



ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

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I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

My dear confrères and sons,

Once again it is time for me to maintain and strengthen my bonds with you with my regular letter, carrying out the function that article 129 of the Constitutions assigns to the Rector Major — to be the Salesian family's centre of unity.

Happy news: Bishop Trochta made cardinal

The election of our dear confrère Bishop Trochta to the college of cardinals is the first happy news to record. Even though the event was publicized some time back it deserves mention in these pages. Such an appointment is a well-merited recognition of the faithful and constant service rendered to the Church in circumstances most delicate and difficult. It is also an honour for our humble society to which Cardinal Trochta always feels closely bound as a member, ever loyal and grateful.

Confident of interpreting the thoughts of the Salesian family, I hastened to congratulate him warmly, having in mind to express our joy in a more fitting way when he came to present himself to the Holy Father for the relevant ceremonies.

Meantime I am pleased to put on record that in all the

difficult, painful and disturbed thirty years of his work for the Church and the Congregation, Cardinal Trochta showed himself everywhere and always utterly faithful to Don Bosco's teachings and was always a priest of Christ and his Church; there was never any question of wavering or doubt; he was always the worthy son of Don Bosco.

Four months of work

Towards mid-February the Superior Council completed its general meetings which had kept the members busy for four full months.

Halfway through February the Regional Councillors resumed their visits; and the remaining members of the Council now have a schedule of meetings and contacts according to their own particular work and Commission.

Your Rector Major has been busy with various visits and meetings, offering guide-lines and encouragement, and dwelling on the more important matters in getting the wheels of renewal rolling.

As you will read under section IV of these Acts, in the four months of full sessions there was much solid work done in tackling the many urgent matters arising.

We spent a lot of time examining the deliberations of the Special Provincial Chapters that followed on the Special General Chapter. You are aware, naturally, that these need the approval of the Superior Council to have binding force. More than forty were examined and approved. Some chapters, for one reason or another, were unable to complete their work in the time foreseen. We shall make every effort to examine their deliberations with all requisite despatch.

Eventually when we get a bird's-eye view of the general situation and have made the relative evaluations of the work done by all the Provincial Chapters we intend to let you know, at least

along the main lines, those elements of special interest that have emerged. Each Province was examined as to its own special situations and problems, together with its own practical needs and its practical proposals along the lines of the Special General Chapter's directives, i.e., in the light of our single mission and single spirit. This makes each Province not an isolated particle wandering about in a void, but a living and active cell in the organic life of an equally living and active reality — the Congregation.

Top priority to formation

Many Provinces have now received back their deliberations together with possible observations and remarks relating thereto. They are now able to forge ahead and translate their deliberations into practice. This point of time is not easy, is of great moment and indeed is crucial. No matter how well conceived and pertinent these documents may be, as long as they remain on paper only, they are merely a list of fine ideas, good intentions and generous resolutions. But all will be « as was » and the documents pigeon-holed in the file of wistful fantasy unless we roll up our sleeves and do battle with the inevitable difficulties that will crop up as we try to put the deliberations into practice.

This is a job that is complex, vital and of the utmost importance, and those responsible are not only the Provincials and local superiors. It must be tackled courageously all together, methodically, and with special attention to those areas which should have priority. But top priority must go to everything that touches on formation of personnel (from aspirantship and postulancy to the curriculum proper to Salesian formation and our spiritual and religious qualification, and eventually to on-going formation). This is a « must » because it is so fundamentally important.

To neglect this essential and vital step, not giving it precedence in the renewal programme, would show a lack of understanding

and realization of the all-important interests of the Province and the Congregation, despite all words to the contrary.

The Congregation (every Province) cannot afford to delay its development, but it must be a development in depth, not in the multiplying or increasing of works.

I am well aware that this policy is not the easiest; but I also know that the really important things are never easy. Renewal must begin right here. If perchance we were to take any other line of thought, not only would we commit a grave error, but we would inflict irreparable harm on our Province and the Congregation: time is not going to stand still and wait for us.

On the subject of personnel in formation, I notice that after the Special General Chapter a very grave danger has come to light. People seem to believe that for young men in formation, preparing themselves for the Religious, priestly, Salesian life, mere living in a Salesian community is sufficient; no one capable or responsible is put in charge of their formation to give them that care that is irreplaceable; nor is there any concern to choose a suitable community that will have an educating influence on them. I have no hesitation in damning this error as fatal. Even if we were not aware of just how much these young men need (far more today than in the past) at least we should take warning from the saddening negative results furnished by these experiences.

Dear confrères, vocations are a precious treasure entrusted to us by the good Lord, and their scarcity makes them all the more precious. We cannot afford to risk damaging or losing these vocations by adopting a superficial and easy-going attitude. We must not neglect that necessary and elementary care which the very nature of a vocation in formation demands. This by no means excludes a wise and balanced understanding of the sensitivity that belongs to the particular times in which we live.

The problem is a serious one, and much of the future of the Provinces and the Congregation will depend on the way we solve it: hence all those responsible for formation must keep these thoughts constantly in mind.

The magisterium

Quite a number of confrères thanked me for what I wrote about the Magisterium in the last number of the Acts. It was my duty to speak of it, and it is one of the responsibilities weighing on all in the Congregation who have been entrusted with any authority. Never before has the Magisterium been so much the mouthpiece of authority as in these days. And just as the Superiors have the obligation of carrying out this important task, so are all the confrères bound to its acceptance.

And so I feel I must point out that while the Magisterium is a duty of the Rector Major it is also proportionately a part of the office of Provincials and Rectors. They have the special duty to make known and, to the greatest extent possible, to promote observance of the the directives and norms, especially those which in fact already exist — particularly in the new Constitutions and Regulations.

It is often obvious that directives and instructions that have been promulgated some time, are simply not known. Rather than indulge in empty laments, those in authority must insist, charitably but unequivocally, that these directives from our different legislative bodies be put into practice.

It is both necessary and more than ever beneficial that Superiors, Provincial and local Councils and every single confrère (according to the particular sphere of action and responsibility) be utterly aware of their sacrosanct duty to the Congregation in this regard.

If the clear and precise directives coming from the General and Provincial Chapters are not practised and made obligatory without fear or reservation, all is wasted.

Another word on prayer

My January letter on prayer aroused many positive reactions, not only from those in charge of communities, but also from

individual confrères, and frequently from the younger members too; indeed there was some reaction in every continent. This is a sign that the perception of our « Life with God » is something widespread throughout the Congregation — despite deficiencies and infidelities to be lamented here and there. It offers comfort and confidence for our renewal.

However, to agree in words only, to applaud the argumentation, to stress the importance of prayer at this point of our history — all this is not good enough. As I pointed out in my letter, and from what is sadly the case in many places, every community and every confrère must show a truly practical conviction that our vocation only makes sense and is only sustained in *faith*; and faith in turn receives its natural nourishment in prayer. Without this it may be something else, but it is certainly not our vocation, certainly not our mission.

Prayer: both fruit and nourishment of faith

I have been deeply impressed by a chapter in one of Jean Guittou's latest books entitled "Why I believe". In it this renowned Christian thinker and scholar refers to his personal experience and develops a thesis that really sets one thinking.

At one point he remarks, "Faith is not real unless it leans on a continual exercise of what could be termed 'piety' ". (Note the word "piety".) He goes on to say, "I know that if I had not been trained to pray, my faith would have starved, like a plant without soil. And I think that the weakening of faith partly depends on the fact that all the thought of past centuries is neglected". He follows up with this observation, "The problem of faith is not just the problem of knowing where Truth is. It is also a practical problem: how can we seize this truth and implant it in our very being?" And again, "Knowledge is not necessarily a preparation for love. To make a truth part of me, to implant it in my being, in 'the flesh of my spirit', I must embody it, give

it a tangible covering”. Guitton concludes that this incarnation of faith, which is truth, is to be found in piety, which (he maintains) is the indispensable element for nourishing faith.

I have quoted thus at length to show that souls dedicated to the diligent and keen quest for truth, souls who have no fear of new ideas (Jean Guitton is a philosopher, ecumenist and exegete) recognise that prayer and piety are deeply linked with faith — so much so that one can conclude that the problem of prayer is a problem of faith.

Indeed it is apposite to ask, “How is it possible to live our vocation and mission to the full if it is separated from prayer and languishes, or if it is reduced to a non-faith? »

Please believe me, dear confrères: to abandon or neglect prayer (and there are plenty of specious arguments being urged — suicidal sophistry) will diminish or harm our faith; and, although not always obvious, that entails our vocation and mission too.

There is only one thing left: we must renew our resolution responsibly and lovingly. Dear Provincials, Rectors and confrères, let us get down to deeds and realities so that prayer may take the foremost place which belongs to it in the life of every confrère and every community.

“Serve God first: the rest will follow”. In this way one’s neighbour will certainly be served and better and better loved. Indeed, the more prayer becomes part of our lives, the more active, generous and fruitful will our mission be. Our Lord tells us, “Without me you can do nothing”, and daily experience shows just how true this is.

The value of silence

While dealing with this matter I wish to develop another idea that has particular bearing on the subject. Voillaume has maintained authoritatively (quoting Brother Carlo Carretto) that prayer is “to think of God and love him”. The two actions cannot

be separated. I shall not dwell on the second part, but it seems to the point to emphasise the word "think".

It is plain that to think of God seriously (as is the case with anything of importance) there must be reflection, calmness. There must be that fruitful silence in which alone it is possible to concentrate one's attention and render real that filial encounter, that speaking and listening to God.

Today, when the subject of silence is broached, we hear expressions like "monkery and medievalism!" This sophistical claptrap is meant to blind the unwary and superficial. Deep down it betrays a mentality tainted (perhaps unwittingly) by the thinking thrust on us by "consumerism", comfort, hedonism, a world allergic to all recollection or reflection and delighting in losing itself in distraction.

A modern author has written, "One has only to take stock of the colossal 'industry of distraction' and the efforts made in this field. People must have noisy distraction at any cost: and this renders more and more impossible the silence that makes for recollection. Modern man does not know what to do with silence, solitude, lone meditation. We used to say, "Nature abhors a vacuum": and this is man's reaction today. It is an attitude that makes a person do anything to get away from solitude, silence and quiet. Obviously reflection and recollection are thus rendered difficult if not downright impossible. We cannot live with the God of silence without being ourselves silent, alone, recollected" (Koser C., *Vita con Dio oggi*).

Of course we are not monks and we do not belong to the middle ages: we cannot be other than Salesians, with all that that name implies; and we are Salesians of our own times. But this does not negate what the Special General Chapter has so clearly maintained. Article 35 of the new Regulations reads, "Let every community decide on opportune periods of silence to produce an atmosphere conducive to recollection, personal work and rest".

As you see, the Special General Chapter, while wanting to relieve our community life of practices not consonant with our particular mission and style, by no means set at naught the importance of silence.

There is another consideration. It is a fact that modern man, caught up in industry, noise and distraction has an absolute longing for reflection and silence. If we examine the Church today, in its myriad contrasts and confusions, we see many thousands of simple Christians, men of action, religious and priests, not indeed "taking the cloister by storm", but certainly flocking to the ever-growing numbers of retreat houses: they feel that there they can breathe deeply of the spiritual atmosphere they find in the silence that envelops them.

Some may ask whether all this is pertinent for Salesians engrossed in work and feverish activity. My dear confrères, rest assured that it certainly is! William Fealher, one of those successful American businessmen who started from nothing, and always in a whirl of activity, left in his memoirs his secret of success: "Spend an evening in your room all alone with your thoughts: this will help you get to know yourself better. Such an evening passed looking in on yourself will help you find a few nuggets of gold or a few diamonds".

But without going as far as America, and certainly not treasure-hunting, Pascal had already written these words (and we septuagenarian Salesians would do well to ponder them): "I have discovered that all one's misfortunes issue from one thing: not knowing how to sit in a room and ponder".

If we gaze about us with honesty and also look into ourselves, we have to agree with this great thinker, who always speaks to man about man.

A propos of Pascal's invitation, we should put ourselves the question, "How much time do I give to reflection, to personal reading of matters that bring me face to face with my innermost self and with the Absolute?" This kind of reading is indispensable. The preparation of conferences, lessons, sermons is certainly always

good and necessary, but it is no substitute: there must be reading that is for the direct nourishing of our spirit, that puts us in filial and loving contact with God.

The true Salesian is a man who thinks

The quote from Pascal impresses me even more when I think of a remark made to me by a priest, a man of culture and anxious for conciliar and post-capitular renewal. After preaching the annual retreat in various places, he sadly remarked to me, "The Salesians I have met during these retreats gave me the impression of being allergic to silence, and also, unhappily, to thinking and prayer". I can only hope this judgement is not true, or at least a greatly exaggerated generalization.

Our classic Salesians, the men who built up the Congregation from its early beginnings, planning its expansion and progress, were indeed men of untiring energy and enthusiasm; but they were also men who, after the example of Don Bosco, were given to thought, personal recollection, reflection and prayer. Names like Rua, Rinaldi, Berruti, Quadrio, Srugi, are representative of thousands and thousands of confrères who were able to throw themselves into their work with great profit; yet always enjoyed the enlightenment and comfort of that "fruitful thought", that energizing "silent conversing ith God", which, despite difficulties that are never lacking, points the sure, safe way to new apostolic goals.

Dear confrères, the more active our life is, the more exposed to the gusty winds of wordliness, the deeper our roots must be. This is achieved exactly by learning how to think, reflect, encounter God, put ourselves in union with him. For this the atmosphere and ambient most suitable is to be found in recollection and silence, especially in those privileged times of the days of recollection we have every month, every three months and every year. The thought of our Founder is underlined by article 63 of the Consti-

tutions, “Don Bosco saw in these moments of recollection and renewal ‘the basic part’ and the synthesis of our whole life of prayer”.

Days of recollection are not study meetings

At the risk or repetition I wish to stress that the days of recollection should not be turned or distorted into study meetings, round-table discussions or debates on all kinds of cultural matters. Admittedly such gatherings can be very useful, but they must not substitute the days of recollection; other times and occasions should be found for them. The days of recollection, with their special programming, must serve to restore and recreate the Salesian’s spiritual and apostolic life: and this is done by reflection and personal and community prayer — these are the things that belong to such days. One can admit that there are many forms, many ways and means, for achieving recollection, silence, solitary withdrawal — and perhaps we have much to learn in this matter; but the basic necessity of these elements for prayer and the interior life cannot be gainsaid.

For the sake of man and his “life in God” we must get rid of the modern phobia regarding recollection, silence and prayer. Recollection and silence are indispensable not only for life in God but also for true culture and civilization.

These ideas may not “conform”, but they are absolutely correct; and if Provincials and Rectors keep them before their minds, I am sure that the logical consequences will not fall on barren soil. They are well aware of their duty to see in one way or another that these days the Constitutions set aside for the spiritual and apostolic nourishment of the confrères be not emptied of their precious contents. The rights and true interests of the confrères in this regard must not be denied them.

Why insist so much on prayer?

Now it may be asked why so much is being said about prayer. The answer is seen in plain facts. I see how urgent it is to take courageous, total and methodical action for our renewal along the clear lines of the Special General Chapter. It is exactly because of this that it would be a grave mistake to insist on the other sections (important though they are) without making our starting point the dedicated renewal of our prayer life; and when I say prayer I include the sum of our personal and community relationships with God — as people consecrated and “sent forth on our mission”.

“This is the very centre, indeed it is the true secret of the renewal of our Salesian vocation today.” This unequivocal statement is not mine: it was made by the Special General Chapter (SGC 519). And a little further on are these words, “We are convinced that only a spiritual rebirth and not a mere set of new structures will give the go-ahead to a new era in the history of the Church” (SGC 523).

These affirmations issue from the most important organ of our Congregation and are the fruit of bitter experience. They come from the desire to see the Congregation extend itself without delay in bold apostolic dedication; and it is for this very reason that the Chapter bids us recharge our spiritual life with God’s urging action, so that we become men of the spirit, men of prayer that is not formalistic but convinced. We must be ever mindful of these statements, especially at this decisive moment when the Congregation is gathering its forces to set in motion the complex machinery of its renewal. It would be a sorry day for us if we were to set our shoulders to other sections of renewal and neglect our life in God — for this is the pivot and foundation of everything else. Renewal is not a case of getting ourselves reorganized, but aligning ourselves with the Lord in fidelity and spiritual docility. We would run the risk of setting up a lot of showy and apparently efficient machinery; but it would be soulless and

lacking that irreplaceable spiritual energy for the service to youth and the Church that the Congregation must render. It would be a poor structure that would very soon prove useless.

My dear Salesians, we have been invited to undertake the task of renewal: then let us be sincerely convinced of the solemn and ever-relevant statement of Don Rinaldi that is backed by the Regulations themselves: "Untiring work sanctified by prayer and union with God must be the characteristic of the sons of St. John Bosco".

Lent and Temperance

One last thought. As I write these pages we are just beginning Lent. In tune with the whole thought of the Council, article 50 of our Regulations invites us to live this important part of the liturgical year intensely, turning Lenten austerity into practical reality, both as individuals and communities.

A general but important observation: I make frequent references to the Constitutions. It is important not only to be well aware of them, but to be thoroughly versed in them. This is the surest way we shall come to appreciate them and discover in them all the spiritual and Salesian wealth they contain. Thus it will not be a case of mere formal observance: rather we shall then live them in practice.

To be consistent and faithful to the promise we freely made we have to eschew all empty and false formalism: we must accept sincerely and cordially this means the Congregation offers its sons in order to help them measure up adequately to their mission and consecration. It is not just fitting, it is necessary that each community find a time for the public reading of the Constitutions and Regulations.

Not shackles but railway lines

Local Superiors, especially Provincials and Rectors, should refer often to the Constitutions and to the spiritual values therein — and I refer also to those articles that are not strictly juridical and practical, but which often contain essential and basic values for the Salesian life and spirit. We must remember that our Holy Rule is not a straitjacket, or a set of shackles to deprive us of liberty, but a railway line along which the Congregation can progress, develop and act in harmony. A little thought will make it obvious that the Constitutions are a synthesis of the spirit proper to our Congregation: to know them, practise them, and have others practise them — these are the simple and efficacious ways and means to keep us united in this spirit which is the vital element of our Congregation.

I should add too that we should do more than just refer to the Constitutions: when proper and necessary, especially those in authority should demand respect for them. Professional loyalty requires this; but there should also be a desire to respect and defend the “law” itself. It is, after all, the expressed will of the Congregation, written up in fidelity to our Founder’s charism. Any well-ordered and organized society would expect this loyal observance from its members. The day when the law (our Holy Rule) is regarded as a “scrap of paper”, and whims and individual caprices take over, and there is contempt (in practice if not theory) then that day would see the end of the Congregation.

Don Bosco gives a further reminder of this in his last will written from the depths of his paternal heart when he was about to leave his children: “If you have loved me in life, continue to love me after death by observing the Constitutions“. He has given us a yardstick to measure our love for him and the Congregation, his creation and our mother. Without this there would be no true love of Don Bosco, no matter how different things might appear. Don Bosco himself, our Father, has said so.

Mortification means strength

Let us dwell a moment now on Lent and its invitation to mortify ourselves. This is the special time for penance, but obviously the obligation extends throughout the year.

This austerity is referred to by Don Bosco and our Salesian tradition as *temperance*. We know well how today's pundits (and they are not all layfolk — possibly some are in our own ranks) despise and dispute these values. They substitute (at least in practice) values of comfort, well-being and status-symbol buying. But indeed where these values become criteria for evaluating persons, groups or peoples, man is no longer man. We should note how this is happening, especially among the young, in those countries in which progress is confused with the rat-race after the myth of plenty.

True human values are lodged on a higher plane than mere well-being (we are not denying the usefulness and validity of the latter, provided it be subordinated to the true values).

The highest human values are reached only when a man is master of himself; and to attain this he must face up to discomfort, austerity, i.e., mortification, temperance.

Pope Paul VI spoke some very apposite words at the beginning of Lent: "Christian abnegation, mortification, penance are not forms of weakness, they are not inferiority complexes; but, issuing from grace and will-power, they are rather forms of strength; they train us to be masters of ourselves; they give unity and balance to our faculties; they help the spirit prevail over the flesh, reason over fantasy, will over instincts; they bring to our being a need for fulness and perfection. Rigor means vigour!" (Address of Pope Paul VI at Santa Sabina, 7 March, 1973).

It is good to see Scripture quoted so freely these days. Then let us recall Jesus speaking simply and clearly to us in particular, who have elected to follow him closely: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and

follow me". We cannot escape this: it is part of the Christian message that we as consecrated men publicly accepted in full.

Three threats to our communities

Our Special General Chapter was very much aware of the importance of Christian self-abnegation — which means primarily and essentially temperance. Don Bosco knew what he was about when he gave us our Salesian diptych: work and temperance.

In article 606 the Chapter remarks that our witness to poverty is particularly meaningful when lived in community. It goes on to explain that in practice this means frugality in food, rejecting the superfluous, functional simplicity in our buildings, the way we own things (we place ourselves and everything we have at the common service of our mission), and our generous solidarity with the houses and Provinces of the Congregation and the various needs of the Church and the world.

Lent invites us to reflect and to ask serenely and sincerely in every community: "As individuals and as communities, how do we stand in the matter of austerity and temperance?" Let us not try to salve our consciences with smart, comfortable but unconvincing arguments; we must answer the question without hedging.

According to Don Bosco the three enemies that threaten our communities are "cibus, potus, lectus" (food, drink and sleep), and he dilated on the array of factors therein that could negate our lives. I think our Founder's words are relevant today, especially in certain sectors.

The lack of frugality and temperance in food, in certain prolonged and costly holidays, in going after all kinds of comforts and conveniences, in recreations that belong to the well-to-do, is an offence to so many of our confrères who live in genuine poverty and Salesian frugality; it is an offence to the infinite number of poor who lack even the necessities of life; and it is an

offence to the thousands of good souls who try to help the Salesian mission by conducting their lives in a frugal pattern of sacrifices, living far more modestly than those who enjoy the fruits of their mortification.

We are aware how critical the young are in this matter that touches on our personal poverty, our community poverty and the very meaning of consecrated life. It should be remembered what a positive influence a life showing the stamp of austerity and temperance can have on young vocations.

Our mission demands austerity

The Special General Chapter had indicated the missions as the main avenue of our renewal. Hence my words on stirring up in every community a constant awareness and interest in the missions. But if we live a soft life, a life spent in anxious questing for bodily comforts, if the stuff of which we are made is mere jelly, if we lack the strength and energy that comes from Don Bosco's style of temperance, how can the missionary spirit flourish in us? Don Bosco knew what he was about when he exhorted his missionaries to "great moderation in food, drink and rest" — and it holds for us too!

One just cannot be a man of prayer with God's interests at heart, and be always anxiously striving for a comfortable little world, lacking nothing. This is very different from what Christ wants and offers us.

Lack of temperance is one of the weak spots; and history teaches us that the enemy makes use of it to undermine the walls of our Congregation. Don Bosco knew his history and shouted the danger to his sons loud and strong.

Our Founder urges us forward to a mission that demands self-giving, and this requires austerity and detachment, "a heart that walks barefoot", as St. Francis of Sales used to say.

Dear sons, it is my wish that you dwell on these thoughts

of mine and use them to check how you stand as individuals and communities. There are so many people who love and esteem the Congregation and want the Salesians to be faithful to their Founder. God grant that they may join our Founder and say of you, "Indeed these are true sons of Don Bosco".

I hope this letter arrives in time to carry you my sincere greetings for Easter.

Affectionate good wishes. Let us be united each day "in the breaking of bread".

May our Father Don Bosco bless you all.

Father ALOYSIUS RICCERI
Rector Major

III. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Bishop Trochta our fourth Salesian Cardinal

The Rector Major's letter in this issue of the Acts has already made reference to the Sacred Consistory of 5 March in which Pope Paul VI announced that Stephen Trochta, Salesian Bishop of Litomerice had already been created Cardinal "in pectore" in the Sacred Consistory of 1969. We give herewith the Pope's allocution to the recent Consistory in which he explains the reasons for the appointment and why the matter was kept secret since 1969.

"And now we have a special announcement to make", the Holy Father said. "We refer to the last Consistory of 28 April 1969 in which we announced the creation of two cardinals for the Sacred College. We then reserved these appointments "in pectore". It is now our pleasure to proclaim that the first of these is our venerable brother, Stephen Trochta, Bishop of Litomerice in Czechoslovakia.

"The reason we chose him was not only to give solemn recognition to the merits of this faithful and zealous pastor but also to show our affection for his splendid country which for many reasons is particularly close to our heart.

"And now the motives for our delay in making public his name: first of all, our venerable brother Joseph Cardinal Beran was still with us (although suffering a severe illness which was soon to cause his death), and although not living in his country, he still had title to the illustrious archdiocese of Prague. But the main reason was that we always desired, and never at any time lost hope, that eventually relations between the Government and the Church in the Republic of Czechoslovakia would return to normal. Over the years great efforts were made to attain this goal.

"Although in its early stages and not yet finalised, certain progress

has been achieved recently with the appointment of four new bishops belonging to that country. We are confident that the hoped-for development will soon be realised; and so we are happy to give you this news which we are sure will bring satisfaction and joy not only to the Catholics but to all the Czechoslovakian people”.

2. Intercontinental meetings for the implementation of the directives of the Special General Chapter

The Superior Council has now decided on the procedure for the intercontinental meetings envisaged by XX SGC. The Acts of the Special General Chapter (761:12) speak of these meetings thus: — “At a convenient time the Rector Major and some members of the Superior Council will arrange meetings with the Provincials of the different regions to take stock of the progress that has been made in the implementation of the directives of the General Chapter”.

This section of the Acts also provides in a general way for the necessary programme to be adopted in the preparation of such meetings. The Superior Council has now further detailed this procedure, dividing it into *four phases*.

1) In every Province the Provincial and his Council will prepare a report on how the Province has implemented the directives of the Special General Chapter and the deliberations of the Special Provincial Chapter.

2) An intermediate Provincial Chapter will be held between the two General Chapters (cf. Acts SGC 761:10). Its scope is to examine the report prepared by the Provincial with his Council and to approve the definitive text.

3) When the report is approved it will be forwarded to the Superior Council for examination.

4) Finally the intercontinental meetings will be held, with the Rector Major, some Council members, and Provincials with their Provincial Delegates.

In broad lines and subject to unforeseen problems the Superior

Council has fixed the places for these meetings: Rome, Brazil and Bangalore.

The dates for the different phases of preparation are here tabulated:

Meetings	ROME	BRAZIL	BANGALORE
1) Preparation of report of Provincial and his Council	for end of 1974	by January 1975	by May 1975
2) Intermediate Provincial Chapter	January 1975	February 1975	June 1975
3) Forwarding of report to Superior Council and examination thereof	Feb-Mar 1975	Mar-Apr 1975	Aug-Sept 1975
4) Intercontinental meetings	first 10 days of April 1975	last 10 days of May 1975	second 10 days of Oct 1975

3. The PAS: specialized and up-dating courses

The PAS at Rome has publicized the specialized and up-dating courses it has organized for the next few years. These specialized courses are: a) a two-year course of theology, b) a two-year course in spirituality and c) a yearly course in up-dating.

a) *The two-year course of specialized theology* is open to those who have completed their institutional theological course. It offers a choice of dogmatic theology and pastoral theology (the latter specializing further into pastoral-moral, pastoral-liturgy and spirituality). The course carries the "Licentiate in Theology" degree.

b) *The two-year course of specialization in spirituality* is open to all members of the Salesian family (SDB, FMA, VDB, Co-operators, Past Pupils), the minimum study requirements being the successful completion of the pre-university year (licenza dalla scuola media superiore). The course awards a "Diploma in Spirituality".

c) *The twelve-months course in up-dating* is suited to Salesians who have spent some years in the ministry and is based on four main themes: knowing modern man and today's world; study of the renewed theological thought of our times; examination of pastoral action; and deepening and up-dating of the Salesian vocation.

With these initiatives the PAS is offering an ever-increasing service and guidance to the Salesian family.

4. Courses of "On-going Formation" at the Salesianum (Generalate, Rome)

The Salesian Formation Commission is preparing courses of on-going formation at the Rome Salesianum.

These courses aim at offering Salesians a "renewal experience" along the following lines: deep spiritual dedication; Salesian community life; pastoral searchings and new attitudes; cultural up-dating.

The first course of on-going formation is planned for next October and will last four months.

5. The world-gathering of Salesian Brothers

The Superior Council has fixed the date and procedure of the meetings of the Brothers which (in compliance with SGC 763:4) are to be held at the Provincial level, then regional, and finally world level.

The organization of these meetings has been entrusted (according to the level) to Provincials, Regional Councillors and the Commission for Salesian Formation.

In these meetings the Congregation will study in depth how the Salesian Brother was envisaged by the Special General Chapter and the practical directives the same Chapter gave in his regard.

The world meeting of Salesian Brothers will take place at Rome in the last week of March 1975, coinciding with the opening of Holy Year.

6. The work programme of the Superior Council

This programme has been scheduled to suit the members' alternating presence at the Generalate and absence on regional visits.

Up to 1976 the general schedule is as follows:

<i>On regional visits</i>	<i>At the Generalate</i>
15 Feb - 30 June 1973	1 July - 30 Sept 1973
1 Oct. 1973 - 14 Jan 1974	15 Jan - 15 Mar 1974
16 Mar - 30 June 1974	1 July - 30 Sept 1974
1 Oct 1974 - 15 Jan 1975	16 Jan - 15 Mar 1975
16 Mar - 30 June 1975	1 July - 30 Sept 1975
1 Oct 1975 - 15 Jan 1976	

7. Mgr. Coronado: new Salesian bishop

The Holy Father has appointed Mgr. Jesús Maria Coronado Caro, SDB, Prefect Apostolic of Ariari, to the residential see of Girardot, Colombia.

8. Provincial appointments

Father Gennaro Honda has been appointed Provincial of the Province of Japan.

Father Robert Falk has been appointed personal delegate of the Rector Major for the Delegation of South Korea.

9. Study Centre for the history of the Salesian Congregation

A Study Centre for the history of the Salesian Congregation has been set up at the Generalate under the aegis of the Theological Faculty of the PAS (Rome).

Its aim is to fill an obvious gap in this sector, and to collect facts and trends that may be of use not only in understanding the past but also for projecting the future.

The Superior Council has assigned to the Centre two tasks: the writing up of Salesian history in general, and the particular history

of the Salesian missions (which will celebrate their centenary in 1975). This latter work will be directed by Father Raphael Farina (Dean of the Theological Faculty at the PAS) with the collaboration of the Commission for Salesian Missions at the Generalate. The Centre aims to collect and catalogue published and unpublished material from missionary centres or lying in various archives; to set up a library of missionary reviews and magazines; prepare a monograph on the history of the Salesian missions (to be ready for 1975); and publish various scientific contributions on the Salesian missions.

The Centre is already at work and has enlisted the aid of Regional Superiors in the organizing of men and suitable initiatives in various parts of the Salesian missionary world for the collection of material for study and publication.

10. Salesians in the Managua earthquake

The violent earthquake which struck Nicaragua 23-24 December last, destroying its capital Managua, also involved the Salesian work in that city. Buildings were seriously damaged, but confrères and all other persons in our houses escaped harm.

The Salesian foundation was on the outskirts of the city in a working-class area that was developing rapidly. It consisted of a school building and work-shops (for printing, mechanics and carpentry) with 1500 pupils; also a free elementary school. Many other works of a social nature were about to be opened in January. The buildings suffered damage to the value of \$ 150,000.

During those tragic days the confrères spent themselves utterly in helping the homeless, and the Salesian houses of Masaya and Granada, not far from Managua, were placed at the disposal of the authorities as emergency bases.

Through the good offices of the Superior Council, a few Salesians from the Missionary Office of New Rochelle travelled immediately to the disaster area. Venezuela also sent confrères; and practically all parts of the Salesian world showed their solidarity by doing or sending something in the way of help.

As a result of these efforts, and especially due to the dedication of the Managua confrères, the youth centre is once more engaging

in some of its activities. News is to hand that in the usable parts of the centre two crash courses in arc-welding for apprentices and workers are already in progress. The idea of these courses is to train men in a hurry to help in the prompt rebuilding of the ruined capital. For the same purpose there are further crash courses in electricity, carpentry, joinery, etc. Meanwhile, the youngsters are drifting back to the youth centre, and life round about is gradually returning to normal.

These pages record and renew the lively solidarity of the Salesian family towards these stricken confrères and especially towards His Grace, Michael Obando Bravo, Salesian Archbishop of Managua.

11. Donations for Managua

After the earthquake tragedy and the damage to our Don Bosco School of Arts and Trades (as described above) various Provinces have hastened to forward to the Rector Major their contributions to the solidarity fund for these confrères so hard-hit. Below are details.

North Belgium	Lire	130,000
United States East	»	309,000
Quito	»	1,240,000
Portugal	»	1,064,000
Bahia Blanca	»	300,000
United States West	»	1,335,165
South Germany	»	1,800,000
Madrid	Pesetas	176,385

From the general BROTHERLY SOLIDARITY FUND the Rector Major has sent to His Grace, Obando Bravo, Salesian Archbishop of Managua, L 1,000,000 to help in the many needs of his stricken people.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST

1. Superior Council meetings

Half way through February the Regional Councillors began their second journey to their respective Provinces. From the third week of last October till then, the Superior Council was in full strength at the Generalate and was busy with many of the Society's problems.

During these four months at Rome it held meetings at various levels: meetings with the Commissions, both separately and together; meeting with the Regionals; with various committees; and sixty-seven general meetings.

The general meetings dealt with a variety of matters. First there was the ordinary governing of the Congregation, and with modern times presenting special problems calling for exceptional decisions, time for ordinary governing is greatly reduced; nevertheless government must proceed: for many decisions (regarding persons, works, Provinces) the Rector Major wants the opinion of his Councillors, or must have their consent.

The Council's first item was the examination of the Regionals' reports on the Provinces they had just visited. These visits, though rapid, were nevertheless sufficient to highlight some questions of moment, and the Council discussed way and means for suitable solutions. The reports covered the whole of the Salesian world.

The Superior Council also appointed eight Provincials. The choice of a confrère to take on the responsibility of a Province is a grave one, especially in these times of renewal; and for that very reason the procedure for appointment is now a more lengthy and detailed matter. According to the Acts of the Special General Chapter the Regional Councillor must see that there be an opinion poll conducted among the confrères of the Province. The Superior Council then carefully examines the confrères' preferences and proceeds with the appointment.

Besides the ordinary work, the Superior Council examined the various Special Provincial Council deliberations. The procedure of this

new and difficult task was described in the last number of the Acts (page 54). Fortysix out of the seventyfour Special Provincial Council deliberations have now been examined. They are herewith listed.

Italy and the Middle East.

Adriatic, Ligurian-Tuscan, Southern, Novarese, Romano-Sarda, Sicilian, Subalpine, East and West Veneta, Middle East.

Central America & South America (Pacific side).

Antilles, Bolivia, Central America, Messico-Mexico, Venezuela.

South America (Atlantic side).

La Plata, Belo Horizonte, Manaus, Recife, Paraguay.

Iberian Peninsula.

Barcelona, Bilbao, Cordoba, Leon, Madrid, Seville, Portugal.

North & Central Europe and Central Africa.

Austria, North & South Belgium, North France, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Holland, Central Africa.

English-speaking Region.

Australia, Hong Kong, Bombay, Calcutta, Gauhati, Madras, Ireland, Japan, Thailand.

The examination of the Special Provincial deliberations has proved very helpful to the Superior Council, putting the members in close touch with the realities of the Provinces and the confrères' obvious desire and efforts for renewal. The work will be resumed in July when the Regionals return from abroad.

2. The work of the Commissions

Each Commission has made practical proposals to the Superior Council and received approval for several.

The Commission for Salesian Formation is helping the PAS (Rome) in the programming of the new academic courses mentioned in "Communications", page 23. It is also preparing for the World Congress of Salesian Brothers (v. page 24).

More generally, the Commission is studying ways and means for a constant increase in the effectiveness of the work of formation in the Provinces (for it is to the Provinces that the Special General Chapter has entrusted the immediate and practical matters of confrère-formation).

Finally the Commission has made considerable progress with a document on on-going formation which the Constitutions describe as the right and duty of every Salesian. The matter is treated as a typically modern fact, aimed at attaining "formation through change". The prevailing stability in the past could have fostered the idea that a formation once acquired lasted for good. But these days see our whole social fabric subjected to constant and regular changes. The grown-up, as well as the youngster, will not survive if he does not "learn how to learn", if he does not form himself "for change and in change". Thus (the document-in-preparation continues), on-going formation will always need to be extended to span the whole of our existence from infancy to old age. This study of the Salesian confrère is not treated as a matter of broad directives, but delves into practical situations: for it is of ever-increasing importance that the Congregation take its on-going formation seriously if it wishes to fulfil its Salesian mission today.

This is why courses of on-going formation are being organized at the Salesianum as described on page 24.

The Commission for Youth "Pastoral" has presented the Superior Council with its programme of action and the objectives it plans to achieve.

On 3 and 4 February it organized a meeting at the Generalate for Salesians representing schools and youth apostolate in Italy and Spain. The problem of the Catholic school in a pluralistic society was dealt with and an outline of proposals for Salesian schools drafted.

The Commission for Adults also presented its plan of action to the Council. It has set in train a two-fold enquiry into Salesian Bulletins and Salesian publishing houses. It plans to make an estimate of the situation, examine the problems that come to light, and, where possible (in line with the directives of the Special General Chapter), co-ordinate initiatives for common action.

Also part of the Commission's scope is information regarding the

internal affairs of the Congregation (communications that are mutually beneficial, exchange of experiences, questing for new methods), especially the Provincial newsletters (now widely in use), and the need to increase the exchange of information at the inter-Provincial and world levels.

The Commission is also working on two documents close to the heart of the Salesian family: the new *Past Pupils Statutes* and the new *Regulations for Salesian Co-operators*. The preparation of the latter is still in the initial stages, and the Commission, together with the National Councils of Co-operators, is mapping out its lines of procedure.

On the other hand, the Statutes of the Past Pupils are well advanced. A first draft has been forwarded to the National Councils and their observations are already to hand. A meeting of the Confederated Committee of Past Pupils will soon be held to finalize details and arrive at a definitive text as soon as possible. The meeting will also deal with two other matters of general interest: the Congress of Past Pupils in Latin America (themes, programmes, organization), and the setting up of an international news bulletin.

The Commission for the Missions has also put its programme to the Superior Council and received approval. Its aim is mission renewal, and the approaching centenary of the Salesian missions will be a good occasion for the launching of various initiatives now in preparation. One of these latter is the founding of a study centre for the "History of the Salesian Missions" (v. page 25).

3. Other activities of the Superior Council

During the period of the general meeting of the Council, some of the Councillors managed to visit various Provinces and Houses. Father Raineri attended meetings of Past Pupils and Co-operators in Spain and Portugal. Father Castillo took part in the Inter-American Catholic Education Conference in January at Panama.

For the first time the new Generalate celebrated the feast of Saint John Bosco. On the eve of the feast many Salesians, Co-operators and past pupils accepted an invitation to be present at the concelebrated Mass presided over by Cardinal Confalonieri.

On 9 February the members of the Superior Council marked the conclusion of their work in Rome by repairing to St. Peter's to celebrate Mass at the tomb of the Apostle.

During the next few days the Regional Councillors set out on their visits; and the Councillors for the Missions and Youth "Pastoral" also left for important journeys: Father Tohill to spend four months in the ten missionary territories of the Congregation in Latin America, and Father Castillo to visit all the aspirantates in Italy.

The Rector Major, too, journeyed to the Iberian Peninsula and was there from the 14th. to the 26th. of February.

4. The Rector Major in Spain and Portugal

During the period 14-26 February the Rector Major visited the Salesians in Spain and Portugal in company with Father Mérida (Councillor for the Iberian Peninsular) and Father Viganò (who also attended the various meetings scheduled).

The visit included Madrid (14-18 Feb), Lisbon and Oporto (18-21 Feb) and Barcelona (21-25 Feb).

At Madrid the Rector Major attended the « Iberian Conference » and also met the five novice masters. He gave a conference on vocations to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and addressed three hundred Salesians on the subject of renewal.

In Portugal he met the Provincial Council, spoke with the Nuncio and visited a number of Salesian Houses.

At Barcelona he addressed two hundred confrères on the subject of renewal and spent a few quiet days of prayer at the monastery of Monserrat.

The Rector Major worked to a tight schedule that was crowded yet calm. (Among other things, Father Ricceri had to front up to an all-out attack of 140 aspirants at Carabanchel Alto — all fierce autograph hunters.)

The Salesian family in the Iberian Peninsular enjoyed meeting the successor of Don Bosco and saw in his urging and encouraging directives the continuation of that dialogue which was begun so many years ago by Don Bosco himself.

V. DOCUMENTS

1. The Salesian Ordo

On 13 March 1973 the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship approved the Salesian Ordo. The text in Latin and English follows.

a) Latin text

SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO CULTU DIVINO
Prot. N. 476/73 SOCIETATIS SANCTI FRANCISCI SALESII

Instante Rev. Domino Decio Baptista Teixeira, Procuratore Generali Societatis Sancti Francisci Salesii, litteris die 28 februarii 1973 datis, vigore facultatum huic Sacrae Congregationi a Summo Pontifice Paulo VI tributarum, Calendarium proprium eiusdem Societatis, prout in adiecto prostat exemplari, perlibenter probamus seu confirmamus, ut ab iis qui eo tenentur in posterum servetur.

Huiusmodi Calendarium servatur etiam in ecclesiis et oratoriis Instituti Filiarum Beatæ Mariæ Virginis Auxiliatricis et inseri potest sive in Calendarium Romanum generale sive in Calendarium Ecclesiae localis, iuxta electionem a Superioribus competentibus singulis in regionibus faciendam.

Contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Ex aedibus Sacrae Congregationis pro Cultu Divino, die 13 martii 1973.

ARTURUS Card. TABERA, *Praefectus*
A. BUGNINI, Archiep. tit. Diocletianen., *a Secretis*

SOCIETATIS SANCTI FRANCISCI SALESII
CALENDARIUM PROPRIUM

IANUARIUS

- 24 *S. Francisci de Sales*, ep. et Eccl. doct., Societatis Tituli, *festum*
31 S. JOHANNIS BOSCO presb., Societatis Fundatoris, *solemnitas*

FEBRUARIUS

- 1 Commemoratio sodalium defunctorum Societatis

MAIUS

- 6 *Dominici Savio*, *festum*
13 *S. Mariae Dominicae Mazzarello* virg., Instituti Filiarum Mariae
Auxiliatricis fundatricis, *festum*
24 B. MARIAE VIRG. titulo AUXILIUM CHRISTIANORUM, Societatis
Patr. Princ., *solemnitas*

IUNIUS

- 23 *S. Ioseph Cafasso* presb., *memoria*

OCTOBER

- 29 *B. Michaelis Rua* presb., *memoria*

b) English translation

SACRED CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

File no. 467/73 SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS OF SALES

At the request of Rev. Father Decius Baptist Teixeira, Procurator General of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, in his letter of 28 February 1973, and by virtue of the faculties accorded to this Sacred

Congregation by the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI, we willingly approve and confirm the calendar proper to the said Congregation as set out in the copy attached, so that it may be used henceforth by all who are bound thereto.

This calendar is also for use in churches and oratories of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and may be inserted into the general Roman calendar or the calendar of the local Church according to the choice of the competent superiors in each region.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the Office of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship,
13 March 1973.

ARTHUR Cardinal TABERA, *Prefect.*
Archbp. A. BUGNINI, *Secretary.*

SALESIAN "PROPER"

JANUARY

- 24 *St. Francis of Sales*, Bp & Doctor of the Church, Titular of the Society: *Feast.*
31 *St. JOHN*, Priest, Founder of the Society: *Solemnity.*

FEBRUARY

- 1 Commemoration of the deceased members of the Society.

MAY

- 6 *St. Dominic Savio*: *Feast.*
13 *St. Mary Mazzarello*, Virgin, Founder of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: *Feast.*
24 MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS, Principal Patroness of the Society: *Solemnity.*

JUNE

- 23 *St. Joseph Cafasso*, Priest: *Memorial.*

OCTOBER

- 29 Blessed MICHAEL RUA, Priest: *Memorial.*

2. Letter of the Rector Major to the Salesians in Mexico

On the occasion of the 80th. anniversary of the arrival of the Salesians in Mexico, the Rector Major sent the following letter to the confrères of the two Mexican Provinces.

Beloved confrères and sons,

The glory and serenity of Don Rua's Beatification is still with us as I take up my pen to write to you on the occasion of the 80th. anniversary of the arrival of the first Salesians in your magnificent country which, from the dawn of its history has been blessed with the ever-abiding presence of its patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe.

It is a happy coincidence that I am able to sign this letter on the very day on which we can honour Don Rua at the altar. Exactly eighty years ago, in October 1892, he decided to send the first group of Salesians to Mexico. This coincidence fills our hearts with joy and confidence.

The first day of December 1972 is a date that is memorable for Mexico and for the whole Congregation. We look with joy over the first eighty years since the first small group of five Salesians arrived in Mexico under the leadership of their energetic rector, Father Angelo Piccono; and the presence of a cleric and brother in that tiny party gave it the characteristic of an authentic Salesian community.

In a way such a small group seemed out of all proportion to the vast work ahead, and but a small offering to the deep affection of so many Mexicans anxiously awaiting their arrival. But Don Rua (like Don Bosco) knew that a small community of Salesians with a deep love for the young could imbue their activities with a boundless energy and enthusiasm. Don Bosco used say, "In things that will help youngsters in peril, in things that will bring people to God, I forge ahead to the point of rashness" (MB XIV 662).

My dear confrères, this great Salesian occasion prompts us to ponder both past and future.

The past evokes the great pioneers: magnificent men like Mgr. Piani and so many other generous Salesians who worked and sweated in the making of the vivid history of the Congregation in Mexico. They have left you the spirit of those early days as your heritage; they opened up the way for your Salesians activities. Let us never forget this:

we must be deeply aware of our vital links with those who blazed the trail of this grand Salesian adventure.

As we think back we recall the unforgettable tragedy that caused the painful dispersal of our confrères — it seemed to sound the death knell of the Congregation in Mexico. Those were tough and heroic years: but a glorious resurrection was in the making, and we were to witness the rebirth of the Mexican Provinces and watch them forge ahead with renewed vigour.

The past obliges us to thank from the very depths of our being Our Father who is in heaven, Mary Help of Christians “who has accomplished everything of us”, and Don Bosco who was the inspiration for this vivid page of Salesian history.

As we have to look forward too. The future presents an obvious pattern as we page through the Acts of the Special General Chapter. To build a future true to the mark and create a “new world”, our Special General Chapter urges us to rapid renewal along the lines of the three-fold aspect of our Salesian vocation: youth, the ordinary people and the missions.

There is no need for me to detail these matters: this is done magnificently by the Special General Chapter and the deliberations of the Special Provincial Chapters. However, in view of the work to be done in the next few years, I wish to point out and emphasise a matter of top priority and fundamental importance: the need to intensify our vocational and formative work.

Like all Latin-American countries, Mexico is young, and its hectic development means that we have to multiply our presence (which, after all, is the presence of the Church) for the sake of the young. Our missionary traditions in Mexico and the urgent needs of the Church and the Congregation all call for a speedy answer. This among other things is the justification of my behest.

I call on the Mexican Provinces to take practical and energetic steps in the matter of vocations. This, of course, presupposes a carefully planned post-capitular Youth Apostolate and specific efforts to create a vocational mystique round the Salesian mission. Far more basically, in every vocational apostolate there is the need for a deep awareness of the priority that must be given to formation, and how vitally important is the personal and community realisation of one's own vocation.

Furthermore, this awareness of our Salesian vocation presupposes, today more than ever, that both individual Salesians and communities succeed in discovering the presence of God in their lives and actions. I pointed this out when I presented the practical guide-lines of the Special General Chapter (cf. Doc. page XIV). This is simply discovering what Don Bosco used to call in his day the supernatural. Our Salesian mission will achieve the full force of its strength when the individual Salesian is seen by the young as “a man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells”, and when the community shines forth as a reality solidly at one with God. In this way the life of the Salesian and the work of the community will constitute a compelling call for those for whom we work and will fulfil their irresistible role in the Salesian apostolate for vocations and in the creation of a Provincial community that is genuinely formative.

This is the thought I offer the Mexican Provinces; and I know that the Mexican Salesian will shape up to his wonderful future and will be able to render help to his brothers in other latitudes.

The answer lies with you. As I make this appeal on the occasion of the arrival of the first Salesians in Mexico, my prayer is that it will result in a vigorous activity along the lines I have indicated.

Before concluding, I must make special mention of the tremendously important role our Salesian Co-operators played in the event we are commemorating. Before the Salesians came to Mexico the Co-operators built up a strong affection for Don Bosco among the people: indeed, they worked without stint to make it possible for Don Bosco's sons to come. To them goes our deepest gratitude; to them our request to carry on with their comforting presence that is evidenced so actively and generously in our Salesian mission.

As Don Bosco's successor I want to be very near you on this happy occasion; and in joyous hope I bless all the Salesian family in Mexico — confrères, pupils, past pupils, co-operators and friends — in token of my fatherly affection for all.

Affectionately yours,

Father ALOYSIUS RICCERI,
Rector Major.

VI. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

1. Church Unity: divine gift, human obligation

On 24 January 1973, on the occasion of the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity", Paul VI gave the following address on what he described as "one of the two great problems of the Church, ecumenism".

(Translation taken from English edition of "Osservatore Romano" dated 1 Feb 1973).

Today, beloved Brothers and Sons, a thought—an idea, a Truth, a Reality—lights up before the eyes of our mind, attracts our gaze, absorbs us, fills us both with enthusiasm and worry, as do things that gain our love. What is this thought? It is the unity of the Church.

As soon as this thought is grasped in its general significance, it takes hold of us, dominates us. Unity: immediately it imposes itself on account of its logical and metaphysical force. It refers to the Church, that is, to mankind called by Christ to be one thing only with Him and in Him. It holds us spellbound because of its theological depth. Then it torments us because of its historic aspect, yesterday and still today, bleeding and suffering like that of Christ crucified. It reproves us and awakens us, like the sound of a trumpet, calling us with the urgency of a vocation, which becomes relevant and characteristic in our times. The thought of unity irradiates over the world scene, scattered with the magnificent rent limbs and the ruins of so many Churches, some of them isolated as if self-sufficient, others broken into hundreds of sects. All of them are now invaded by two conflicting forces, in a moving tension; one centrifugal, fleeing, in its pursuit of autonomy, towards schismatic and heretical goals; the other centripetal, demanding with reborn nostalgia the recomposition of unity. Motherly and fearless, Rome, certainly not faultless, and burdened on her own account with immense responsibility, stubbornly affirms and promotes

this unity as her own duty, smacking of witness and martyrdom. It is the authentically ecumenical and unitarian force, which is seeking its principle and its centre, the base, which Christ, the real cornerstone of the ecclesial edifice, chose and fixed, in his stead, to signify and perpetuate the foundations of his kingdom... And again it reverberates, this thought of unity, in the conscience of so many thoughtful, religious souls, raising in them a spiritual problem: how do I respond to this imperative of unity?

I believe in the one Church

“I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”. How often do these words of the Creed rise to our lips during public or private prayer; and how often we must consider them and meditate on them because they express the great truth that “Christ established and ceaselessly sustains here on earth His holy Church, the Community of faith, hope and charity” (*Lumen gentium*, n. 8), and communicating his Spirit through her works in us and with us in the world for its salvation. “By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind” (*Lumen gentium*, n. 1).

We have frequently read and heard the words of the Apostle Paul: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4, 4-6); “You are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3, 28); “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one” (1 Cor. 12, 4-6); “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body” (Col. 3, 15).

And above all the sublime words of the Lord urge us irresistibly: “that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”. (Jn. 17, 21).

These words of our Lord and of his great Apostle have a universal value. They are destined to touch the minds and the hearts of all Christians, to be a source of inspiration and to guide the actions of

all those who bear Christ's name. They remind us of the divine gift of unity, but at the same time also of the obligation that is incumbent on men, unity. The II Vatican Council, almost summing up its own doctrine on the mystery of the Church, says: "This is the unique Church of Christ which in the Creed we avow as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. After His Resurrection our Saviour handed her over to Peter to be shepherded, commissioning him and the other apostles to propagate and govern her. Ever He erected for all ages as "the pillar and mainstay of the truth". (*Lumen gentium*, n. 8).

Christian communities mirror the unity of the Church

The epistles of St. Paul quoted above contain a deep theology, but they do not constitute a theoretical treatise. They had in mind the concrete situation in the churches of Ephesus, Corinth, Colossae. In the priestly prayer for unity Jesus was speaking in the intimate circle of his Apostles, referring, however, to all those who will believe in Him through the word of the Apostles.

Therefore if the principles enunciated by Jesus and the Apostle have a universal value, for all Christians of all times, they are put into practice concretely in particular communities and through these communities.

Unity, which is a real gift from Christ, develops and grows in the concrete situation represented by the lives of the Christian communities. Understanding of the important role of the particular communities, of the particular churches, was clearly formulated by the Council: "The individual bishop is the visible principle and foundation of unity in his particular church, fashioned after the model of the universal Church. In and from such individual churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 23).

In fact the unity of the Church, as we said, in the historical charism of the whole Catholic Church and the Roman Church particularly, is already a reality, in spite of the deficiencies of the men composing it. However, it is not complete, it is not perfect in the statistical and social framework of the world, it is not universal. Unity and catholicity are not equal, either in the sphere that calls for this correspondence most,

the sphere of the baptized and believers in Christ, or, even less, in that of the whole of mankind on earth, where most do not yet adhere to the Gospel. These are the two great problems of the Church, the ecumenical and the missionary, both dramatic.

Today we are speaking of the first one, that is, the union of Christians in one Church.

We would like to indicate as one of the ways to the solution, even though it is a way that is already known, long, delicate and difficult, the duty and the possibility of interesting the local churches in the ecumenical question, in harmony, of course with the universal and central Church, (if we do not want to make the situation worse instead of better).

We see how important it is that the particular churches of the Catholic communion should keep in mind their tasks and their characteristic ecumenical responsibilities.

Through the particular church the Catholic Church is present in the same local and regional environment in which other Christian Churches and Communities also live and work. The establishment of contacts and brotherly relations often turns out to be easier in this context.

We therefore exhort all our Brothers and Sons wholeheartedly to bring it about that the commitment for the unity of Christians will become an integral part of the life also of the particular churches.

Communities open to one another

“The dialogue of charity”, the expression so dear to our brother of venerated memory, the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras, can be fully realized between persons and communities that have frequent mutual contacts, share sufferings and hopes, open to one another and, together, to the Spirit operating in them in the course of the concrete experiences of their lives.

The catholicity and the unity of the Church are manifested in the capacity of the particular churches and of the whole to take root in different worlds, times and places; to find themselves in reciprocal fellowship in every world, time and place.

Unity at the local level is always a sign and manifestation of the

mystery of the unity which is the Lord's gift to the Church. The particular churches can enrich the ecumenical movement as a whole with their experiences, can make a contribution fruitful for the whole Church. At the same time they will receive suggestions and directives coming from the centre of unity, that is the Apostolic See, "universo caritatis coetui praesidens" (Ignatius ad Rom. Inscr.), to be helped in their problems and to be able to judge the validity and fruitfulness of their own experiences.

"I believe in the One Church..." — this profession of faith urges us, therefore, to dedicate ourselves to the cause of the unity of Christians, with all the ardour of which we are capable, and with all the possibilities that the life of the Church offers us at many levels.

Dear Sons, we all ask for forgiveness for the faults committed against this great gift of unity, greater than any merits of ours. Let us join wholeheartedly in the sublime prayer of Jesus, which He, as priest and victim, addressed to the Father for his Church: "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me".

2. We must halt the spread of drugs

On 18 December 1972 the Holy Father received in audience a group of 150 persons engaged in the anti-drug campaign among school children. His address will be of definite interest to Salesians working for the young.

(Translation taken from English edition of "Osservatore Romano" dated 4 Jan 1973).

We extend to you our fatherly welcome, and we thank you for offering us, with this meeting, the possibility of setting forth to you our concern, which is also yours, with regard to a problem which we, too, have so much at heart: the problem of drugs.

We do not wish to lose the opportunity of associating our voice with yours to call public attention to a fact of morals that cannot be neglected. It is an appeal which we also address to all men of goodwill.

The distressing spread of the use of drugs among the young and the very young is a motive of deep sadness for us, especially on account of that undermining of spiritual and intellectual energies which they cause in their lives. If the phenomenon is not checked somehow, it will soon be directed against the human community, when the new generations, their ideals and their energies in fatal disorder, in their turn occupy the posts of responsibility.

A danger of colossal proportions

It is an established fact that drugs, beyond their more immediate effects, which are already grave in themselves, such as the distortion of sensory perceptions, the weakening of the central psychic functions, longafter-effects of apathy and depression, with forms of lack of balance which can even reach manifestations of the psychotic type, lead before long to a psychic dependency which ties the subject to drugs as the most enjoyable and simple solution of his difficulties, in the beginning, but later it becomes dramatic. Hence the step to complete spiritual aridity, to the loss of all ideals, to the subsequent contact with increasingly strong drugs and with their criminal background, is a very short one. On the plane of scientific research the hypothesis has already been put forward that some drugs may leave painful traces even in the offspring of the victims. You are well aware of all these things.

Before a danger of such insidious and colossal proportions, we would like to make known some obvious reflections of our own to you, social animators, who with intelligent timeliness have chosen this specific field as the expression of Christian charity and human solidarity; to all those who, directly or indirectly, by means of study, assistance, proposed laws, initiatives of prevention or of rehabilitation, wish to play your part in the struggle against this new social evil.

Let us leave aside the analysis of the hedonistic attraction, namely, the temptation of pleasure and the curiosity of the experience, that drugs, like other things pleasing to the senses and forbidden, may exercise on the inexperienced minds of youth.

Let us look rather at the phenomenon of drugs. Now grown to alarming proportions, it has certainly been prepared and encouraged

for some time by deep motives the importance of which had perhaps escaped pedagogical investigation, as sometimes happens in the case of the early symptoms of serious diseases.

The real causes and people mainly responsible

It seems that the real causes are to be sought in the discontent and distrust of the young in regard to the adult generation, whom they accuse of indulging in things which they forbid to them (cf. "no admittance to minors"), of highlighting false values, of inconsistency of life, exclusive concern with gain, tolerance and insensitivity with regard to their own hedonism and injustice to others. Under these conditions of disgust, unable to change the system by themselves, perhaps after seeking dialogue and answers within the family, they have chosen escapism and complete irresponsibility, they have looked for groups in which they could recognize themselves and to which they could belong. And it is here that they may easily meet with drugs, turned into a symbol of rejection, used as a factor of compensation and as an instrument of comradeship. A good dose of curiosity and exhibitionism accelerates this phenomenon of detachment.

The call of the young to their elders to face up to their responsibilities is not always objective; but it undoubtedly induces us to re-examine our conduct, our educational systems, our ideals, our ideas. Perhaps people have been too much concerned with providing for their children's prosperity and the possibility of studying, and too little concerned about training them gradually to the responsibility of life, and making them enthusiastic about ideals and active interests from their earliest infancy. Today youth's encounter with reality calls for training, commitments of value and a certain aptitude for sacrifice.

Perhaps, too, there has been a wrong approach to the dialogue between parents and teen-agers. Parents, perhaps, have not succeeded in making it possible for their children to ask questions with frank and serene freedom and in offering them proposals that are morally uplifting. Sometimes they refuse to broach moral subjects as if they had been attacked. The outcome has been a situation of mutual mistrust, which has led to the emotional detachment of the young from their parents, inducing them to look, often without any control, for a group

outside the family, where feeling themselves at their ease, they have no possibility of escaping its negative influences.

The drug problem, however, would still not exist, at least in its present proportions, if there did not also exist a whole network of responsible conspirators: the clandestine producers and drug peddlers, whose earnings, it is said, are incalculable. These are the people on whom responsibility falls in the first place for the hundreds of thousands of lives that are irremediably undermined. We find it almost incredible that these traffickers should pay couriers and distributors to give free samples of the drugs, in the perverse conviction that after trying them the young people will become regular customers.

Drugs are no way to reach God

Furthermore, a certain ideal justification and a flavour of adventure is given to drug taking among the young by a set of ideas that are apparently philosophical and even mystical in content. Man, it is said, is about to be overwhelmed by his technical advances and his inner unrest. The only way to emerge from this state of dissatisfaction in order to find more personal and authentic horizons is drug taking, which intensifies consciousness, digs deep down and leads to interior horizons, which modern life has made inaccessible. It is then that there takes place, they say, the encounter with superior worlds, which put the subject in a dream state that has something divine about it.

Everyone can see the subtle danger of these auto-suggestions. In this connection it would be enough to recall what science teaches about the biochemical action of the drug introduced into the organism. We would like to learn from you, who are extremely well informed, the description of these phenomena. We are told that it is as if the brain were violently struck: all the structures of psychical life are upset by the impact of these exceptional disordered stimuli. The subject emerges from these experiences with his mental capacities still in a state of confusion; he remembers only a few absurd and fantastic scenes, which vanish as quickly as figures in a dream. Now it is impossible to think that a subject for whom these conditions are almost habitual will be able tomorrow to dictate the lines of a new society, much less offer his collaboration in sectors of commitment.

As for the religious and mystical character that the experience of drugs is claimed to assume, to the extent, according to some theorists, of leading to the hearing of God, we wish to warn people of the glaring ambiguity on which this statement is based. Really religious experience and spiritual contact with God are fruits of lucidity and mental activities in full consciousness; they are tensions and ascents in the ways of intuitive knowledge, which in most cases cost sacrifice and always call for the exercise of self-control. On the contrary, drug taking "deeply affects the human spirit, and compromises its delicate receptiveness to the mysterious interior influence of the divine Spirit". If in archaic and prescientific cultures, some drugs were thought to be capable of putting one into a state of ecstasy, that was because the psycho-active principles of some plants were not yet known. Today it is known that those sensorial and psychic states of exaltation were only modifications of the nerve centres, produced by chemical stimuli. Therefore it is no longer possible today, by way of support for the thesis of the use of drugs in order to reach the ascetico-mystical plane, to put forward the use made of them by primitive peoples before and during prayer to the divinity.

Drugs a form of escapism

At this point, a matter of fundamental importance arises spontaneously. Granted that the young turn to these forms of escapism to manifest their dissent with society, we can see that the way they have chosen is quite unsuitable to get out of the present social situation. Owing to drugs, they are becoming poorer and poorer in ideals and energies; their attitude is limited to a hostile and idle criticism of a society that ought itself to know that it is sick; they are unable to propose alternatives and remedies. It is, therefore, a squalid and almost cruel dissent, from which the community certainly cannot expect anything constructive.

These drug addicts, in fact, do not seem to have been able to emerge from their hallucinating experiences strengthened in their ideals of good, enriched with programmes, for example, against poverty and hunger. None of them has gone to the Third World to dedicate himself completely in helping those needy peoples; no young drug addicts

have ever been found alongside spastics, congenital defectives, old people, attentively giving assistance and comfort.

In this context, the comparison with another category of young people is very significant. Those rich in spiritual and human ideals, precisely because they wish to correct the errors and injustices of the community of which they are responsible members, feel the need of clarity of purpose, ideals of understanding and commitment; theirs is constructive criticism, made up of proposals and personal sacrifice. Drugs seldom take root among such people.

First duty: accurate informing

Having said this, the question always arises: what can be done to control and reduce this terrible tide of poison. In the first place, it is indispensable to mobilize public opinion, as is being done, by you especially, by means of clear and exact information on the nature and the real and deadly consequences of drugs, against those misunderstandings that are circulating about their alleged harmlessness and beneficial influences.

This task of information rests mainly on those who run schools and youth associations of whatever kind; recourse must be had to any medium of social communication specially suited to drive home the danger to the young. There should be instruction for parents, so that they will know to prevent situations of detachment from the family and assist their children if they should take drugs. Courses on toxicology should be made compulsory for those training to be teachers; up-to-date knowledge on the problem should be available in secondary schools.

Well-planned radio and television programmes could be helpful, or simple booklets in keeping with the spirit and tastes of youthful readers. It would also be useful, in youth clubs or parent-teacher associations, to arrange meetings with experts on the matter so as to be constantly informed about the evolution of the phenomenon and the ways in which drugs make their way into our environments of life.

We do not share the opinion of some people that this type of early and planned information, if it is carried out with great judgment,

can become a form of propaganda and stimulation to drug taking. Confronted with a phenomenon which the young person will almost inevitably come up against, sooner or later, the most constructive remedy is to give him timely warning, thereby instructing and strengthening him to defend himself in a responsible way. The effect of the information will also certainly depend on the way in which it is given. As happens in every other type of preventive instruction, there may always be some one who will take advantage of the alluring news out of curiosity or a spirit of adventure. But at least young people will be prevented from getting involved in drug-taking without realizing it.

Special legislation needed

A decisive contribution in this programme of containing and curbing drug addiction should come from special legislation for the various drugs, which are very different from one another in nature and effect, and for the ways in which they are peddled among the young. We hope furthermore that, alongside an agreed control and repression of clandestine producers and distributors, a modern programme of prevention and treatment will be undertaken, duly organized also locally, by means of centres for the detection of those who are using them, specialized medical wards distinct from psychiatric hospitals, or by means of treatment at home or in dispensaries. Some norms of special assistance for young drug addicts will perhaps be necessary, such, however, that while ensuring the health authority the possibility of initiating and completing a serious detoxicating treatment, do not constitute for the young person concerned a motive for evading the necessary therapy. Specialists in the matter will know what measures to take.

For the purpose it will be opportune to legislate in such a way that, while recognizing that also the occasional consumer of drugs has a certain responsibility, a clear distinction is made between the latter and the trafficker for the sake of gain. In the first case, a state of physical and psychical illness is very often prevalent, from which he must be freed; in the second case there is the will to spread evil, while knowing that very high personal and social values are at stake.

This is what we wished to say to you, even if you already know all these things, in the pastoral distress that afflicts us, like a thorn

in the side, at the thought of a calamity now so widespread and menacing.

We trust we have, with our reflections, confirmed you in the resolution of commitment and assistance which distinguishes you; and while we congratulate you on the attention you devote to the problem, we, together with you, rally all the forces of good to check an evil that endangers our beloved young people, and the society of tomorrow.

May our special Apostolic Blessing encourage everyone in this noble effort.

3. Common teachings but formidable truths!

“Dear sons and daughters, they are, as you see, teachings that are very common and more or less well-known to all; but the truths contained in them are indeed formidable and sublime...”. *On 7 February last Paul VI thus described the addresses he was giving at his usual Wednesday audiences.*

These audiences are always crowded, for the Pope expresses his thoughts to the Faithful in simple language and with a father's confidence, offering decisive answers to the distressing problems of modern man.

The following are four of the Pope's more recent “meditations”.

a) **Has modern man no longer any need of God?**

(Address of Paul VI at the audience of 17 January 1973)

(*Translation taken from English edition of “Osservatore Romano” dated 25 Jan 1973*).

Why do you come to this meeting?

What do you seek from him who is happy to receive you, make your acquaintance, speak to you, feel he is with you? An unusual man? A historical phenomenon? A witness crying in the desert?

We know that you come here not so much to seek, as rather to find. To find one whom, perhaps, you have never seen, nor approached, but whom you know very well, as a father, a brother of all, a friend, a teacher, a representative of that Christ to whom you yourselves belong

and whose name and likeness you bear, as Christians, a minister of his, a successor of the one to whom Christ entrusted the keys, that is, the powers of that kingdom of heaven, of that religion He had come to set up, and to found as a new society, visible, spiritual and universal, the Church, and to build it on that same humble man, since then called Peter, the foundation, the centre, the principle constituting the building, the servant, the pastor of humanity, which is really linked with Christ himself. Yes, you come to us, because you believe and know that here is the Church in her most genuine and characteristic expression, as St. Ambrose said: *ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*, where Peter is, there is the Church. And this, of course, is independent of the littleness and the unworthiness of the physical person that is speaking to you now; rather, precisely because of the religious sense that guides you here, it is all the more beautiful and consoling.

Why beautiful and why consoling? Because it contrasts with an attitude, which is also characteristic and widespread in certain cases in the modern world: the negative attitude to all that is connected with religion, faith, the Church, Christ, God.

Absence of God

We would like you, at this moment of intimate conversation, to read in our heart one of the most constant and painful thoughts imposed on us, on the one hand, by our apostolic and prophetic office as upholder and promoter of the kingdom of God, and on the other hand, by observation of the absence of God in such a large sector of the mentality and life of contemporary man.

Well, consider for a moment with us this fact that seems to characterize the history and civilization of our times: the absence of God. So much has been said and written about this fact, atheism, in its many expressions, secularism, namely, the exclusion of all religious reference from the actual life of man and of society, the intentional and in practice radical negation of God's very name from the expressions of culture and of the scientific conception of the world and of human existence. A famous French review, for example, has informed us in the last few days of the ban that a certain country, despite its great religious traditions, has placed on writing the name of God with a capital letter. At what a point we have arrived, even today!

Have certain representatives of modern man become enemies even of the holy and ineffable name of God? This is nothing but the extreme and external aspect of modern atheism. But there are other aspects that deserve our reflection. Modern man, it is said, is allergic to religion. He is no longer disposed to think, to seek, to pray to God. He is indifferent, he is spiritually insensitive. At bottom, there is a more serious objection, which is tacitly, but strongly, operative, we, men of today, do not need God; religion is useless, it serves no purpose, on the contrary it is a restraint, an embarrassment, a superfluous and paralysing problem. Today man has broken free from the old theological, mythical, pietistic ideologies; and convinced that he is winning a higher freedom, he has put out the lamp of religion: better the darkness of unbelief than the mystification of superstitious speculations.

How many people think in this way? And is it true—but we do not want to believe it—that youth, the new generation, is turning to this facile and victorious irreligiousness? Today minds are filled with concrete knowledge, both empirical and scientific, and are completely taken up with mastering useful things, machines for example, or with interest in trivial things, amusement, for instance; one would think they lack nothing. The world of economy and of pleasure, the experimental and sensible world, the so-called world of the real, tangible and commensurable realities of experience, suffice for them, and they neither wish nor need to seek, in the sphere of the invisible, of the transcendent and of mystery, the completion and fullness for the inner emptiness, which, it is said, no longer exists.

This absence of God deeply distresses us, and gives us the desolate impression of being alone, anachronistic.

Perhaps an unconscious quest

This, brothers and sons, is one of the reasons that make your visit most welcome to us. It brings us the comfort not only of your presence around our ministry, surviving down the centuries and in modern human vicissitudes, but also of God's presence in contemporary life.

And so the dialogue with you, though casual and very short, confirms to us, on the one hand, the supreme and harmonious necessity of religion, faith and prayer, and instructs us, on the other hand, about the origin and nature of certain frightening phenomena of modern mentality: the anguish, the confusion, the rebellion, the deep unhappiness of a part of mankind today. Man has lost the profound, metaphysical sense of things, the meaning of his own life, hope in any kind of destiny. Yes, the light that illuminated the whole surroundings has been put out, and people are all groping like blind men in search of a point of orientation and support, bumping into one another and embracing one another, as if by chance. Is Babel rising again? And is that "spirit of confusion", of dazed bewilderment, of which the prophet Isaiah speaks (19, 14), blowing through mens minds? Or does this denial of God's name hide, indeed, an iconoclastic intention, but against the false conceptions of divinity, against imperfect or corrupt religions, and which can therefore be solved in the quest, perhaps an unconscious one, of the unkown God? (cf. Acts 17, 23). Of a God who is Truth? A God who is Goodness? A God who is Life? In other words, is not the absence of God today an obscure and tormenting aspiration to the presence of a God who is salvation? That is, ultimately, a Messiah, a Christ, light of the world, in whom the man of today can find again at the same time himself and God the Father, his beginning and end? His hope and joy?

Let us think about it: it is the great problem of our times. As for us, we have this confidence; and in this painful absence let us stand firm and straight, stretching out our arms again to suffering mankind, and repeating the words of Christ: "Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened; I will give you rest" (Mt. 11, 28).

b) From the absence of God to the search for God

(Address of Paul VI at the audience of 31 January 1973)

(*Translation taken from English edition of "Osservatore Romano" dated 8 Feb 1973*)

Let us pick up again the thread of a reflection that can never and must never end: reflection about our attitude to the question of God, the religious question. This is what is happening: the boldness, rash

or unconscious, with which the negation of God imposes itself today, reinvests this question with a tormenting urgency. God is absent, we have said, from modern life, because He is forgotten, because He is excluded; is nothing happening in the world? Is nothing happening in human culture? Is nothing happening in the conscience of the living, thinking person? We will not try now even to make these questions explicit; we will merely mention them, to stimulate you to a search that can take any of the hundred paths that open up before you, precisely because of the immense and indefinite emptiness produced by the absence of God. It is enough for us to drive home this explosive word: the search. What shall we put in God's place?

That is to say, the absence of God, which characterizes modern life with certain macroscopic aspects, is followed, willy nilly, by the search for God. Let us simplify this phenomenon, by classifying it into some of its elementary categories, beginning with the one that seems the most obvious and the most convenient.

Knowledge increases the enigma

The first search returns at once to the original denial, namely, the search suffocates itself, trying to convince itself that the religious question is a pseudo-question; it is useless, harmful. Even if immense areas of shadow gather around the human mind in this way, and if no one now claims that science can satisfy the supreme aspirations of the human mind, people are resigned to live within its horizons, which are continually expanding, but without realizing that the more the marvellous field of scientific knowledge is extended, the more the enigma of the being that pervades them all, grows. This being of himself urges us to rise to a higher sphere, where it is necessary to arrive, the sphere of the necessary, the absolute, the sphere of creating causality, the sphere of God.

We are well aware that the logical effort to arrive at this first pale knowledge of the first principle often does not succeed in establishing that vital relationship between man and God, which we call religion, but is its premise: the subjective premise, because the window of transcendent reality is thrown wide open before thought, which is made humble and exalted; and the objective premise, because above

the mystery, which can always be explored, of finite things, we see the ineffable and inexhaustible mystery of the infinite Being, with this incomparable discovery, which is fundamental for the whole religious order: that our thought is made to reach the peak of divinity. A marvellous discovery: we are essentially destined for a personal relationship with God. Let us recall the ever quoted words of St. Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart will never rest until it rests in Thee" (Conf. 1, 1). To deprive man of this goal would clip the wings of his spirit, lowering his stature to the level of beings without spiritual souls, deceive his supreme aspirations with objects of insufficient dimensions, feed his religious hunger with food that increases it, but cannot satisfy it.

The ancient answer: "Seek higher up".

Does the search for God stop here? It is so deeply rooted in our nature that in some way even those who forget Him and deny Him, continue the search, deflected to false, incomplete, or impersonal and abstract representations of God. We moderns, trained to think, are particularly predisposed to this mystification, this idolatry: we make every desire, every ideal abstraction of unity, of truth, of goodness, every conception, real though it may be, of happiness, power, art, beauty and love, we make them a supreme good, an absolute that dominates us. We fall back again into the human sphere, often no less childish than the ancient worshippers of sensible things or of natural phenomena. Now man is not enough for man. If we really listen to the voice of this humanistic sphere, we must record the ancient answer: seek higher up; *quaere supra nos*. And above man, supposing we arrive at the threshold of the religious world, is our search finished, we repeat?

No, we answer. It rather begins on a new plane, in a new kingdom. We would like this to be understood by those who think, or doubt that to give one's spirit to the religious experience may frustrate its freedom, its autonomy, its energy; fill it with ghosts and myths, scruples and fears. We must admit that not all religious expressions are valid; but we have the good fortune and the duty to affirm that there exists a real religion, subjectively modelled according to the measures and the needs of our spirit, objectively set up by that

God whom we are seeking, with the surprise, here too, of discovering that even before we moved in search of God, to an infinitely greater degree, God came in search of us (cf. Abraham Heschel, *Dieu en quête de l'homme*, Seuil, 1968).

So the search continues. And, as you know, in an ocean of truths and mysteries. In a drama in which each one has his own part to play. This is life. Can it be exhausted in this temporal existence of ours? No. In spite of the immense light of our Catholic religion, the search and expectation of further revelation are not complete: on the contrary they are still at the beginning. Faith is not complete knowledge, it is the source of hope (cf. Hebr. 11, 1). Now we see religious realities, even in their incontrovertible reality, in mystery, in their impossibility of being reduced to the purely rational yardstick; we know these realities "in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor. 13, 12). Study, research, let us say the word that comprises the whole human-religious process, love, remain active and dynamic.

Is it possible that man today, ever striving, anxiously, elatedly, for conquest, is not able to listen again to this perennial stimulating invitation to seek God?

Let us repeat to ourselves the exhortation of the Prophet: "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near" (Is. 55, 6).

c) **The religious rebirth of modern times**

(Address of Paul VI at the audience of 21 February 1973)

(*Translation taken from English edition of "Osservatore Romano" dated 1 Mar 1973*)

When we go in search of traces of religion, and more specifically traces of the faith, our Catholic faith, in the modern world, we are often struck by the negative aspects that we find. We see the religious sense diminish, and in certain sociological contexts even die out; the fundamental conception of being and of life necessarily related to God, is dimmed; prayer is silent and worship and love of Christ and God is replaced by indifference, profanity, and even hostility to religion, sometimes official, active and fierce, that pseudo-security that sensible and material experience can offer us, those substitutes for real spirituality

with which criticism, doubt, self-autonomy, fill the mind of man overconfident in his own culture (cf. J. Daniélou, *La culture trahie par le sens*, Epi 1972). Statistics speak clearly: religion is losing ground.

This may be true, and, unfortunately, it often is. But if we limit our observation to the purely sociological level, we commit an error of method; that is, we forget to consider the objective reality of religion, authentic religion, at least. This is a composite, bilateral reality, that is, it consists not only of man, but also and in the first place of God, who is not absent, nor inert in the realm of religion.

God seeks us more than we seek God

In the plan of revelation and faith, God has the main part and the initiative, while man has certainly a necessary and not purely passive part but one which, if we look more carefully, is rather dispositive and cooperating. The true religious relationship consists in the gift that God, on the one hand, makes of Himself, limited, of course, in form and extent, were it only by his own mystery and by the need of faith on our side (cf. 1 Cor. 13, 12); and it consists on the other hand in man's acceptance. God seeks us, we can say, even more than we seek God; because God is love and it is He who has the first initiative; He loved us first.

This realistic vision of the religious world is a source of gratitude and tenderness for the faithful who breathe the atmosphere of God's house, and can be a source of surprise for anyone who considers religion only from the human, historical and earthly standpoint. Let us recall the dialogue of Jesus with Nicodemus by night: "...you must be born anew. The wind blows where it wills" (Jn. 3, 7-8).

Here, then, we have a question which may be answered by facts that escape positivistic analysis. Religion may arise from spiritual processes that lie outside purely scientific processes. It is indeed a miracle; but it is, in a certain sense, normal, because it is part of the economy of the kingdom of God. The meeting with God may take place outside any calculation of ours. Hagiography offers us admirable examples, and the chronicles of our times record some sensational ones (cf. A. Frossard, *Dieu existe, je l'ai rencontré*, Fayard, 1969), and innumerable other silent ones. We are in the charismatic sphere, of which there is so

much talk today: the wind blows where it wills. We will certainly not quench it, recalling the words of St. Paul: "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5, 19). Only we must remember at the same time the following words of the same Apostle, "but test everything; hold fast what is good" (ib. 21); the famous "discernment of spirits" is necessary in a field in which deception can be very easy.

The Church: highway of the Spirit

But the fact remains that the marvellous meeting with God can take place in spite of the modern world's refractory attitude to religion. We see strange and also consoling symptoms of this in various countries.

And the crucial thought returns: has our religion no longer a power of its own to testify to itself, to preserve itself, to renew itself in traditional and extraordinary ways? Does the Spirit breathe only outside the usual framework of canonical structures? Has the Church of the Spirit left the institutional Church? Is it only in the so-called spontaneous groups that we will find the charisms of the real, original, pentecostal Christian spirituality?

We do not wish now to open a discussion on this subject, which, however, is worth a respectful examination. We wish, on the other hand, to say two things. The ordinary and institutional structure of the Church is always the highway by which the Spirit reaches us. Today, too, and more so than ever. Only it is necessary that the idea of the Church, the "sensus Ecclesiae" should be re-established in us, rectified, deepened. Anyone who alters the conception of the Church with the intention of renewing religion in modern society, spoils in so doing the channel of the Spirit established by Christ, compromising the religion of the people.

In this connection our times have had the grace to see two elements of prime importance for the reflowering of religion in our days, gush forth from the Tradition of the Church by means of the Council: the conciliar doctrine on the Church and the liturgical reform.

Let us remember this well, let us all remember.

d) **Prayer: dialogue with God**

(Address of Paul VI at the audience of 14 February 1973)

(*Translation taken from English edition of "Osservatore Romano" dated 22 Feb 1973*)

This is a subject that extends to the whole psychology of the man of our times; and so we examine it, not indeed, to offer you an exposition befitting the merit both of the subject and of the immense literature concerning it, in the past and today; but only to point out one of the characteristic, and perhaps essential lines of the profile of modern man.

Do people pray today? Do they realize what significance prayer has in our life? Do they feel the duty, the need, the consolation of doing so? Its function in the framework of thought and action? What are the spontaneous sentiments that accompany our moments of prayer: haste, boredom, confidence, inner recollection, moral energy? Or also the sense of mystery? Darkness or light? Or finally love?

We should try in the first place, each one on his own account, to make this examination, and to think out a definition of prayer for our personal use. We could propose to you a very elementary one: prayer is a dialogue, a conversation with God. We see at once that it depends on the sense of the presence of God, whom we manage to represent to ourselves, either by natural intuition or by a certain conceptual form, or by an act of faith. Ours is an attitude like that of a blind man who cannot see, but knows he has before him a real, personal, infinite, living Being, who observes, listens to and loves the person praying.

Then the conversation begins. Another Person is here; and this other is God.

Dialogue, not monologue

In the absence of this realization that God is to some extent in communication with the man who is praying, the latter would be holding a monologue but not a dialogue. It would not be a real act of religion, a tête-à-tête between man and God, but only a monologue, beautiful, perhaps, superlative at times, like a supreme effort to soar towards a dark and boundless sky, crying out and, in this case, often

weeping, in the void. We would be in the realm of the most lyrical and profound phenomenology of the spirit, but without certainty, without hope; a desolation, rather, and music swallowed up in silence.

It is not so for us, who know that prayer, the meeting with God, is a possible and real communication. Let us put this affirmation among the unquestionable certainties of our conception of the truth, of the reality in which we live. In simple terms: religion is possible; and prayer is a par excellence religious act. We spoke about this on another occasion, concluding, in fact, that there exists not an absent and insensitive God, but a provident God, a God who watches over us, a God who loves us, and who expects from us love, above all. Hence a primary and very important state of mind can be produced in the one who prays, the result of the synthesis of two different and apparently opposite sentiments, that of the transcendence of God, dazzling, overwhelming, and that of his immanence, that is, his immediate nearness, his ineffable presence; two sentiments that complete each other in the poor little cell of our spirit, and at once kindle there an extraordinary religious intensity, which can at once stammer out its twofold prayerful expression, praise and invocation, or, in certain mystical souls, can remain absorbed.

This is the genesis of prayer, which, raised to the plane of faith, issuing from the school of the Gospel, assumes a quiet, soft voice, almost of the same nature as our human language, authorized as it is to call the God of the abysses by the sweet and confidential name of Father. "Pray then like this, our Master Jesus teaches us: Our Father who art in heaven..." (Mt. 6, 9).

The difficulties that extinguish prayer today

Sublime. But we must admit that the world today does not pray willingly, does not pray easily; it does not usually seek prayer, it does not enjoy it, often it does not want it. Analyse for yourselves the difficulties that try to extinguish prayer today. Let us list some of them. Incapacity: where there has not been any religious instruction, it is very difficult to have prayer: the man, the child, remains dumb before the mystery of God. And where belief in God has been denied, has been declared vain, superfluous, harmful, what other voices take

the place of prayer? And after the insistent lessons against spirituality, both natural and that educated by the faith, lessons of naturalism, secularism, paganism, hedonism, lessons, that is, for the benefit of the desired religious aridity, with which such a large part of modern pedagogy has paved the soul of the masses, saturated with materialism, how can the poetry of prayer bloom in hearts?

Two difficulties are typically contrary to it today. One is of a psychological nature, stemming from the overwhelming, fantastic and profane profusion of sensible images, unfortunately too often polluted with sensuality and licence, with which the modern instruments of social communication, marvellous in themselves, fill social psychology. The room of sensible experience is not in itself the one suitable for religious life; it may serve as an ante-room, if it is wisely connected with the one set aside for the life of the spirit and reverence for the sacred. The other difficulty is the pride of man striding along the ways of science and technology, which are also marvellous, but charged with the illusion of self-sufficiency. Prayer, it is true, is an act of humility, which calls for higher but easy wisdom in order to find its logical justification and its magnificent apologia.

But fortunately outstanding contemporary examples still strengthen our innate tendency to seek in God the one, infinite complement of our limits, and the blessed fulfilment of our desires and our hopes.

Here we will end. But we trust you will continue the study of prayer; it is a study of one of the factors of our salvation.

VII. NECROLOGY

Brother Filelfo Aprili

* Bologna (Italy) 25.11.1882, † Mother House, Turin 5.10.1972, 89 years of age, 68 profession.

His long Salesian life was spent at the Mother House, Turin. His early work was as bookseller at the SEI when the publishing house was in its infancy. Then he was put in charge of the delicate and complicated task of the Missionary Transport & Shipping Office, putting in good, solid work from 1924 onwards — a period of intense missionary development. His poverty and spirit of work were an inspiration. He patiently offered to God the increasing blindness that afflicted the last twenty years of his life.

Brother Emanuel Baeza

* Fuentes de Andalucia (Seville - Spain) 15.2.1885, † Carmona (Seville - Spain) 3.9.1972, 87 years of age, 70 profession.

He spent his long life completely dedicated to teaching the young. His services as music-master and band-master were much appreciated. A great love of Don Bosco and a deep desire to be of help to others formed the basis of his life: he was a genuine first-generation Salesian.

Father Paul Bazzichi

* Stazzema (Lucca - Italy) 30.6.1888, † Pietrasanta (Lucca - Italy) 6.2.1973, 84 years of age, 64 profession, 53 priesthood, 21 rector.

From the traditionally austere example given him in his early days he derived a solid piety and Christian and human training that gave his long life a faith that stood the test, an activity that was tireless, and a love of souls that was prudent and unassuming. He spent his last years in the confessional and in silent and solitary prayer, in complete acceptance of

the will of God in all things. He will be remembered with gratitude by his innumerable past pupils and the many priests who were helped in their vocations by his example and advice.

Brother Joseph Bianconcini

* Firenzuola (Florence - Italy) 23.4.1886, † Mother House, Turin, 25.11.1972, 86 years of age, 61 profession.

A man of prayer, simple, serene, optimistic and untiringly active. His Salesian life was spent at Guayaquil, Ecuador, then at the Vatican Polyglot Press, and after the war at Valdocco, Turin. He is remembered with pleasure for his zealous work in the mission fields, his dedicated care of sick confrères when infirmarian, his regular and fervent prayer at the urn of Don Bosco and his persuasive way with words.

Father Peter Bolognani

* Patti (Messina - Italy) 24.8.1880, † Messina 26.12.1972, 92 years of age, 71 profession, 63 priesthood, 32 rector.

A sincere and apostolic missionary. Soon after ordination he went to the Far East missions (1911); back in Italy he was called up for military service during World War I. After the war he returned to the missions till 1952, when he came back to his Sicily. Physically exhausted but spiritually alert, he continued to work, true missionary that he was, giving generously of his services as confessor to confrères, sisters and boys till God called him to his reward.

Father Albert Bouchet

* Opglabbeek (Belgium) 21-5.1915, † Hasselt (Belgium) 1.1.1973, 57 years of age, 38 profession, 30 priesthood.

Most of his life was spent teaching in technical schools, where his deep understanding of his charges made his apostolate a fruitful one. He died unexpectedly on New Year's Day, and his loss is a bitter one indeed for the Province.

Brother Joseph Bücherl

* Rötz-Oberpfalz (Germany) 18.5.1908, † Waldwinkel Kraiburg (Germany) 29.10.1972, 64 years of age, 40 profession.

He never spared himself in working for his charges; his subjects were woodwork and art. He was noted for his obedience, simplicity and great

spirit of work. His free time was spent doing jobs about the house and for the boys, who were greatly attached to him. While at the Front during the war he contracted a sickness which caused him much suffering and was responsible for his untimely death.

Father Nazarene Camilleri

* Sliema (Malta) 20.11.1906, † PAS (Rome) 1.3.1973, 66 years of age, 49 profession, 38 priesthood.

From his early days he showed he was a scholar of note, with a leaning towards the speculative studies. Degreed in philosophy and theology, he was much esteemed as teacher and spiritual guide by generations of students, priests and sisters. He was Dean of the Faculties of Philosophy and Theology. His treatises in philosophy and theology were noted for acuity, research and speculative penetration; and his work in the hagiographical, spiritual and pastoral field was invaluable. He gave his services unstintingly, was utterly loyal to the magisterium of the Pope; and his insatiable thirst for the knowledge of God was the basis of his research and his apostolate.

Father Vitus Campobasso

* Triggiano (Bari - Italy) 27.9.1908, † Lanuvio (Rome - Italy), 28.10.1972, 64 years of age, 48 profession, 39 priesthood.

A brilliant man with a prodigious memory. He taught for many years till his health broke down, and bore his many illnesses with patience. He was a great help with the boys' confessions and was endowed with deep humility, poverty and meekness. He died a happy death on the vigil of the Beatification of Don Rua.

Brother Florentius Celdrán

* Benijofar (Alicante - Spain) 7.11.1899, † Valencia (Spain) 14-12-1972, 73 years of age, 45 profession.

A good, simple soul, whose love for others was gratefully reciprocated. He had lost an arm, but still worked without stint in the class-room, in the theatre and in the playground with pupils and past pupils. In his last years, blind and too weak to work, he was still to be seen surrounded by his friends, big and small, patiently going over their schoolwork with them. It was only natural that his life of work prayer and love of God should end in a courageous facing up to the difficult trials of his long illness.

Brother Francis Chiappello

* Dronero (Cuneo - Italy) 13.4.1888, † Bagnolo, Piedmont (Cuneo - Italy) 27.11.1972, 84 years of age, 40 profession.

He worked for 10 years in Brazil as driver, mechanic and electrician. Then he looked after the maintenance at Valdocco for as long as his health held out. After that he was in charge of the sacristy of St. Francis of Sales and the the chapel of relics. His deafness made his life lonely and he gave himself much to meditation and prayer. His death was neither sudden nor unexpected, and he faced it with serenity, being well prepared.

Father John Del Degan

* Faibano (Udine - Italy) 24.6.1912, † Gorizia (Italy) 23.11.1972, 60 years of age, 42 profession, 34 priesthood.

He was a gifted thinker and deeply versed in Rosminian thought and imitated his mentor in his search for truth and goodness and was a real crusader for this philosophical discipline. When failing health prevented his working further, he offered his trials to the Lord, being particularly sensitive that he could no longer help others with his great talents of heart and mind.

Brother Charles Dell'Acqua

* San Vittore Olona (Milan - Italy) 22.9.1906; † there 12.10.1972, 66 years of age, 41 profession.

He worked for nine years in India then for twentyfive in Burma. The war and its aftermath caused him great sufferings, especially because of under-nourishment and illness. He spent his energies helping refugees and fugitives, giving them milk, eggs and rice and whatever his work produced. His labour was dedicated and intelligent, and he added serenity to the community; he was strictly observant and had a great love of Don Bosco.

Brother Isidore De Smet

* Ghent (Belgium) 3.4.1891, † Sleidinge (Belgium) 21.6.1972, 81 years of age, 60 profession.

The oldest Brother in the Province In his long Salesian life he fulfilled many duties and was a good, simple soul, always readily available.

Father Laurence D'Heygere

* Wattrelos (North France) 30.6.1902, † Montigny-Lencoup (France) 22.2.1973, 70 years of age, 42 profession, 35 priesthood, 6 rector.

A late vocation. He was assistant and socius in the novitiate. He also undertook tasks of great responsibility in other houses. Finally he was chaplain of the prison at Fontainebleau. His work was always accurate, responsible and persevering, and he could always be relied on: for him, faithfulness and loyalty received top priority. Although not demonstrative, he appreciated any small sign of friendship and was always deeply concerned for the good of others.

Father Nicholas Endres

* Limbach (Renania - Germany) 10.12.1904, † a Benediktbeuern (Oberbayer - Germany), 25.8.1972, 67 years of age, 47 profession, 37 priesthood.

War and imprisonment interrupted his studies (which he eventually completed with a thesis on Don Bosco). The Episcopal Conference of Germany appointed him Education Liaison Officer. His area of activity was in the diocese of Bavaria. For many years he was president of the "Catholic Villages Committee" for the youth of all Germany. Those who knew him remember him as always kind and gentle. His excessive labours slowly wore him down and he died unexpectedly, mourned by all.

Father Angelo Fidenzio

* Turin (Italy) 4.6.1879, † Taranto (Italy) 19.11.1972, 93 years of age, 75 profession, 69 priesthood, 26 rector.

In his early priestly life he was rector and master of novices at San Gregorio di Catania and Genzano, Rome. Later he was transferred to Taranto, where he edified all by his lively faith, prayerfulness, prudence, deep understanding of the Salesian mission and balanced adaptability to the times. He was a man of action rather than words and left an imposing educational monument (the Don Bosco Institute at Taranto) where the young receive a magnificent preparation for life and where there is a fine spirit of study.

Brother Angelo Stephen Fossati

* Novi Ligure (Alessandria - Italy) 26.12.1899, † Mother House, Turin, 7.1.1973, 73 years of age, 35 profession.

Certain happenings during his military service of World War I and

immediately afterwards convinced him that he was under the very special care of Our Blessed Lady. He vowed to give himself to God, and entered the Salesian Congregation. He made his novitiate in Mato Grosso, where he worked as a missionary for 32 years. He was a good Religious, with a lively faith, a filial trust in his Superiors and a sincere piety.

Father Louis Franceschini

* Romagnano di Trento (Italy) 1.6.1904, † Casale Monferrato (Italy) 24.1.1973, 68 years of age, 46 profession, 38 priesthood.

He is remembered for his simple, reserved, sincere, consistent and completely dedicated life: he had the knack of helping others without ostentation. He took a childlike delight in God's world and constantly thanked him for his wonderful creations. In his long years as a teacher he sang the praises of "brother sun, sister moon, brother fire, brother wind" and finally of "our sister death", putting a fitting seal on his religious consecration.

Brother Meinrad Frey

* Dielmansried (Baviera - Germany) 13.7.1899, † Benediktbeuern (Germany) 28.10.1972, 73 years of age, 36 profession.

A man of simple and deep piety, he worked hard and gave a faithful account of his religious duties. His great spirit of sacrifice was sorely tried during the 19 years of illness that preceded his death.

Father Peter Gil

* Valdealcón de Rueda (Leon - Spain) 5.5.1931, † Madrid (Spain) 15.12.1972, 41 years of age, 19 profession, 11 priesthood.

He gave his best to his apostolate and was a man of fine human and religious qualities. God permitted the purification of his spirit by a painful illness borne with religious resignation.

Father Richard Giovannetto

* Fobello (Novara - Italy) 16.6.1883, † Biella (Vercelli - Italy) 17.1.1973, 89 years of age, 72 profession, 63 priesthood, 2 rector.

A man whose faith was great, simple and childlike, transforming itself into hope and love while he waited expectantly to enter "the Kingdom".

He is remembered for his meekness, kindness, poverty and incapability of giving offence to anyone. He eschewed the limelight and spent himself for others.

Father Francis Glon

* Malestroit (Morbihan - France) 30.1.1931, † Sion (Switzerland) 16.12.1972, 41 years of age, 19 profession, 10 priesthood.

He became a Salesian "to make Christ better known and loved, to consecrate his whole life to the young". Despite poor health, he fulfilled the duties of catechist and prefect of studies, but was prematurely stricken with Parkinson's disease. He underwent surgery and came out of the operation well: however, the disease progressed rapidly. When he realised that he was cut off from the active life, he resigned himself after an obvious interior struggle and turned his illness to good account by forging a chain of friendship with the other sick confrères of the Province.

Father Louis A. Gorosito

* Roldán (Santa Fé - Argentina) 23.1.1901, † Alta Gracia (Cordoba - Argentina) 21.11.1972, 71 years of age, 55 profession, 46 priesthood.

He was known as author and poet under the pen-name of "Nice Lotus". His most famed works were "Namancurá", "Amor Azul" (dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary), and "Espiritualidad de San Juan Bosco". He belonged to the National Cultural Commission, the Argentine Writers Society, and the La Plata Literary Academy. To the pupils and in artistic and literary circles he was known as the priest-poet.

Father Casto Guede

* San Martín de Nogueira de Betan (Orense - Spain) 19.8.1899, † Arcos de la Frontera (Cádiz - Spain) 31.8.1972, 73 years of age, 53 profession, 44 priesthood.

He devoted his life to teaching and training youth and in his last years he made the confessional his apostolate. He was a Salesian who did not parade his qualities and lived a solid interior life. Progressive cerebral arteriosclerosis proved a heavy trial for him, gradually depriving him of all movement.

Father Louis Hernández Ledesma

* Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca - Spain) 17.4.1904, † Seville (Spain) 15.1.1972, 67 years of age, 50 profession, 40 priesthood, 15 rector.

A humble man in the service of humble people. When catechist and rector his authority was enhanced by his humble and sacrificing availability to all. His gift of uniting hearts and minds gave his community a true family atmosphere. In his work for vocations he knew how to make real Christians out of his pupils and nurture excellent vocations. The city of Morón de la Frontera, where he spent many years, honoured him with special citizenship and called one of the state schools after him.

Father Henry Heyns

* Weelde (Anvers - Belgium) 5.5.1910, † Saint-Pieters-Woluwe (Belgium) 20.8.1972, 62 years of age, 28 profession, 21 priesthood.

He became a Salesian at the age of 33, a timid and kind man always, enjoying the affection of both confrères and youngsters. As confessor and infirmarian he was always available and willing.

Father Auguste Jamaux

* Sain M'Hervé (France) 29.4.1891, † La Guerche (France) 7.12.1971, 80 years of age, 61 profession, 48 priesthood.

After the war (during which he was awarded the Croix de Guerre), he decided to give his life to the service of the young in the family of Don Bosco. At La Marse (Tunis) he worked enthusiastically in things religious, sporting, musical, educative and scholastic. As parish priest he was greatly loved by his flock; and for many years he worked for the Co-operators and proved a valuable bond of union between the various Salesian groups. His life was a wonderful example of Salesian work.

Father Joseph Klaumann

* Calmesweiler (Saar - Germany) 31.3.1913, † Kassel (Germany) 24.1.1973, 59 years of age, 37 profession, 17 priesthood.

As a young Salesian he had to interrupt his studies for military service when war broke out. Ten years of prison life in Russia undermined his health; but he returned to his studies and was ordained. Bad health dogged his whole life, frustrating his generous dedication — there was so much to

do and he had so little strength to do it. Nevertheless he continued till his death, which was caused by thrombosis.

Father Anthony Macák

* Vystuk (Slovakia) 25.10.1907, † Muran (Slovakia) 31.8.1972, 64 years of age, 42 profession, 34 priesthood, 6 rector.

He worked with great success in the education of young Salesian clerics. As an educator he was methodical, understanding and fatherly and his teaching and formation of the clerics carried the stamp of his earnestness. In the last ten years he was parish priest and in all kinds of difficulties he always proved himself a true pastor, totally given to the good of souls. He had a great interest in the research and study of folk songs, and to have them known abroad he translated many (even into Latin).

Father Joseph Martí Serra

* Barcelona (Spain) 9.6.1882, † Algeciras (Cádiz - Spain) 2.5.1972, 89 years of age, 74 profession, 67 priesthood, 18 rector.

He was the Provincial doyen in age, profession and priesthood. He worked in various houses and at various pastoral and educative tasks. More than once the Salesians used his delicacy and tact in the unpleasant task of closing certain houses. Contact with Salesians who knew Don Bosco personally, left in him a deep love of our Society.

Father Julius Morelli

* Genazzano (Rome - Italy) 9.9.1909, † Ravenna (Italy) 16.1.1973, 63 years of age, 47 profession, 39 priesthood, 12 rector.

He carried out the delicate tasks of economer, rector and teacher, always the priest and educator in his dealing with the boys, their families and the staff. He found his greatest consolation in prayer and the Mass, and he continued celebrating Mass even when his sight was failing. To a confrère by his death-bed he confided, « I have loved the Church: on this point I have nothing to reprove myself ».

Brother Theodore Movellán

* Fuentes de Valdepero (Palencia - Spain) 23.10.1912, † Córdoba (Argentina) 6.2.1973, 60 years of age, 28 profession.

After an apostolate of a few years in his own country he went to Uru-

guay, but his poor health necessitated a transfer to a better climate and he was sent to Argentina. He offered the sufferings of his last illness for the success of the Special Provincial Chapter and the good of the Congregation.

Father George Nitsch

* Nieder-Ohlsch (Silesia - Poland) 14.3.1900, † Oberthalheim (Austria) 29.1.1973, 72 years of age, 53 profession, 46 priesthood, 24 rector, 12 provincial.

From a large and deeply Christian family he entered the Society at 17 years of age. In 38 years he fulfilled the duties of rector, provincial and again rector. He is remembered by all as a man of deep faith, always serene and imbued with zeal for souls.

Father Ferdinand Palkovič

* Hrnčarovce (Trnava - Czechoslovakia) 6.12.1908, † Marseilles (France) 9.12.1972, 64 years of age, 40 profession, 32 priesthood.

He left his country to work for North Africa: Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco. He also worked in various houses in the south of France. He laboured hard, and had a generous, sensitive nature, and was always understanding and attentive to his confrères.

Brother Joseph Pavliš

* Velké Levár'e (Bratislava - Slovakia) 31.1.1902, † there 20.9.1972, 70 years of age, 46 profession.

A humble and hard-working son of Don Bosco, he remained faithful to his vocation amidst great difficulties and persecution. Fidelity to his vows and to the spirit of Don Bosco were the mainspring of his life, even when he had to live « in the world » without the help of community life.

Father John Perovšek

* Krnce - S. Gregorio (Jugoslavia) 21.10.1880, † Zagreb (Jugoslavia) 14.1.1973, 92 years of age, 75 profession, 66 priesthood.

Simplicity, kindness, understanding and apostolic zeal marked his Religious life. Most of his priestly ministrations were devoted to the confessional: he was available from 5.30 a.m. for confrères, novices, students of theology and parishioners. He was a shining example of complete apostolic service for others.

Father Blaise Re

* Pedalino (Ragusa - Italy) 16.4.1914, † Modica Alta (Italy) 6.12.1972, 58 years of age, 35 profession, 25 priesthood.

Health reasons demanded his return from the Ecuador missions in 1961. His first assignment was to Ragusa, then to Modica Alta as confessor and in charge of the infant parish of Mary Help of Christians next to the Institute. He was a man of simple methods and truly Christian charity and he soon won the goodwill of these humble people on the city outskirts. He was tragically killed in a road accident, and the huge crowds at his obsequies demonstrated the deep sorrow of his parishioners.

Father James Rivera

* Junquera de Ambía (Orense - Spain) 23.6.1930, † Puerto de S.Maria (Cádiz - Spain) 16.8.1972, 42 years of age, 24 profession, 15 priesthood.

He died on the anniversary of his profession in an accident at sea. His first apostolic activities were with the aspirants in whom he inspired enthusiasm for their vocation, their studies and their work. As a priest his apostolate was with the students of philosophy. He was childlike, generous and humble, and he was happy in helping others. He had a great devotion to Mary, who substituted for him his own mother lost in his childhood.

Father Ramón Rodríguez

* Durazno (Uruguay) 26.12.1896, † Castillos (Rocha - Uruguay) 15.6.1972, 75 years of age, 54 profession, 40 priesthood, 3 rector.

He died suddenly in Castillos where he was in charge of the parish. His apostolic, priestly and Salesian work was performed in various places. He was always at ease among the young, like a good son of Don Bosco.

Brother Bernard Ruà

* Sampeyre (Cuneo - Italy) 5.5.1880, † Bagnolo, Piedmont (Cuneo - Italy) 10.1.1973, 92 years of age 48 profession.

He entered the Society at 44 years of age. In his application for first profession he had written, "If I were to consider my own poor talents I would not have the hardihood to make this request; but as I consider that in this Congregation there are many tasks, and one of them will be possible for me, I take courage to make this application." This was the style of

humility, untiring work and strict poverty that accompanied him to a grand old age.

Brother Accursius Schinelli

* Caltabellotta (Agrigento - Italy) 30.10.1929, † Araguaiana (Mato Grosso, Brazil) 26.9.1972, 43 years of age, 14 profession.

He was barely a year in Mato Grosso when he lost his life tragically in his field of work. He possessed a joyousness, an optimism and a great dedication to the poor. He rests now close to the tombs of Father John Fucs and Father Peter Sacilotti, two brave missionaries among the Xavantes.

Father Louis Uhl

* Glöt (Germany) 1.11.1902, † Los Teques (Venezuela) 23.12.1972, 70 years of age, 45 profession, 38 priesthood.

An example of piety, community life and tireless and self-sacrificing work. He will always be remembered by the great number of workers to whom he dedicated much of his Salesian life.

Father Benignus Vacca

* Muravera (Cagliari - Italy) 30.8.1888, † Fossombrone (Pesaro - Italy) 29.12.1972, 84 years of age, 65 profession, 58 priesthood.

A diligent and tireless worker in the Lord's vineyard. He has passed on in its completeness the genuine Salesian spirit he received from Don Rua and the first Salesians. Through his teaching and his music (instrumental and vocal), he helped in the formation of great numbers of Salesians and boys. He sleeps the sleep of the just, a serene old patriarch.

Father Adolphus Vagli

* Isola Santa - Careggine (Lucca - Italy) 16.8.1917, † Geona - Sampierdarena (Italy) 1.1.1973, 55 years of age, 35 profession, 25 priesthood.

His life was a programme of serene humility, religious observance, silence, and the constant and careful fulfilment of his priestly ministry. He was stricken with illness as he was resuming his teaching activities, an occupation he carried out with great dedication and deep love for many years. He had a great affection for the Society and had the gift of infusing the young with love and stirring up in them great devotion to Don Bosco.

Father John Vogelpoth

* Essen - Berge (Rheinland - Germany) 17.9.1909, † Essen (Germany) 7.12.1972, 63 years of age, 44 profession, 35 priesthood.

After ordination he went to the Central African missions and worked with zeal and self-sacrifice. Health problems brought him home again where he worked as economer and in the pastoral ministry. He bore the problems of his poor health with fortitude till called by the Lord on the vigil of Mary Immaculate.

Father Joseph Volek

* Velké Scirovce (Bratislava - Slovakia) 3.3.1911, † Sinovce (Slovakia) 13.10.1972, 61 years of age, 42 profession, 33 priesthood.

An exemplary Salesian who never swerved from his ideals. Because he refused to conform, the government forbade him the care of souls. However, his was a completely apostolic life all the time he lived among the working people. He had the gift of seizing on opportunities for giving instruction and was a convincing and efficacious speaker. He was a help and a spur to his confrères, compelled as they are to live scattered here and there. He will always be remembered for his dedication to the Salesian cause in such difficult times.

Father John Luis Zuretti

* Mesenzana (Varese - Italy) 17.12.1880, † Mother House, Turin, 21.11.1972, 91 years of age, 73 profession, 68 priesthood.

He was the good and faithful servant, a man of complete faith, disarming candour, solid work and frugality. For 60 years he dedicated his life to the apostolate of the classroom and is revered by an army of past pupils. He had the joy of teaching the Venerable Zephyrinus Namancurá. He also had a flair for writing: "Civilisation Française" (a text used in secondary schools), the periodical "Gymnasium" (teachers' text) and a French Grammar. He was also a keen mountaineer who went in search of sun, fresh air... and to be a priest among the mountain-climbers.

1° Elenco 1973

N.	COGNOME E NOME	LUOGO DI NASCITA	DATA DI NASC.	E MORTE	ETÀ	LUOGO DI M.	ISP.
1	Coad. APRILI Filelfo	Bologna (I)	25.11.1882	5.10.1972	89	Torino-Casa Madre (I)	Cn
2	Coad. BAEZA Emanuele	Fuentes de A. (E)	15.2.1885	3.9.1972	87	Carmona (E)	Se
3	Sac. BAZZICHI Paolo	Siazzema (I)	30.6.1888	6.2.1973	84	Pietrasanta (I)	Li
4	Coad. BIANCONCINI Gius.	Firenzuola (I)	23.4.1886	25.11.1972	86	Torino-Casa Madre (I)	Cn
5	Sac. BOLOGNANI Pietro	Patti (I)	24.8.1880	26.12.1972	92	Messina (I)	Sc
6	Sac. BOUCHET Alberto	Opglabbeek (B)	21.5.1915	1.1.1973	57	Hasselt (B)	Wo
7	Coad. BÜCHERL Giuseppe	Rötz/Oberfalz (D)	18.5.1908	29.10.1972	64	Kraiburg (D)	Mü
8	Sac. CAMILLERI Nazareno	Sliema (Malta)	20.11.1906	1.3.1973	66	Roma PAS (I)	PAS
9	Sac. CAMPOBASSO Vito	Triggiano (I)	27.9.1908	28.10.1972	64	Lanuvio (I)	Ro
10	Coad. CELDRAN Fiorenzo	Benijofar (E)	7.11.1899	14.12.1972	73	Valencia (E)	Va
11	Coad. CHIAPPELLO Franc.	Dronero (I)	13.4.1888	27.11.1972	84	Bagnolo (I)	Cn
12	Sac. DEHLERT Brunone	Strabigotten (D)	12.10.1910	26.4.1972	61	München (D)	Bl
13	Sac. DEL DEGAN Giovanni	Fialbano (I)	24.6.1912	23.11.1972	60	Gorizia (I)	Vn
14	Coad. DELL'ACQUA Carlo	S. Vittore Olona (I)	22.9.1906	12.10.1972	66	S. Vittore Olona (I)	Cn
15	Coad. DE SMET Isidoro	Gand (B)	3.4.1891	21.6.1972	81	Sleidinge (B)	Wo
16	Sac. D'HEYGERE Lorenzo	Wattrelos (F)	30.6.1902	22.2.1973	70	Montigny-Lencoup (F)	Pr
17	Sac. ENDRES Nicolao	Limbach (D)	10.12.1904	25.8.1972	67	Benediktbeuern (D)	Mü
18	Sac. FIDENZIO Angelo	Torino (I)	4.6.1879	19.11.1972	93	Taranto (I)	Mi
19	Coad. FOSSATI Angelo S.	Novi Ligure (I)	26.12.1899	7.1.1973	73	Torino-Casa Madre	CGn
20	Sac. FRANCESCHINI Luigi	Romagnano di T. (I)	1.6.1904	24.1.1973	68	Casale Monferrato (I)	No
21	Coad. FREY Meinrado	Dielmannsried (D)	13.7.1899	28.10.1972	73	Benediktbeuern (D)	Mü
22	Sac. GIL Pietro	Valdealcón de R. (E)	5.5.1931	15.12.1972	41	Madrid (E)	Ma
23	Sac. GIOVANNETTO Ricc.	Fobello (I)	16.6.1883	17.1.1973	89	Biella (I)	No
24	Sac. GLON Francesco	Maestroit (F)	30.1.1931	16.12.1972	41	Sion (CH)	Pr
25	Sac. GOROSITO Luigi A.	Roldán (RA)	23.1.1901	21.11.1972	71	Alta Gracia (RA)	Gr
26	Sac. GUEDE Castro	Nogueira de B.	19.8.1899	31.8.1972	73	Arcos (E)	Se
27	Sac. HEYNS Enrico	Weelde (B)	5.5.1910	20.8.1972	62	Sint-Pieters-Woluwe (B)	Wo

N.	COGNOME E NOME	LUOGO DI NASCITA	DATA DI NASC.	E MORTE	ETÀ	LUOGO DI M.	ISP.
28	Sac. HERNANDEZ L. (Lcd.)	Ciudad Rodrigo (E)	17.4.1904	15.1.1972	67	Sevilla (E)	Se
29	Sac. JAMAUX Augusto	Saint-M'Hervé (F)	29.4.1891	7.12.1971	80	La Guerche (F)	Pr
30	Sac. KLAUMANN Giuseppe	Calmesweiler (D)	31.3.1913	24.1.1973	59	Kassel (D)	Kö
31	Sac. MACAK Antonio	Vystuk (Cecosl.)	25.10.1907	31.8.1972	64	Murán-Roznava (Cecosl.)	Sl
32	Sac. MARTI Gius. (Serra)	Barcelona (E)	9.6.1882	2.5.1972	89	Algeciras (E)	Se
33	Sac. MORELLI Giulio	Genazzano (I)	9.9.1909	16.1.1973	63	Ravenna (I)	Ad
34	Coad. MOVELLAN Teodoro	Fuentes de Val. (E)	23.10.1912	6.2.1973	60	Córdoba (RA)	Cr
35	Sac. NITSCH Giorgio	Nieder Ohlisch (PL)	14.3.1900	29.1.1973	72	Oberthalheim (A)	Au
36	Sac. PALKOVIC Ferdinando	Hřncarovec (Cecosl.)	6.12.1908	9.12.1972	64	Marseille (F)	Ly
37	Coad. PAVLIS Giuseppe	Vel'Ké Leváre (Cecosl.)	31.1.1902	20.9.1972	70	Vel'Ké Leváre (Cecosl.)	Sl
38	Sac. PEROVSEK Giovanni	Krnec (YU)	21.10.1880	14.1.1973	92	Zagreb (YU)	Zg
39	Sac. RE Biagio	Comiso (I)	16.4.1914	6.12.1972	58	Modica Alta (I)	Sc
40	Sac. RIVERA Giacomo	Junquera de A. (E)	23.6.1930	16.8.1972	42	Puerto de S. María (E)	Se
41	Sac. RODRIGUEZ Ramón	Durazno (U)	25.12.1896	15.6.1972	75	Castillos (U)	U
42	Coad. RUA Bernardo	Sampeyre (I)	5.5.1880	10.1.1973	92	Bagnolo (I)	Sb
43	Coad. SCHINELLI Accursio	Caltabellotta (I)	30.10.1929	26.9.1972	43	Araguaitana (BR)	CG
44	Sac. UHL Luigi	Glött (D)	1.11.1902	23.12.1972	70	Los Teques (VZ)	Vz
45	Sac. VACCA Benigno	Muravera (I)	30.8.1888	29.12.1972	84	Fossombrone (I)	Ad
46	Sac. VAGLI Adolfo	Isola Santa (I)	16.8.1917	1.1.1973	55	Genova (I)	Li
47	Sac. VOGELPOTH Giov.	Essen-Berge (D)	17.9.1909	7.12.1972	63	Essen (D)	Kö
48	Sac. VOLEK Giuseppe	Velké Šcirovec (Cc)	3.3.1911	13.10.1972	61	Sinovec (Cecosl.)	Sl
49	Sac. ZURETTI Gian Luigi	Mesenzana (I)	17.12.1880	21.1.1972	91	Torino-Casa Madre	Cn