took him to the Salesian House in Soyapango, Ciudadela Don Bosco, which includes several works, including the well-known Don Bosco University. Here in the evening he had a short meeting with the confreres of the house at evening prayer. The following day in the evening he took part in the official ceremony for the conferral of the "Doctorate honoris causa" on the Rector Major, who in the meantime had arrived in San Salvador.

At midday on Sunday 23 October, he celebrated Mass with the Rector Major in the Church of Mary Help of Christians at Santa Tecla. In the evening of the same day the *Team Visit to the Inter-america Region*, began and continued until Friday 28.

At the end of the Team Visit on Saturday 29 October Fr Adriano Bregolin left for Cuba. Arriving at Havana in the early afternoon he was taken to the Saint John Bosco Community - Víbora, for a first short visit. Then, the same afternoon after visiting a missionary chapel cared for by the Salesians, on the outskirts of the Capital, he went to the "Mary Help of Christians" community in the old city.

The following morning, Sunday 30 October, he celebrated Mass in the parish church of Vïbora. After Mass he met the Salesian Family and the young people of the parish and then had a short meeting also with the Volunteers of Don Bosco, and their Regional President. In the afternoon he paid a courtesy call on the Community of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Guanabacoa, on the outskirts of the Capital, and then returned to the "Mary Help of Christians" community. Early on the morning of 31 the Vicar met the Nuncio Apostolic Archbishop Bruno Musaró and then accompanied by Fr Bruno Roccaro and the confrere Fr Julio Fernández he went to Santa Clara for a short visit to the confreres of that Community. During the journey he also made a short courtesy call on the FMA Sisters in Manguito. The Vicar said Mass with the confreres at Santa Clara, and blessed the restored statue of Mary Help of Christians and then met the Salesian Family and the Educative Community of the Oratory.

On 1 **November**, Solemnity of All Saints, Fr Adriano Bregolin again met all the confreres in Havana at a festive lunch and in the afternoon, after a short visit to

the Archbishop of the Capital, Cardinal Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino, he celebrated Mass in the "Mary Help of Christians" Community with the presence of the young people and the Salesian Family. Late in the evening he left for Italy, arriving at the Generalate on 2 November.

On Tuesday morning 15, with the Rector Major he went to the Vatican for a meeting with the Substitute of the Secretary of State, Archbishop Angelo Becciu.

On Monday 21, at the House of the Paolini in Ariccia, he had a meeting with the male and female religious and the lay people of the Orioni Family, gathered at their annual Assembly.

On the following days, Wednesday 23, Thursday 24 and Friday 25 November, at the Salesianum, he took part in the Half-yearly Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (USG), at which the Rector Major Fr Pascual Chávez presided.

In the afternoon of 25 November, accompanying the Rector Major and with the Regional Councillor Fr Marek Chrzan, he left for London for a meeting – between 25 and 27 – with the Provincials and Vice Provincials of the Provinces of the Atlantic Zone: GBR, IRL-Malta, BEN-Holl, GER, AUS.

On Sunday afternoon 27, at the end of the meeting, with the Rector Major he visited the Community of Farnborough, where there was a meeting of the confreres of the communities of Farnborough, Chertsey and Battersea.

In the afternoon of 2 *December* the Vicar of the Rector Major went to Mogliano Veneto, where the following morning 3 December he led a Day of Recollection for the Educative and Pastoral Community of the *Astori* Institute. In the evening he then returned to Rome to the Generalate to begin the work of the winter plenary session of the General Council.

### **The Councillor for Formation**

When the summer plenary session of the General Council had come to an end, in the month of *August*, between 1 and 3, the General Councillor for Formation organised the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commission for the *Project for Europe* at Santiago de Compostela. On this occasion the Commission reflected on the following issues: the challenges and the opportunities provided by European culture with regard to evangelisation, the

phenomenon of migration in Europe, the communication of the Project within the European Provinces, the involvement of the non European Provinces. With the Commission he also had a meeting with the Provincial Council of SLE at Cambados. Between 6 and 11 he took part at Lyon (France) in the *Team Visit to the West Europe Region*. Then 22-28 he took part in the V Congress and the Assembly of the Salesian Biblical Association at Jerusalem "Ratisbonne".

In *September* 3-7 in Krakow he took part in the *Team Visit to the North Europe Region - central and eastern zone*. Between 9 and 27 he visited India and Myanmar. In India between 12 and 15 in Calcutta he took part in the Regional Commission for Formation of South Asia, at which the issues dealt with included: vocational fidelity, missionary formation, affective maturity, the aspirantate, the quinquennium, an evaluation of and proposals regarding intellectual formation. During this same journey to India he visited the aspirantate and the prenovitiate at Azimganj (INC), the prenovitiate at Coimbatore (INT), the post-novitiate at Yercaud (INT), the novitiate at Yellagiri Hills (INM), the 'Don Bosco' and 'Sacred Heart' aspirantates in Tirupattur

(INM), the new theologate at Kavarepettai, (INM), where first of all he met those in formation and then the formation personnel of the respective Provinces; he also reflected with the Provincial Commissions for Formation in INC, INM and INT. In Myanmar he visited the community in Yangon, where the students of theology attend the National Major Seminary, and then the aspirantate and novitiate at Anisakan, the postnovitiate at Pyin Oo Lwin, the prenovitiate at Thibaw, meeting those in formation and then the formation personnel. During his travels in the two countries, Fr Cereda also paid courtesy calls on the Archbishops of Chennai, Yangon and Mandalay and the four communities of the FMA in Myanmar. On his travels he also had meetings with other confreres: in India with those working with street children in Salem, with the confreres of Katpadi, Vellore, Tirupattur and the confreres in the Chennai communities. Also in Myanmar he gave a conference to the confreres of the Vice Province at the beginning of their Retreat.

On *October* 1 he took part, with the Rector Major, in the "Curatorium" of the UPS; on 12 at the inauguration of the academic year of our University; on 17 at the inau-

guration of the new premises for the "Saint Thomas" community of the Vice Province of the UPS. Between 19 and 31 he was in El Salvador, where he took part in the meeting of the Regional Commission for Formation of the Inter-america Region at Ayagualo, and then in the *Team Visit* to the same Region at San Salvador and finally in a meeting of the Provincials of the Region, also at Ayagualo. In the Regional Commission the issues dealt with were those similar to the ones at the Commission for South Asia.

In *November* the Councillor began the *Extraordinary Visitation*, in the name of the Rector Major, of the UPS Vice Province with the commemoration of deceased Salesians in the cemetery at Genzano, with a meeting of the Rectors and then with the Provincial Council; afterwards he visited the "Saint Thomas" and "Zephyrinus Namuncurá". Communities. Then between 23-25 in Rome he took part in the Assembly of the Superiors General. Between 25 and 27 he took part in a meeting of Salesian Missionaries in the Project for Europe. Finally between 28 and 30 at Turin-Valdocco he met the "Saint Francis of Sales" community and held the "Curatorium" for the stage of specific for-

mation for Salesian Brothers and then presided at the Commission for the Project for the Salesian Places of special interest.

In December on 10 he presided at the "Curatorium" of the "Zephyrinus Namuncurá" community of Gerini in Roma; on 13 he took part in the Theological Commission of the Union of Superiors General; between 17 and 19 he chaired the Commission for the Project for Europe.

### **The Councillor for Youth Ministry**

Between August and November 2011, the Councillor for Youth Ministry, Fr Fabio Attard, was mainly engaged in meetings of Youth Ministry Delegates at Regional level: the meeting for the Africa-Madagascar, Region at Lubumbashi, D.R of the, between 16 and 21 September; for the America South Cone Region, at Campos do Jordão, Brazil, between 26 September and 1 October; for the Interamerica Region, at San Salvador, El Salvador, between 19 and 23 October; for South Asia, at Bangalore, India, between 2 and 7 November; for North Europe at Vienna, Austria, between 15 and 20 November;

for the West Europe Region, at Madrid, Spain, on Saturday 4 December 2011. As their main subject these meetings had the presentation and examination of the document on *Rethinking Salesian Youth Ministry*.

Together with these meetings the Councillor took part in a meetings of the Commission for the *Project for Europe*, held at Santiago de Compostela, Spain, between 31 July and 3 August 2011.

During *World Youth Day*, held at Madrid between 16 and 21 August 2011, the Councillor accompanied the *Centro Nacional Salesiano de Pastoral Juvenil* in Spain. The Centre had responsibility for the organisation and for welcoming about 8000 young people as well as the celebration of the day for the SYM for all the Salesian young people from 53 countries.

Between 22 and 31 August 2011, the Councillor was in Japan preaching a Retreat and having a meeting with the Salesian Family of Japan.

On 1 September 2011, Fr. Fabio Attard gave a conference at a Congress on the challenges facing Youth Ministry, organised by the Salesian Centre of Theological Studies in Manila.

After this he took part in the "Team Visit" to the Provinces of

Central and Eastern Europe – including Poland - KSIP, CIMEC and the Circumscription EST – which was held at Krakow between 3 and 7 September 2011. As well as this one the Councillor also took part in two other “Team Visits”: that to West Europe held at Lyon, France, between 6 and 11 August 2011; and that to Interamerica, held at San Salvador, between 24 and 28 October 2011.

In addition the Councillor presided at two celebrations of professions: that at Colle Don Bosco for the newly professed from the Novitiate at Pinerolo, and that for the perpetually professed from the Lombardy-Emilian Province, held at Milan on Sunday 11 September 2011.

Between 12 and 15 September 2011, the Councillor presided together with Sr Maria Carmen FMA, at the first meeting of the newly re-constituted SDB - FMA Commission for Salesian Schools in Europe.

There was also the first seminar on spiritual direction – *Saint Francis of Sales and spiritual direction* – held in Rome between 11 and 13 November 2011 with the participation of Salesians and FMA engaged in the formation of spiritual directors in various parts of the world.

Two celebrations which the Councillor attended were that for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Don Bosco Haus” in Vienna, on Sunday 9 October, and that for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DBYN in Brussels on Saturday 15 October 2011.

### **The Councillor for Social Communication**

After the end of the summer plenary session of the General Council, the Councillor for Social Communication, Fr Filiberto González, spent some time with work in the Department. The between 15 and 21 August he took part in the *World Youth Day* in Madrid.

Between 24 August and 14 September he was in the Mexico - Guadalajara (MEG) Province, where he met the Provincial and his Council, the Provincial Delegate for Social Communication and his team. He celebrated Mass and visited the formation personnel and students of the community of the Theologate at Tlaquepaque. Afterwards he went to the city of San Luis Potosí, where he met the confreres of the local Salesian community. Then he visited his mother and family.

Between 15 and 18 September he was at São Paulo - Lapa. On 16

he met the Provincial, the Rector of the CIS-BRASIL centre and the Director of the Don Bosco Publishing House. He took part in a meeting of the Delegates for Formation in the South Cone. Then on the evening of 18 he reached the Provincial House of South Argentina Province (ARS) in Buenos Aires. On 19 he said Mass and had a meeting with the students and formation personnel of the Theologate at San Justo; afterwards he went to the San José community in Rosario, in the Province of North Argentina (ARN). On 20 he said Mass in the Prenovitiate at Funes; then in the San José house he had a meeting with the Delegate for Social Communication of ARN and his team, and then visited the work and the community of the 'Sagrado Corazón' and of 'Domingo Savio'. On 21 he visited and spoke to the personnel at the Don Bosco Press and the EDEBE in Buenos Aires. On 22 he met the Salesian Bulletin team and also the Delegate for SC for the ARS Province with his team.

Between 24 and 27 September he chaired a meeting of the Provincial Delegates for SC in the America South Cone and the Interamerica Regions held at the studentate in Lapa, at São Paulo,

to improve knowledge and application of the new *SSCS 2.0*.

Between the evening of 27 and the morning of 30, at Campos do Jordão, he took part first in a meeting of the Provincials of the South Cone Region at which the Regional presided and then at a meeting of the same Provincials with their Delegates for Youth Ministry, with the Regional and the Councillors for Youth Ministry and for the Missions, to consider the progress so far made in the co-ordination of the three Departments for the Mission.

Between 3 and 12 October he took part in the meetings of the 'intermediate session' of the General Council. After this, in Kigali, Rwanda, between 19 and 21 he took part in meetings of the Provincial Delegates for Formation in the Africa-Madagascar Region, and between 23 and 27 of the X CIVAM, at which the Regional presided, with the Provincials and Delegates for SC in the Africa-Madagascar Region, and again presented the new *SSCS 2.0*.

In November between 1 and 14 he visited the Italian Provinces in order to present the new *SSCS 2.0* and see how it was being implemented locally, and meeting the Provincial Delegate for SC and his team, and where possible, the

Provincial and his Council, the groups and works engaged in various aspects of SC and the formation houses, in the following order: ICP (Provincial, ELLEDICI, Turin-Crocetta, Valdocco YM - SC and Press, Pinerolo, Prima Radio Asti, Rosetta), ILE (Milan-Saint Ambrose, SC Team, Nave, open community, Forli), IME (Naples, Caserta, Molfetta: Provincial, Vice Provincial YM - SC; Bari, Lecce), ICC (Rome - Sacred Heart YM - SC, SC Team, Rome - Saint Francis of Sales CCS: Formation personnel and SC, Radio Meridiano 12), INE (Venice-Mestre: Provincial and Council, YM - SC, Saint Mark - IUS, 'Artemides Zatti' community), ISI (Catania: Provincial, YM - SC, Messina: Saint Thomas and Mamma Margaret).

Between 16 and 24 November he visited the four Provinces of Spain, for the same purpose and meeting the same sets of people as previously mentioned, in the following order: SLE (León: Provincial e YM - SC; Burgos), SBI (Bilbao - Provincial House: Provincial, YM - SC, SC Team), SMA (Madrid - Provincial House: YM - SC; Don Bosco House Director CCS), SVA (Valencia: Provincial House, San Juan Bosco Centre Assisi; Godelleta: local SC Delegates and SC Team). On 22 at Madrid 'Don

Bosco House' he had a meeting with the Iberian Conference at which the Regional presided in order to present the *SSCS 2.0*.

### **The Councillor for the Missions**

When the summer session of the General Council was over, the Councillor for the Missions, Fr. Václav Klement left for the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commission for the "Project for Europe" at Santiago de Compostela, Spain. As a result of the meeting he was charged with arranging an enquiry into the Salesian involvement for/with migrants in Europe. The subject of migration was seen as one of the key issues for the re-vitalisation from within of our charism in Europe. After spending three days in Taizé, he took part, with other Councillors, in the "Team Visit" to the West Europe Region in Lyon, France (6-11 August).

In August one after another there were three meetings of the *Study Days on the first proclamation of Christ*, jointly organised with the FMA Area for the Missions. At the Days for South Asia in Kolkata (INC) Fr Klement was unable to be present (5-11 August); but he was present at the Days for East Asia (Sampran, Thailand, 14-

18 August) and for Oceania (Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 21-25 August), and noted the enthusiasm of those taking part from various groups of the Salesian Family. On the return journey to Rome Fr Klement took advantage of four days stop over in the Philippines, visiting the two Provinces FIS and FIN, especially the initial formation houses (Parañaque and Canlubang - FIN, Lawaan - FIS).

The 142<sup>nd</sup> *Missionary Expedition* was prepared for by a 25 day course at which for the first time in addition to 32 SDB, 6 *Sisters of Charity of Jesus* also took part before their departure for Southern Sudan their first African destination. Taking part in the Missionary Expedition on 25 September at Valdocco were also 20 FMA, 3 CMB and 17 lay volunteers.

Before the "intermediate session" of the General Council, Fr. Klement took part with the other two Councillors for the Salesian Mission in a meeting of Provincials and Delegates for Youth Ministry in the South Cone Region at Campos do Jordão (BSP). Before this meeting he stopped in Brasilia (BBH) for a visit to the prenovitiate and to the National Centre for missionary formation of the Bishops' Conference of Brazil. On the way back to Rome he stopped

in Montevideo (URU) for a short visit connected with missionary voluntary service (30 September - 1 Octobre). During the intermediate session Fr. Klement was able to meet personally with all 20 SDB participants in the 16<sup>th</sup> Course of ongoing formation for missionaries at the UPS, Rome. Thanks to the interest and the concern of the Superior of the UPS Vice Province, Fr Joaquim D'Souza, for the first time the Salesian missionaries were able to stay at the UPS.

After the intermediate session of the General Council, Fr Klement took part in the Council meeting and the General Assembly of the Don Bosco Network (Rome, 12-13 October). Afterwards he left for Mexico, where he stayed between 13 and 23 October. In the two Provinces MEG and MEM he met the Provincial Councils, spoke to the young confreres and candidates in the formation houses. The main purpose was a first visit to the Mixopolitana Prelature (with headquarters in Ayutla) which was celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Salesians in 1962. With the Bishop of the Prelature Mons. Héctor Guerrero Córdova SDB and the Provincial of MEM Fr. Miguel Agustín Aguilar Medina, the Councillor paid a short visit in the Prelature to the eight

Salesian presences and the minor seminary opened two years ago.

Immediately after this Fr Klement took part in the "Team Visit" to the Interamerica Region at San Salvador (CAM, 24-28 October). It was a very well prepared Visit which gave a new impetus to a new project for Hispanic migrants in the United States.

After this Team Visit the Councillor led an event for the two Regions of America, at Quito - Cum-bayá. It was a seminar for the Delegates for missionary animation, with the collaboration of the Regional Centre for Ongoing Formation at Quito which brought together almost all the Provinces of America for four days.

Fr Klement dedicated the first three weeks of November visiting the South Asia Region. In the first week he was in Hyderabad (INH), where in the Provincial House there was a second Seminar for the Planning and Development Offices between 5 and 11 November, with the presence of 88 participants from 5 continents, 27 lay people and 61 SDB with the Economist General, Bro. Jean Paul Muller. After the Seminar the Councillor paid a short visit to the 16 missionary presences in the three regions of first evangelisation – at Muniguda in the State of Orissa

(INH), in the State of Tripura (ING) and finally for a week in the State of Arunachal Pradesh (IND). On 22 November with the Regional Councillor Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga, he took part in the official opening of the first Salesian Missionary Aspirantate after the Second Vatican Council at Sirajuli, in the diocese of Tezpur (ING). In July 2011 six formation personnel with 13 prenovices and 40 aspirants began the first formation experience outside Europe, inspired by the tradition of the 15 missionary aspirantates in Europe – starting with that of Ivrea (1922-1965).

During the last week before the plenary session of the General Council the Councillor, together with the Councillor for Formation Fr Francesco Cereda, led the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting for the missionaries present in Europe (Rome, (25-27 November). 40 participants from eight European Provinces shared the experience of the first years of the 'Project for Europe' from the point of view of the Provinces which welcome them and the new arrivals fitting into the Provinces.

Finally between 28 November and 1 December Fr Klement chaired a Seminar for the European Delegates for Missionary Animation in Turin-Valdocco. With the Councillor for the North Eu-

rope Region, Fr Marek Chrzan, and some members of the three Departments for the Salesian Mission (YM, Missions, SC) 23 Delegates for Missionary Animation in the European Provinces took part with some members of the Salesian Family. Direct contact with the places associated with Don Bosco at Valdocco and Colle Don Bosco provided valuable missionary inspiration. The Councillor returned to Rome on 12 December.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Social Communication Department, all the events of this period were available in real time on the new virtual platform (*AGORA - Missions* on the site) for a sharing of computerised documents among those taking part and those who are unable to be present and want to make a contribution.

### **The Economer General**

Immediately after the conclusion of the plenary session of the General Council, Bro Jean Paul Muller had a meeting at Benediktbeuern with some Foundations supporting the Salesian mission.

During the "Team Visit" at Lyon/France, the exchange of ideas and the reflection carried out on the changes taking place at pre-

sent in the area of the Economy in Europe showed very different situations among the various Provinces in Spain, France, Belgium and Portugal.

Between 20 and 28 August the Economer chaired a Seminar on the importance of ethical behaviour in the banks and financial institutions. He then spent some days at the Missions Office in Bonn planning the key occasions for the new school year.

At the beginning of September in Rome at the Direzione Generale there were discussions with collaborators in order to plan the second half of the year.

Between 4 and 11 September, on the occasion of the "Team Visit" at Krakow, the Economer had the opportunity to make some visits to significant works in the Province and to hold meetings with the Economers in the Region.

After the meeting of the Council of Administration of the Missions Office in Bonn on 13 September, the Economer General made a visit to the Salesian Vice Province of Haïti, in particular to the Provincial Economer's Office, to examine new projects together. Concerns were expressed about the situation of the confreres, about formation and guaranteeing youth projects for the long-term.

At the end of September and the first two weeks of October the Economer was in Rome and took part in the "intermediate session" of the General Council; he was involved in reflections on the running of the 'Salesianum' and in planning necessary work to be done at the Direzione Generale.

Between 15 and 18 October he was in New York taking part in the annual meeting of a Catholic Foundation; immediately afterwards he was present at the "Team Visit" in San Salvador until 30 October. The meeting with the Provincial Economers made clear the importance of a continuing process in the future to create a close network providing assistance to the various Provinces in the Region for long-term organisation.

On 3-11 November with the Councillor for the Missions, the Economer General led an international seminar for PDO (Planning and Development Offices), which provided the opportunity to meet the Economers and those responsible for the PDO in more than 35 Provinces. A visit to projects for abandoned youth in Birda (the Bangalore Province) and the opening of a printing press in the Hyderabad Province were opportunities for meeting

people and sharing the Salesian charism.

The visit to the Provincial Economers Office in the Antilles Province (15-20 November) at Santo Domingo strengthened relationships with the confreres responsible for the sector of the economy, for the Foundation and for many other institutions in the Province.

At the invitation of the Regional Councillor, the Economer General met the Iberian Provincial Conference in Madrid. They discussed especially concerns about the economic situation following some political changes in Spain and in Portugal, but also the fact that new situations with regard to some financial Institutions require new ideas and decisive action.

With a talk on preventive pedagogy the Economer made a contribution to a congress on pedagogy held in Berlin on 25 November.

Finally, before returning to Rome for the plenary session of the Council, between 27 November and 2 December Jean Paul Muller was in Turin to take part in the Commission planning events in view of the year 2015 and to reflect with the Provincial Economer on the current challenges facing the Province. At the

same time he met the Delegates for missionary animation during their *DIAM* 2011 Congress.

### ***The Councillor for the Africa - Madagascar Region***

After the end of the plenary session of the General Council, the Regional Councillor for Africa and Madagascar, Fr Guillermo Basañes, left Rome on 4 August, and was able to preside at the installation of two superiors in the Region: on 6 August, in the Sanctuary of Mary Help of Christians at Upper Hill - Nairobi, the installation of Fr Giovanni Rolandi as the new Provincial of the East Africa Province (AFE), and on 10 August, at the headquarters of the Vice Province that of Fr Claudio Ciolli as the new Superior of the Vice Province of Madagascar (MDG).

Between 13 August and 30 September, in the name of the Rector Major, he carried out the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Vice Province of Mozambique (MOZ)*, visiting every house and meeting every confrere. During this period the community of the Headquarters of the Vice Province transferred to the residence in Maputo.

In the first days of October Fr Guillermo took part in the “inter-

mediate session” of the General Council, in the course of which the Africa - Madagascar Region was examined.

On 13 and 14 October at DBYES in Nairobi, Kenya, he took part in the first African Congress of ACSSA. Afterwards he went to neighbouring Uganda, where he was able to visit all four communities, and in particular the new foundation in Gulu, in the north of the country.

On 19 October the Regional Councillor arrived in Kigali, Rwanda, where the annual meeting of the Regional Commission for Formation was already taking place in the new Headquarters of the Vice Province of the Great Lakes (AGL). Immediately afterwards between 24 and 28, he chaired the meetings of the X Assembly of the Provincials’ and Vice Provincials’ Conference of Africa and Madagascar (CIVAM).

Between 31 October and 4 November he paid a visit to the Vice Province of Ethiopia-Eritrea (AET), taking part in a meeting of the Provincial Council at Addis Abeba and visiting some of our houses in Ethiopia, particularly that in Dilla.

Between 5 and 14 November Fr Basañes paid another visit this time to the Vice Province of Ango-

la (ANG). In addition to also here meeting the Provincial Council he was able to visit almost all the houses and meet almost all the confreres.

On 15 November he arrived at Lomé, in Togo, where he was able to visit all three Salesian communities, stopping especially in the interprovincial formation houses: the Novitiate and the Post-Novitiate.

On 17 he arrived in Cotonou, Benin, where he had the joy of taking part with the confreres and the Salesian Family in the Apostolic Visit of Benedict XVI.

On 23 November the Regional Councillor returned to the Generalate with the intention of leaving the following day for Eritrea; the only country in the 38 which make up the Africa - Madagascar Region, which Fr Guillermo has not yet visited. But the authorities in Asmara, for the second time, did not give him an entry visa.

Having cancelled the flight, between 26 and 30 November, he visited the "Saint Thomas" community of the students of theology in Messina - ISI, meeting especially the 14 students from Africa and Madagascar who are doing their formation there. During these days in Sicily he also took the opportunity to have a routine med-

ical check-up which confirmed his good state of health.

### ***The Councillor for the Latin America - South Cone Region***

After the summer session of the General Council, the Regional for Latin America - South Cone Fr Natale Vitali, left to take part in the 'Curatorium' of the Regional Centre for the Salesian Brother (CRESCO) in Guatemala City. The Centre is for the two Regions of America. This year the South Cone Region has seven confreres and two formation personnel in the Centre. Taking part in the 'Curatorium' were the two Regionals of America and the Provincials who have confreres in formation.

Afterwards he went to the San Paolo Province in Brazil, to hold a meeting, on 3 August, with the Provincial Council and the Rectors, to present to them the Letter of the Rector Major for the conclusion of the Extraordinary Visitation previously held.

On 4 August the Regional began the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Paraguay*. The "Mary Assumed into Heaven" Province has thirteen Salesian communities and 91 Salesians. Particularly sig-

nificant were two visits to the missionary communities of Chaco Paraguayo and to the headquarters of the Vicariate whose Bishop, Mons. Edmundo Valenzuela, on 8 November was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of the capital Asunción.

On 23 September the Regional took part in the continental meeting for Provincial Delegates for Social Communication, at which the Councillor for Social Communication was present.

Two days later 25, he took part in the 'Curatorium' of the Theologate in Argentina, in Buenos Aires, where there are 13 students of Theology from the two Provinces of Argentina.

Having returned to Brazil, on 28 September Fr Vitali took part in the annual meeting of the eleven Provincials of the Region at which the Councillors for Youth Ministry, the Missions and Social Communication were present. The meeting ended with Mass celebrated in the Basilica of "Nossa Senhora Aparecida" Patron of Brazil. This was followed by the Extraordinary Visitation of the San Paolo Province.

On 24 and 25 October the Regional took part in the meeting of the two Provincial Councils of Argentina to assess the progress be-

ing made in the two Provinces in many shared services.

Between 3 and 5 November he took part in the meeting of the Salesian Centre for Ongoing Formation (CSRFP) in Quito, a Centre which is now for the two Regions of America.

Afterwards between 7 and 9 November he organised the consultation for the new Provincial of San Paolo, in three different places: Lapa, Lorena and Araras; all together 124 Salesians took part.

Finally on 21 and 22 November Fr Vitali took part in a meeting of the Provincials of Brazil; after which he returned to Rome.

### ***The Councillor for the Interamerica Region***

When the summer session of the General Council was over, Fr Esteban Ortiz González, Councillor for the Interamerica Region, on Sunday 31 July travelled to Guatemala City (Guatemala) to take part – on 1 and 2 August – in the 'Curatorium' of CRESCO (Regional Centre for the Salesian Brother).

On Wednesday 3 August he had a meeting with the Provincial Fr Alejandro Hernández and his Council, in particular to prepare

the logistical part of the “Team Visit”, to be held in San Salvador (CAM) between 24 and 28 October.

The same day 3 August he set out for Medellín (COM), to take part on the following day in the ‘Curatorium’ of the Novitiate at La Ceja, where the Novices from the four Provinces (BOL, COB, COM and PER) are.

On Thursday 4 August he travelled to Bogotá (COB) and took part – on Friday 5 and Saturday 6 – in the ‘Curatorium’ of the Formation Community for the students of theology from the Provinces of (BOL, COB, COM, ECU, PER).

On Saturday 6 August he moved on to Caracas (VEN) and met the Provincial Fr. Luciano Stefani and the Provincial Council in order to present the Letter with the recommendations of the Rector Major after the recent Extraordinary Visitation of the Province carried out in the early part of this year (2011).

On Monday 8 August the Regional Councillor travelled to New York to visit his family, and on Thursday 11 he was at Stony Point (NY) with Fr Tom Dunne, the Provincial of New Rochelle, to organise the Extraordinary Visitation of the East United States Province (SUE) to be held during the first part of 2012; at the same

time he greeted the confreres who were making their retreat.

On Sunday 21 August he went to Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Saint John Bosco Province of the Antilles* (ANT); the following day he had a talk with the Provincial Fr. Víctor Pichardo, followed by a first meeting with the Provincial Council.

On Tuesday 23 he began visiting the 28 Communities which the Province has in three countries: Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

In the first place he visited the Communities (17) in the Dominican Republic. On 6 October in Puerto Rico would begin to visit the Communities (6) on that island.

On Sunday 23 October, the Regional Councillor interrupted the Extraordinary Visitation to the Antilles and travelled to San Salvador (El Salvador) to coordinate the *Team Visit to the Interamerica Region*. This took place between 24 and 28 October with the participation of 94 Salesians (all the Provincials with the members of the Provincial Councils); the Rector Major, who called the meeting and presided, was accompanied by his Vicar Fr Adriano Bregolin, and by five General Councillors: Fr.

Francesco Cereda, Fr Fabio Attard, Bro Jean Paul Müller, Fr Václav Klement and Fr Esteban Ortiz González.

Extraordinary indeed was the welcome given by the Confreres of CAM and the logistical organisation which facilitated the success of this "Team Visit" 2011.

After the Team Visit the Regional Councillor chaired a meeting of the Provincials held on 29 and 30 October at Ayagualo (El Salvador).

On Monday 31 October he travelled to Bogotá, where the following day he met with Fr. Mario Peresson, Provincial of Bogotá (COB) and his Council to assess the implementation of the recommendations of the Rector Major after the Extraordinary Visitation in 2009.

On Tuesday 1 November the Regional went to Quito (Ecuador) and the following day said Mass at the meeting for the Provincial Delegates for Missionary Animation from the two Regions of America, being held in Cumbayá.

On 3 and 4 November at the Salesian Centre for Ongoing Formation (CSRFP) he took part in a meeting of the "Extended Team", with Fr Natale Vitali, Regional Councillor for Latin America – South Cone, representatives of the Departments for Formation and for Youth Ministry (Fr. Horacio López

and Fr. Rafael Borges, respectively), the Coordinator of Formation for CISUR (Fr. Luis Timossi) and the permanent members of the CSR Team (Fr. Javier Altamirano, Fr. Fernando Peraza, Fr. Julio Olarte and Fr. Josué Nascimento).

On Saturday 5 November, the Regional Councillor returned to the Antilles Province and began visiting the Communities (5) of Cuba, starting with Santiago de Cuba and ending with Havana.

On Saturday 19 November he went to Santo Domingo to hold some meetings with the Provincial Commissions to prepare his final report; on 25 he had a meeting with the Rectors of the Communities of ANT and on Saturday 26 there was the concluding meeting of the Extraordinary Visitation with a considerable group of confreres; in the afternoon he had a meeting with the Provincial and his Council.

On Monday 28 he travelled to Port-au-Prince to visit the Salesian works in the Vice Province of Haiti (HAI) which are within the area affected by the earthquake in January last year (2010); on Tuesday 29 he had a meeting with the Superior of the Vice Province Fr. Ducange Sylvain, and his Council.

Finally on Wednesday 30 November, Fr. Esteban Ortiz made

the return journey to Rome to take part in the winter plenary session of the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the East Asia and Oceania Region***

After the conclusion of the plenary session of the General Council, the Regional Councillor for East Asia - Oceania, Fr. Andrew Wong, left Rome on 31 July and arrived on 1 August in Manila, where he stopped briefly to learn about the state of health of the Provincial, Fr Eligio Cruz. On 3 August from Manila he went to Japan, also here to learn about the state of health of the Provincial Fr. Aldo Cipriani. Both Provincial are carrying out their role fully with the medical attention and the medicines they are receiving.

On 4 August the Regional arrived in Bangkok, Thailand, where he began the *Extraordinary Visitation* of the Province. He continued this until 31 August, when he interrupted it in order to go to Manila to take part in the 'Curatorium' of the Region at the Don Bosco Centre of Studies in Parañaque, Metro-Manila. After this meeting the Regional had personal meetings with some of the Provincials.

On 3 September Fr. Andrew Wong returned to Thailand to continue the Extraordinary Visitation. On 6 September he arrived in Cambodia, to visit the community in the city of Poipet, on the border with Thailand. He stayed in this community until 8 September and then returned to Thailand, where he continued the Visitation until 18 of the month.

On 19 September he went to visit the house in the Republic of Laos. The community of Udonthani in Thailand, which the Regional was visiting is close to the border between Thailand and Laos. It was only a one day visit; and it was a good opportunity to see the place for a new Salesian foundation which it is hoped to start in 2012.

On 20 September the Regional continued his Visitation of Thailand until 28 of the month. On that day he had the opportunity to meet the Nuncio Apostolic, Archbishop Giovanni d'Aniello.

On 29 September the Regional left Thailand to go to Rome and take part in the "intermediate session" of the General Council will was held between 3 and 11 October. During this session Fr. Andrew Wong gave a report on the East Asia and Oceania. Region.

On 13 October the Regional left Rome to go to Cambodia again for a visit. Here he saw the heavy flooding which had affected the population, especially in the rural areas. On 20 October he returned to Thailand, where on 21-22 October he had a meeting with the Provincial, his Council and the Rectors of the houses to bring the Extraordinary Visitation to an end.

On 24 October the Regional went to Jakarta to meet the new Provincial Delegate and his Council. He also went to visit Fr. José Carbonell, the pioneer missionary in Indonesia, whose health is declining rapidly.

On 30 October Fr. Andrew Wong travelled to Seoul, Korea, where he had meetings with the Provincial and the Provincial Delegates for the various Sectors. He stayed in the Provincial House in Seoul until 2 November when, in the afternoon he went to Hong Kong.

In the Provincial House in Hong Kong the Regional met the Provincial Fr. Simon Lam, and the Provincial Delegates for the various Sectors.

He stayed in Hong Kong until 4 November. Then Fr. Andrew Wong continued his tour of the Region, going to Quetta, in Pakistan. In this community he met the Rector Fr. Pietro Zago the other three

confreres and the young people they are looking after. He also had the opportunity to meet the new Bishop of Quetta, Mons. Viktor Gnanapragasam, OMI.

He left Quetta on 8 November to go to Melbourne, Australia. Here he met the present Provincial Fr Francis Moloney and the newly appointed Provincial Fr Gregory Chambers.

On 13 November the Regional left Melbourne to go to Manila to ask for a Visa to enter Myanmar. In Manila he had a meeting with the Provincial Fr. Eligio Cruz and with the Provincial of South Philippines, Fr. George Militante. On 23 November he also met the Provincial of the FMA.

On 24 November Fr. Andrew Wong went to Myanmar. Here he met the Provincial Fr. Maurice Vallenge and his Council. He also met Archbishop Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon.

On 27 November the Regional completed his visits to the Region and returned to Rome for the winter session of the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the South Asia Region***

After the plenary session of the General Council, the Regional for

South Asia, Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga, arrived in Chennai on 1 August, where he held an assessment meeting with the Provincial Council. Then on 3 August he went to visit the “Becchi Don Bosco” Theological Institute. On 5 August at New Delhi he had a planning meeting with the members of the SPCI house. The following day he took part in a meeting of Provincial Delegates for missionary animation. On 8 August he arrived in Guwahati to take up again the *Extraordinary Visitation*, he had interrupted to take part in the summer plenary session of the General Council. Between 18 and 31 August he visited 18 houses in the area of Shillong and the Khasi Hills. During the visits to the Salesian houses he also met groups of the Salesian Family, such as the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHCs), the Sisters of the Visitation of Don Bosco (VSDBs), the Sisters of Maria Auxiliatrix (SMA) and the Disciples.

Between 1 and 3 September the Regional led the half-yearly meeting of the Salesian Provincials’ Conference of South Asia (SPCSA), in Calcutta, and on 4 November he chaired the Consultative Committee of the Salesian Family,

with the presence of the Major Superiors of all the Groups of consecrated persons in the Family.

Starting on 5 September the Regional continued the Extraordinary Visitation in Lower Assam, Garo Hills and some areas of the Khasi Hills. In this stage he visited 12 houses; he also spoke with the confreres in Sirajuli and Tura. The Extraordinary Visitation of the Province of Guwahati ended on 24 September with a meeting of all the Rectors. At the same time in the name of the Rector Major, he carried out a consultation on the possible subdivision of the Province.

Afterwards on 26-28 September the Regional was in Dimpaur to meet the Provincial Council and visit some houses. During the journey to Goa – where he went to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Panjim-Konkan Province (INP)* – he went to Mumbai on 30 September to meet the Provincial Council. The Extraordinary Visitation of the INP Province lasted until 19 October with the Regional visiting the 15 houses and the 3 presences, located in the Indian States of Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

On 7 November the Regional went to Hyderabad for a meeting of the Planning and Development

Offices of the Congregation, during which he gave a talk about the relevance of the Spirituality of the Preventive System in the Ministry of Development. On 9 November he arrived in Bangalore, where he spoke to the Provincial Delegates of the Salesian Family (SDB and FMA). After completing the Extraordinary Visitation of the INP Province, Fr. Maria Aokiam travelled to Sirajuli (ING) for the opening of the first Salesian Missionary Aspirantate in India. Finally on 26 November, the Regional celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his ordination at the "Sacred Heart College" in Tirupattur and, after visiting some Salesian presences at Chennai and the surroundings he left for Rome, where he arrived on 29 November.

### ***The Councillor for the North Europe Region***

After the conclusion of the summer session of the General Council, the Councillor for the North Europe Region Fr. Marek Chrzan, took part in a meeting of the Commission for the "Project for Europe" held in Spain at Santiago de Compostela between 31 July and 3 August. Immediately afterwards he travelled to Poland where at

Częstochowa he took part in the *VI International Congress of Mary Help of Christians*, organised by ADMA in the National Polish Sanctuary at Jasna Góra, between 3 and 6 August. On 20 August he took part in the Youth Festival in the Province of Piła at Trzciniec, where, during Mass he received the perpetual profession of 5 confreres from the Piła Province (PLN).

Between 3 and 7 September he took part in the "Team Visit to the North Europe Region" for the 10 Provinces of Poland, the Conference of Cyril and Methodius (PLE, PLN, PLO, PLS, EST, CEP, CRO, SLK, SLO, UNG), which was held in Krakow in Poland. Afterwards he accompanied the Rector Major to Częstochowa, where he took part in the first profession of 18 Novices from the whole of Poland at which the Rector Major presided.

On 9 September he went to Warsaw to begin (10 September), the *Extraordinary Visitation of the East Poland Province (PLE)* of Saint Stanislaus Kostka, with headquarters in Warsaw. A meeting with the Provincial Council officially opened the Visitation. After this the Regional began by visiting the following houses: Tolkmicko, Ostróda, Olsztyn, Sępól, Jaciążek.

On 24 September he took part in the solemn opening of the Academic Year of the Salesian Post-Novitiate in Łąd, where he presided at Mass and met the students, especially those from the Warsaw Province. He also took part in the 'Curatorium', held in Łąd, after the opening ceremony. On Sunday 25 September he took up again the visits to the communities in Łódź and Lutomiensk. He had a meeting with the Archbishop of Łódź, Archbishop Władysław Ziółek, who expressed his appreciation for the presence of the Salesians, over so many years in his Diocese.

On 1<sup>o</sup> October September he took part in the solemn opening of the Academic Year of the theological studentate in Krakow, where he presided at Mass and met the young confreres from the Warsaw Province. The he resumed his visits to the houses in the following order: Łódź - S. Teresa, Zgierz, Żyrardów, Kutno-Woźniaków, Czerwińsk, Płock, Legionowo, Mińsk Mazowiecki.

On 17 October he travelled to Slovenia and at Ljubliana, on 19 October, he chaired a consultation meeting of confreres in view of the appointment of the new Provincial of Slovenia. On 20 October he went to Croatia, where at Zagreb, on 21 October, he chaired a simi-

lar consultation meeting of confreres for the appointment of the new Provincial of Croatia.

On 23 October he again resumed his visits to the communities of the Warsaw Province in the following order: Różanystok - Sanctuary, Różanystok - School, Suwałki, Ełk, Warsaw - Hostel for young people, Warsaw - Missionary Centre, Warsaw - Provincial house and Basilica, Głusków, Sokołów Podlaski, Lublin. On 31 October he was received in audience by the Archbishop of Warsaw, Cardinal Casimiro Nycz.

On 18 November he took part in a Pedagogy Seminar about great educators of the XIX century at the "John Paul II" Catholic University of Lublin. In the course of the Seminar he joyfully took part in the conferral of a *Doctorate honoris causa* on the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva.

On 22 November he visited the inter-provincial novitiate in Swobnica, meeting the novices from the Warsaw Province and all the community which juridically belongs Piła Province (PLN).

The conclusion of the Extraordinary Visitation took place in Warsaw at the Provincial House on 24 November, in the presence of the Rectors, parish priests, and repre-

sentatives of the communities. The Extraordinary Visitation was brought to a close with a solemn Mass and closing conference, and a subsequent meeting with the Provincial Council.

On 25 November the Regional went to London to take part in a meeting of the Provincials and Vice Provincials of the Atlantic zone of the North Europe Region (GBR, GER, IRL, AUS, BEN) with the Rector Major and his Vicar. Between 27 November and 1 December he took part in Turin, in a meeting of the Delegates for missionary animation of the Provinces of Europe. On 28 November he also took part in the 'Curatorium' for the formation community for Brothers at Turin-Valdocco.

On 1 December he returned to the Generalate in Rome to take part in the winter session of the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the West Europe Region***

At the end of the summer session of the General Council, the Regional Councillor, Fr José Miguel Núñez, left Rome for Santiago de Compostela to take part in the meeting of the Commission for the "Project for Europe", dur-

ing the first days of August. On 6 August the *Team Visit to the West Europe Region* began in Lyon, France. With the participation of the Rector Major and of various General Councillors it lasted until 11 August. The Provincial Councils of the eight Provinces in the Region were present.

Afterwards the Regional Councillor went to Madrid to take part between 15 and 21 August in the *World Youth Days* with the presence of Pope Benedict XVI and the participation of about two million young people. Also present at the Days were the Rector Major, his Vicar, several other Councillors as well as the Mother General.

Between 22 and 28 August Fr José Miguel spent a week with his family.

On 29 August the Councillor went to Lisbon to take part in the meeting of the Provincial Council of Portugal and accompany the process of re-vitalisation, put into action following the Extraordinary Visitation and the Provincial Chapter of 2010.

On 30 August the Councillor returned to Madrid, where over several days he held a number of meetings with the Provincials of Spain the National Youth Ministry Centre and the Madrid Mission Office.

On 4 September Fr José Miguel Núñez travelled to Chile to begin the *Extraordinary Visitation of the "Saint Gabriel the Archangel" Province*, in the name of the Rector Major. The Visitor was engaged in this task until 20 November, visiting all the Salesian houses, speaking with the confreres and the lay people in the Salesian centres, presiding at the Provincial Council and the meeting of Rectors. During the Visitation Fr José Miguel also presided at the perpetual profession of two confreres and took part in the priestly ordination of a Salesian at Punta Arenas. During the months of his stay in Chile he was received in audience by a number of Bishops including the four Salesian Bishops.

After his return to Spain, in the last week of November the Regional took part in a meeting of the Iberian Conference, held in Madrid on 22-23. After this, on 24-25 November also in Madrid there was the first meeting of the Provincials of Spain and Portugal with those of Italy and the Middle East to share thoughts on the process of charismatic re-structuring and re-vitalisation.

Finally on 27-28 Fr José Miguel went to Paris to take part in the France - South Belgium Provincial Council meeting. On 1 December

he returned to Rome to take part in the winter plenary session the General Council.

### ***The Councillor for the Italy and Middle East Region***

At the end of the summer session of the General Council, Fr Pier Fausto Frisoli took part between 31 July and 3 August in the Commission for the "Project for Europe" in Santiago de Compostela. He then went to visit his parents.

Between 16 and 21 August he was again in Spain to take part, with a considerable number of young people from the Region, in the *World Youth Day* in Madrid. On 22 August he accompanied the Rector Major to the *Meeting of the Peoples* in Rimini. The following day in Milan he presided at the concelebration of the installation of the new Provincial of the Lombardy-Emilia Province (ILE), Fr Claudio Cacioli. On 26 and 27 August he went to Messina, in Sicily, to visit the confreres following a course of preparation for perpetual profession. On 28 a Pacognano he presided at Mass with the confreres of the Southern Province (IME), for the installation of the new Provincial Fr Pasquale Cristiani.

On 29 in Venice-Mestre he took part in the Provincial Assembly of the North East Italy Province (INE) and then returned to Rome.

On 2 and 3 September, in Turin, he took part in the Provincial Assembly for the opening of the *Extraordinary Visitation of the Circumscription of Piedmont, the Val d'Aosta and Lithuania (ICP)*. He then returned to Rome. On 13 September in San Donà di Piave, he received the perpetual profession of four confreres from the North East Province.

On 22 September he began the Extraordinary Visitation of ICP, visiting in turn the communities of Turin "Andrea Beltrami", Vilnius and Kaunas in Lithuania, Turin-Monterosa, Oulx, Colle Don Bosco, Rivoli-Cascine Vica, Turin-Rebaudengo, Cuneo, Turin-San Giovanni Evangelista, Cumiana, Lanzo, Alessandria, Avigliana.

During this period of time, Fr Frisoli also took part on 26 October in Rome in the celebration held in the Campidoglio of the contribution of the Salesians and of

the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to the 150 years of the history of the Unification of Italy. Between 4 and 6 November he took part in a Seminar for the formation of the Coordinators of the Pastoral Ministry in Schools and Vocational Training Centres in the Region on the subject: «The need for vocation ministry ». Then between 7 and 11 November he led the first module of the Course of formation for New Rectors held at Mascalucia in Sicily. On 16 November he chaired the 'Curatorium' at Turin-Crocetta; between 23 and 25 in Madrid he took part in a meeting of the Provincials of the Italy and Middle East Region with the Provincials of Spain and Portugal. Finally between 25 and 27 November he presided at a Seminar on the Salesian Brother held in Rome at the Salesianum.

On 1 December he made a contribution to the General Council of the Sisters of the Infant Mary in Milan. Then he returned to Rome to take part in the winter plenary session of the General Council.

### 5.1 New Salesian Bishops

#### 1. **MULENGA Clement, SDB, Bishop of the Diocese of Kabwe (Zambia)**

On 24 October 2011 the Press Office of the Holy See published the appointment of the Salesian priest *Clement MULENGA* as Bishop of the new Diocese of *KABWE*, in Zambia, which the Holy Father erected at the same time as appointing its first Bishop.

Fr. Clement Mulenga, born on 15 August 1965 at Dismas Lunte (Zambia), made his first profession as a Salesian on 31 January 1991 in Maputsoe, where he had made his novitiate. He then followed the Salesian course of formation in formation houses in different countries: at Walkerville in South Africa, at Manzini in Swaziland and at Nairobi in Kenya for theology. Perpetually professed on 25 August 1996, he was ordained priest at Luwingu on 26 April 1998.

After ordination, between 1998 and 2000 he exercised his ministry as curate in Lusaka - Bauleni; then for a year in the house of Chingola. Between 2001 and 2004 in Rome he completed his studies at the Salesian Pontifical University. Having returned to Zambia, between 2005 and 2007 he was

Rector of the community in Chingola, and at the same time Provincial Councillor and Delegate for Formation. Afterwards he was in the formation community of the postnovitiate at Moshi, in Tanzania, as Vice Rector, teacher and one of the formation personnel. From 2009 he was the Director of the Youth Ministry Office in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

The Holy Father has now appointed him Bishop of the new Diocese of Kabwe, erected by the division of the Diocese of Mpika and the Archdiocese of Lusaka, and a suffragan of the Metropolitan see of Lusaka. According to information provided by the Apostolic See, the new Diocese – at its erection – covers 63.574 sq.km, with a population of 1,078,334 of whom 138,810 are Catholics; with 43 priests; 95 religious. The Salesians in Kabwe have a community dedicated to Blessed Artemides Zatti

#### 2. **STURLA BERHOUE Daniel Fernando, Auxiliary Bishop of Montevideo (Uruguay)**

On 10 December 2011 the Press Office of the Holy See published the appointment of the Salesian priest *Daniel Fernando STURLA*

*BERHOUE*T as *Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of MONTEVIDEO (Uruguay)*, with the Titular See of Felbes.

Fr. Daniel Fernando Sturla Berhouet, born on 4 July 1959 at Montevideo (Uruguay), made his first religious profession as a Salesian on 31 January 1980 at Montevideo. Following the usual Salesian course of formation he made his perpetual profession on 31 January 1986 and was ordained priest at Montevideo on 21 November 1987.

Already having a Baccalaureate *Civil Law*, he then obtained a Licence in *Theology*.

After ordination he joined the community of the Theologate in Montevideo, where he remained

until 1992. In 1992 he was moved to the Novitiate, from where in 1994 he moved as Rector to Montevideo-Aspirantate. In 1996 he returned to the Novitiate in Montevideo as Rector and Director of Novices. In 1996 he was also called to be part of the Provincial Council. Then, between 2002 and 2008 he was Rector of the "Juan XXIII" Pre-university Institute in Montevideo. In 2004 he was also entrusted with the role of Provincial Delegate for Ongoing Formation. In June 2008 the Rector Major with his Council appointed him Provincial of the "Saint Joseph" Province of Uruguay, the position he still held when he was appointed Bishop.

## 5.2 Our dead confreres (3<sup>rd</sup> list 2011)

"Faith in the risen Christ sustains our hope and keeps alive our communion with our brothers who rest in Christ's peace. They have spent their lives in the Congregation, and not a few have suffered even to the point of martyrdom for the love of the Lord....Their remembrance is an incentive to continue faithfully in our mission" (C. 94).

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P ALDUNATE JURIO José	Barcelona (Spagna)	29/09/2011	76	SBA
P ALESSANDRINI Giglio	Roma	08/10/2011	92	ICC
P ANDREATTA Angelo	Paute-Yugmacay (Ecuador)	13/09/2011	91	ECU
P BAJOREK Joseph	Ridgewood, NJ (U.S.A.)	14/09/2011	95	SUE
P BENOTTO Giuseppe	Torino	04/12/2011	86	ICP
P BERGAMIN Antonio	Venezia-Mestre (Italia)	12/11/2011	79	INE
L BERNABÉ Angelo	Arese (Italia)	07/09/2011	87	ILE
P BETTIN Giuseppe	Varazze (Italia)	23/09/2011	78	ICC
P BRAVO FERNÁNDEZ Manuel	Sevilla (Spagna)	22/10/2011	76	SSE
P CALEJERO PEIRO Blás	Arévalo (Ávila, Spagna)	05/11/2011	85	SMA
P CALVO José	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	14/10/2011	89	ARS
P CANAVESI Angelo	Arese (Italia)	16/10/2011	91	ILE
P CANU Alessandro	Civitanova Marche Alta (Italia)	05/10/2011	99	ICC
P CARDILLO Clement	Caldwell, NJ (U.S.A.)	22/11/2011	86	SUE
P CARUSO Alfio	Messina (Italia)	15/11/2011	89	ISI
P CORRE René	Saint-Brieuc (Francia)	09/11/2011	87	FRB
P CUVELIER Marc	Seoul (Korea)	04/12/2011	73	KOR
<i>Fu Ispettore per 12 anni</i>				
P de ANDRÉS PEÑA Ciriaco	Arévalo (Ávila, Spagna)	08/10/2011	85	SMA
L DE JESUS Elias	Lisbona (Portogallo)	23/10/2011	88	POR
P DE ROSSI Pietro	Lugano (Svizzera)	24/11/2011	85	ILE
P DELMOTTE Michel	Coux-et-Bigaroque (Francia)	03/09/2011	78	FRB
L DIANA Vincenzo	Vigliano Biellese (Italia)	03/09/2011	97	ICP
P DOSSI Giovanni	Sesto San Giovanni (Italia)	29/11/2011	89	ILE
P FEDDEMA Hernan Josef	Valencia (Venezuela)	08/12/2011	86	VEN
P FERNANDO Christy	Dankotuwa (Sri Lanka)	26/09/2011	69	LKC
P FERRARIO Marco	Arese (Italia)	08/10/2011	95	ILE
P FOLLIS Héctor Mario	San Isidro (Argentina)	15/11/2011	87	ARS
P GNIDICA Ivan	Trstenik (Slovenia)	29/08/2011	81	SLO
P GOBETTI Luigi	Bandel, West Bengal (India)	22/09/2011	90	INC
P GONZÁLEZ FESTI Carlos	Montevideo (Uruguay)	19/09/2011	93	URU
P GOUVEIA DE SOUSA Manuel	Caracas (Venezuela)	11/09/2011	65	VEN
P GUZZETTI Cherubino Mario	Arese (Italia)	18/10/2011	88	ILE
P IACOVACCI Italo	Roma	30/10/2011	91	ICC
P IGNACZEWSKI Henryk	Rumia (Polonia)	11/09/2011	98	PLN
P IZZI Vincenzo	Roma	02/12/2011	89	ICC
P JACONO Giovanni	Messina (Italia)	17/11/2011	91	ISI
L JERALA YENKO Mirko	Santiago del Cile	08/11/2011	95	CHI
P JULITA Carlo	Torino	23/10/2011	84	ICP

SURNAME AND NAME	PLACE of death	DATE	AGE	PROV
P LAURO Victorio José	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	13/11/2011	81	ARS
L LOPES Virgínio Francisco	Barbacena (Brasile)	21/10/2011	68	BPA
P MARTÍNEZ REUS Vicente	Zapala (Argentina)	22/09/2011	90	ARS
P MORONE Sebastiano	Civitavecchia (Italia)	03/12/2011	89	ICC
P NERI CARVALHO José Raimundo	Manaus (Brasile)	12/11/2011	46	BMA
P NORDERA Luciano (INE)	Haifa (Israele)	02/12/2011	83	MOR
P OPDEWEEGH Christ	Helchteren (Belgio)	12/10/2011	88	BEN
P PAREDES REVERON Miguel Antonio	Valencia (Venezuela)	17/11/2011	89	VEN
P PASCUCCI Remo	Bahía Blanca (Argentina)	13/10/2011	88	ARS
P PEISCH Ferenc	Székesfehérvár (Ungheria)	15/06/2011	89	UNG
L PETRUZIO Canzio	El Campello, Alicante (Spagna)	21/09/2011	93	SVA
L POLATO Angelo	Castello di Godego (Italia)	16/10/2011	89	INE
P PORTA TIBALDI César	Santiago del Cile	03/11/2011	93	CIL
P QUINTAS ARANDA Alfonso	Santiago del Cile	09/09/2011	89	CIL
P QUINTAS ARANDA Fernando	Santiago del Cile	16/11/2011	89	CIL
P RAMOS José Cipriano Silva	Americana (Brasile)	02/09/2011	58	BSP
L REIS Afonso Gonçalves	Niterói (RJ, Brasile)	07/10/2011	95	BBH
P RODRÍGUEZ FORERO Jaime	Bogotá (Colombia)	04/11/2011	81	COB
P RODRÍGUEZ REGALADO Eduardo	Sevilla (Spagna)	04/12/2011	87	SSE
P ROJAS ARIZA Gustavo	Bogotá (Colombia)	04/09/2011	96	COB
P RUSSO Geraldo	Foggia (Italia)	25/11/2011	70	IME
P SARIS Wilhelmus	Schiedam (Olanda)	19/11/2011	90	BEN
P SCHÄFFLER Siegfried	Memmingen (Germania)	14/11/2011	96	GER
P SCHNEIDER Jerzy (PLS)	New York City, NY (U.S.A.)	22/11/2011	88	SUE
L STEFANINI Pierpaolo	Civitanova Marche (Italia)	25/10/2011	71	ICC
P STELLA Prospero	Roma	20/09/2011	87	UPS
L VALERI Luigi	Venezia-Mestre (Italia)	13/11/2011	72	INE
L VENTURI Alcides	Campinas (Brasile)	23/11/2011	83	BSP
L WU Tak Yim John B.	Hng Kong (Cina)	28/09/2011	62	CIN









