



ACTS OF THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL

OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY

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S. G. S. - ROMA

I. LETTER OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

Rome, July 1975

My dear confreres and sons,

I have just returned to Rome from the Latin-American Provincials' Meeting in Brazil. It consisted of eight days of intense work, with plenty of realism, fraternal charity and sincere community prayer. The object of the meeting was to check up on how far the recommendations of the Provincial Chapters, based on those of the Special General Chapter, had been implemented.

Meeting with the Provincials

The discussions were very practical, though, of course, the practical measures had solid thought behind them. The whole affair was conducted with great sincerity and calmness, and the temptation to churn out more paperwork was steadily resisted. Instead, the essential, urgent points were brought into focus and lines of action were thrashed out with an eye to getting concrete action under way and joining forces in unity of mind and heart for the time that remains before the next General Chapter.

There emerged three lines of operation vital to the life of every Province. Although distinct, they are nevertheless interdependent, the one presupposing and complementing the others; hence the importance of their harmonized activation. The alternative is a malfunctioning and non-action that will have a serious

snow-ball effect, when there *should* be reconstruction and expansion in the light of the experiences of the last few years.

To forestall objections, let me say here and now that these fully-elaborated lines of action are not going to push out the other recommendations and decisions of the Provincial Chapters. On the contrary, one could say that they subsume the existing decisions, draw out the essentials and so isolate what is urgently needed for our total renewal. This renewal, it should be noted, is well under way in many Provinces and much encouraging progress has been made, but it has not always and everywhere reached the objectives that have been repeatedly declared essential and therefore indispensable.

Further on in this number (pages) you will find the report on the meetings of the Provincials from Europe and the West, and of the Provincials of Latin America. You will find a common denominator that indicates a foundation of situations common to all parts of the Congregation; and also differences of emphasis and nuance that speak of differing situations.

However, everywhere there has been a realistic appreciation of the fact that we can no longer permit ourselves the luxury of further procrastination in getting things done. This much is clear from the courageous and faithful analyses made in the Regions.

Whilst taking decisive action is the immediate responsibility of the Provincials and their Councils, it also involves the Rectors, their Communities, and the confreres individually. Obviously this work will not be done by a little wand-waving on the part of the Rector Major and his Council; it demands the active, determined cooperation of everyone, if the findings of the Provincials' Meetings are to arouse an adequate response. And I don't have to rub in how urgent an obligation this is. In the sacred union of clear minds and strong wills, we shall be able to make up the time we may have lost over the years and take our decisive steps forward. The improved general situation gives us grounds for hope.

Looking forward with hopeful eyes

Our good confreres in the East, who will be holding their Provincials' Meeting at Bangalore in October, will be able to draw much profit from these conclusions, and I think many of them will be echoed in their final report.

As I have already told the Provincials at these meetings, I look forward to the morrow with every hope, especially since my return from the Americas. I found enthusiasm, hard work, achievement, creativity, splendid and original new developments for poor boys; fresh and lively modes of prayer among the young confreres; in many Provinces an influx of very mature young men trying their vocations; an interest in Don Bosco and the Congregation, and finally a generous offer to go on the missions from very many confreres, a high proportion of them being youngsters.

I must say that this is a source of great comfort and hope. The letters that I receive from these young confreres tell me that there are strong, healthy forces at work in the Congregation that remind me of the young men of our Golden Age. Surely we can look to the future with hopeful eyes?

The Missionary Centenary

In this Centenary Year, I repeat, each Province and Community should feel that it is really mobilized, so that it can inspire others with that sense of missionary fervour that is characteristic of our vocation. There is no lack of things to do: we offer a number of suggestions, and all you have to do is to make use of them. Your loving care and methodical application will generate enthusiasm, which will blossom into vocations.

And so in this number of the Acts you will find some useful indications of how to go about it. In particular, I recommend that you take great pains to prepare for 11th November, the Day of Spirituality. It must be a day when the whole Congregation,

and each Community, should be united, without fuss or triumphalism, in prayer, reflection, fraternal remembrance of our deceased missionaries, and in thanksgiving to the Lord for all the good the Congregation has done through them in this hundred years of mission work.

The commemoration strikes me as being a singular grace in this year 1975-6, which is likely to see a decided recovery after the years of trial. It is the business of each one of us to make his own contribution to this work of spiritual recuperation and apostolic rebirth.

MISSIONARIES OF YOUTH

Let me now illustrate the first of the three conclusions I mentioned above: it is about *our mission*. I shall discuss, then, our *raison d'être*, our vocation in the Church generally, and our vocation in the Church of today.

We have been described as 'Missionaries of Youth', a pregnant and compelling description at this moment of history when youth holds the stage and we, for that very reason, are called into action.

Missionaries, that is, those sent to bear the Good News; *of youth*, the people chosen by Don Bosco for himself and his sons as recipients of the Good News.

So the young constitute the whole point of our missionary presence 'in the Church and in society'.

We have a considerable literature in Don Bosco, the evangelizer who worked with the most original catechetical methods. Just page through the *Biographical Memoirs* or any of the better-known studies, and you will see him successively as the Sunday juggler to the adults, the yokel to the boys of his own age, the young priest roaming the meadows in the middle of a noisy crowd of his 'little brats', the good shepherd recognizing the lost sheep and bringing it home to the Father there at the road-side or up

on the box of the mail-coach, then the apologist of the *Letture Cattoliche* or the *Storia dei Papi*, the zealous strategist waging the war of the religious tracts with his fecund imagination and tenacious will, the apostle of the South American missions, the inspired dreamer... all in Don Bosco. His whole life is the expression of the urge to evangelize. Such was his profound sense of particular mission that the words of St. Paul could appropriately be applied to him: 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!' (*I Cor.*, 9, 16).

1st. Our mission: taking the Good News to the young

Coming back to the times we are living in, we are constrained to ask at once: where precisely does our mission lie if Don Bosco's mantle has fallen on us, as obviously it has? Here the Church provides sure guidance with its teaching and its policies: today 'mission' means essentially proclaiming the Good News and educating in the Faith (*Direttorio Catechistico Generale*, No. 6). And the realities of the religious and social situation set us in the same direction.

Evangelization is still just starting

'Old Europe', as we all know, has become a true mission land, a territory to be evangelized. And not only in certain social enclaves or cultural coteries, as might have appeared to be the case thirty or forty years ago; but in the widest and deepest sense.

Then, the phenomenon of neo-paganism affected the Church as a place or moment of religious and cultural life; now, it strikes down at the inner being of the Church as a living, vital body. And the situation on the other continents is, unfortunately, no better, though for different reasons. So the terms are reversed:

the enclaves and coteries are now islands of faith rising up from the sea of a social and cultural environment that, to put it mildly, is areligious (taking 'religious' in the sense of seeking a real relationship with God, and not a mere window-dressing for it).

The Church is one great catechesis

The Church, then, summons everyone to the task of spreading the Gospel. All its documents on catechesis are couched in terms, explicit or implicit, of evangelization or re-evangelization (e.g., v. No. 6 in the *Direttorio Catechistico Generale*). Further, I would say that the Church, at the recent Council, saw itself as a great work of evangelization and catechesis, and presented itself as such. A very special catechesis, since the Council Fathers were at the same time masters and pupils, apostles and faithful, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with his grace. This was a true evangelization and catechesis, that is, in the words of Pope John: 'a penetration of doctrine and a formation of consciences, corresponding more perfectly with fidelity to authentic doctrine, which is to be more thoroughly studied and explained at greater depth through the method of enquiry and of literary formulation developed by modern thought' (Opening address of the Council: 11-10-1962). And why could not the Council have been anything else but a vast catechesis? Because the Church herself is just that: the living transmission of one truth, the Word of God (cf. *A.G.* 35; *G.E.* 4; *D.H.* 14), the Word of Jesus Christ (cf. *L.G.* 3; *John* 20, 21; *Matt.* 28, 19).

The 'History of Salvation', that is, the ensemble of historically established acts by which God effected and continues to effect the salvation of His children, is itself a marvellous, divine catechesis, a transmission of religious truths (the God-man relationship). It is as though men were called to higher and higher realities until the Son of God, becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ, made

it possible for us to be grafted on to the same divine life through the life of grace won by the Redemption (S.C. 10).

The prime importance of evangelization/catechesis was underscored by the last Bishops' Synod (27th Sept.-26th Oct., 1974), which was devoted entirely to the theme.

Naught for your comfort

I have said above that, with the present situation, we have no alternative but to look around and see where we stand, 'we' being the Church, as individuals and as members of groups playing their part in the mission that Christ passed on to His Mystical Body. Let us look at our own situation; and we cannot get a proper grasp on our mission to evangelize the young unless we see it against the broad canvas of the general situation. I must say, more's the pity, that what the Church and her missionaries see around them could hardly be called encouraging.

First of all, and above all, there is an abysmal ignorance of religious truths in general, and of Christian and Catholic doctrine in particular, even with people who are professionally competent in their field and who therefore consider that they know quite enough, thank you, to find their way around the truths of religion (cf. G.S. 4). They are, in fact, very numerous, these recidivist unbelievers or pagans, just as there are recidivist illiterates.

Then there are the people whose religious knowledge is very skimpy and entirely inadequate for their age and the responsibilities they bear. It may even be distorted to the point where they confront the most serious problems of life, including family and social problems, with complete indifference and disastrous results.

The next stage is that religious truths are discredited to the point of being thrown out entirely as inadequate to face and solve the great questions of life. Sometimes the attitude is: 'I couldn't care less'; sometimes it is openly hostile, while at other times there is an *a priori* condemnation of the Church and its priests.

Interestingly enough, we find Tertullian in the 2nd-3rd century of our era addressing these words to his pagan fellow-citizens: 'The Church asks only to be heard and understood before being condemned'.

In the end there is an open denial of religion and of God Himself, atheism is erected into a system of life, and often becomes a system of political and social action, with the accompanying violence and strife, overt and covert, directed against the Church and the whole Christian ethic.

Young people with their faith at peril

And on to this rickety stage marches youth, the ones to whom we Salesians have been sent (cf. Const. 39). No longer are they in a situation where their faith is sheltered; on the contrary, it is menaced from all sides.

The statement of the recent Bishops' Synod spot-lights these dangers to the faith: 'In our discussions we have never closed our eyes to the difficulties and obstacles, some old, some new, that seem to be set up against evangelization. Indeed, we have given careful consideration to a number of the phenomena of our time. Secularisation, for instance, which does present some positive aspects, but is bent towards secularism. That means excluding God from human horizons and, with Him, there is lost a deepened sense of the meaning of existence. There is atheism, that many-headed hydra, which is widely spread in a number of countries. We have studied these things carefully and have examined their underlying causes to see if we can discover in them the call of God, Who calls us to a greater purity in the confession of our faith and in our witness to it. Neither did another great difficulty escape us, one that is often laced with cunning and violence: that is, the cutting-back of religious liberty, and restrictions on the life of the Church, with the object of muzzling her completely.

'Nor have we forgotten the oppressed, particularly all those who are being persecuted for the Gospel, bearing in themselves the Good News of the Cross, pressing on with an excellent work of evangelization, and making a very significant contribution to the fulfilment of the Church's mission' (Third Bishops' Synod, Statement, No. 8).

Ideological pluralism and freedom of conscience

Besides these attacks on the faith, we must take other aspects of our times into account. The most important is ideological pluralism in the field of religion, which exposes the young to a welter of contradictory ideas, convictions and life-ideals, offering a sharply opposed alternative to Christian concepts. It is plain that arguments based on authority and positions of privilege cut no ice at all with them; the only thing that works is the conviction behind the message and the way it is put across.

Today, especially since the Conciliar Declaration on freedom of conscience (*Dignitatis Humanae*: 1-12-1965), many think that personal religion is also a matter of choice. However that may be, the fact remains that, for many of our youngsters, the choice of Christ is by no means taken for granted; it is an object of suffering and laboured research, with ever-elusive final solutions.

Why have the evangelizers not been more successful?

'But just a minute', you may say, 'I thought you were telling us a little while ago to look at our world with the optimism of Don Bosco (cf. *A.S.C.*, No. 278, p. 11). Isn't this all rather contradictory?' Not at all!

I want to make sure that the optimism does not veer off into illusion and woolly-mindedness on such an important matter as evangelization.

The Pope has appealed explicitly to us Christians and religious to feel that we have been called personally to the cause: 'In these stormy, fateful days, what is evangelization's greatest need? *Men: it needs men.* And it is such a simple answer that it can elicit the disappointed response: "Tell us something we didn't know". But wait: if it was known, where are all the men? Or perhaps there were not enough of them?

'And today, now that our reflection on the common priesthood has made us all alive to the fact that every Christian, every baptised person carries within him a missionary vocation, a call to the apostolate, to the honour and responsibility of spreading the Gospel, just tell me how it is that evangelization is still crawling along painfully and laboriously? If we knew all the time that the economy of the Gospel was based on the freely-given service of every Christian, freely-given, but at the same time morally binding, does not the lack of men who have made the apostolate their way of life constitute an accusation of sloth and disloyalty against many of Christ's followers, who don't care about Christ, and are perhaps deserters?' (Address: 30-10-1974).

Our reply

With such a situation before us and such a plaintive crying in our ears, our Congregation has already pledged its service: the S.G.C. has got down to the roots of the matter and produced some 'working guide-lines' that are precise and practical, courageous and right up-to-date. In particular, it made evangelization and catechesis the criteria of the genuineness of the will to renewal in our works and communities. This it did repeatedly and insistently.

Here's the proof:

'The XX General Chapter considers it desirable to endorse what the XIX Chapter authoritatively affirmed: "Salesians, consecrated as they are to the service of youth, especially the poorest, in

order to be amongst them the efficacious presence of the love of God, will consider the religious education of youth as the first apostolic activity of the Salesian apostolate; it asks therefore for a rethinking and for a reorganization of all Salesian works so that they may have as their main purpose the formation of the man of faith.” (No. 279).

But the S.G.C. goes further: ‘Every Salesian, besides being a catechist, must consider himself as one who forms catechists. *Every Salesian community must study how it can evangelize as a group* and become a centre for promoting catechetics.’ (No. 333) And to clinch the point: ‘It is necessary for it (the community) to respond to the new needs because *the extent to which it is evangelical will be the measure of its being Salesian.*’ (No. 339)

So we are dealing with something to which a serious obligation is attached, something that cannot be left to the resourcefulness or good will of some pioneers. It will be decisive for the future of the Congregation; we could say that its future is in the balance and that future will be conditional on its generous response to the ‘signs of the times’ as an expression of a providential work of education.

The post-capitular review

The Provincial Chapters of 1975 and the Continental Meetings, provided for in the S.G.C., have been reviewing the progress made — and the members are still at it — in the implementation of the Congregation’s commitments over the last three years.

The general verdict is that some headway has been made... but not much. There is a need to intensify and speed up the work on the more urgent items; in other sectors, it is a matter of rectifying defects and specifying improvements, but always with a mind to evangelizing. It is interesting to note how much was said at the conclusion of the meetings on this priority Salesian topic,

with a sense of responsibility, humble sincerity and vigorous decision. All very significant.

The European Provincials state: 'We are fully aware that the present situation makes an urgent demand on us to attend to the evangelization and religious education of youth... The religious education of the young cannot be considered simply as a sector of our work; rather, it is a permanent dimension of all our pastoral work, whatever the sector or structure (school, club, youth centre, parish...)' (Practical Conclusions of the Continental Meeting at Rome)

In their turn, the Provincials and Delegates of Latin America, referring to the analysis of the situation made at the meeting, declare that, with its help, they have been shown 'just how far our obligations go. These bind us to a strategy of combined planning' for the coming years... Realities in Latin America are pressing on us Salesians, especially in the field of the evangelization of youth. The urgency of the situation has been made clearer by our reflection together on how much we have to do... in the way of evangelization and catechetics. These are priority areas and determine our lines of action (restructuring of works, new presences, qualification of personnel, training programmes, etc. Cf. *S.G.C.* 279, 328, 361). (Practical Conclusions of the Continental Meeting, Latin America)

And this is our mission. It is desperately needed by the youngsters who have gone astray, duped and manipulated by a system that has fixed them psychologically and ideologically, no matter how. You can see clearly enough the lack of evangelization in the embittered, shrill 'demos' that are a common feature of the juvenile scene. And you cannot blame the young for that; it is the people whose duty it is, the educators, the counsellors, the apostles who are to blame for failing to evangelize.

There is a pressing need for our mission in the times and situations we are living in (we have already seen the Pope calling them 'these stormy, fateful days'). As the going gets tougher,

it becomes more demanding, more powerfully charged with developments and consequences and closely-spaced dead-lines.

But all this needs something more than a simple diagnosis leading to generalized proposals, which, of themselves, resolve nothing into practice. It is necessary to work out a series of well-coordinated practical measures and initiatives in catechetics that are nailed down to places, times, methods and means, and are related to the people being evangelized.

The Provincials were well aware of this necessity in reviewing the situation at their Continental Meetings and dealt with the practical consequences, as you will see from the report further on in this number.

The three obligations entered into by the S.G.C.

This complex subject cannot be treated exhaustively, but keep in mind that the S.G.C. had already worked out a general programme embodying the basic thinking without which methods and means are nothing more than a confidence trick.

The S.G.C. says in paragraph 339: 'Since the XX General Chapter emphasizes the renewal of Salesian communities, each one of these must develop a new mentality and outlook; it must adopt a new "community" style of thought and action and present itself to the world in a new guise.'

As you see, there are three items of capital importance:

- 1) to bring about a change of mentality;
- 2) to adopt a new style of community thought and action;
- 3) to present a new image to the world.

Let us think about these for a while.

1. To bring about a change of mentality

From the very beginning the capitular document ('*Evangelization and Catechesis*') shows an awareness to this necessity, de-

claring (para. 274.1): 'It is not concerned with giving an exhaustive list of principles but rather with pointing out the urgency of a change of mentality in the field of evangelization.'

This change of mentality is needed because today catechesis is not what it was before. I would like this reality to be sincerely and effectively acknowledged by everyone, especially those who are getting on in years. Many Salesians who are doing catechetical or pastoral work or teaching religion are today experiencing some dismay at finding that they can no longer do what perhaps they have been doing successfully for many years. Perhaps they have not realized the profound changes that, in the course of a few years, have changed society, youth, pastoral criteria and catechetical methods, because the new audio-visual society has created a new type of man, a new way of looking at the universe, a new language. We older men have to 'learn' this language so that we can use it for the Gospel message.

The *Direttorio Catechistico Generale* echoes these anxieties: 'This (catechetical) renewal seems to be in danger today from those who fail to grasp how deep the renewal has to be, as if all that was needed was to remedy religious ignorance. For them, the remedy is more and more catechesis. This solution obviously does not measure up to reality. The catechesis itself has to be renewed, and not only for children either, but also for the continuous education of adults in the faith' (No. 9).

There has to be a change of mentality, then, a change that demands a true conversion, in the sense of a radical recasting and resetting of one's range of pastoral thinking and pastoral action. It is a law of life, and we know that life can impose some very drastic mutations on nature, which is hard on nature, but necessary.

2. *To adopt a new style of community thought and action*

The community dimension of pastoral catechetics is seen today to be of prime importance. The *Direttorio* again: 'Catechesis

necessarily depends on the support of the witness given by the ecclesial community. It is more compelling when seen against the back-drop of what the community is and does, visibly. The catechist is in a way the interpreter between the Church and those who are being catechized' (No. 35).

What has been said above of the community of the Church applies also (indeed, more trenchantly) to a religious community. Each of our Communities plies its catechesis much more effectively by what it is than by what it says. The days are long past when catechesis was off-loaded on to some member of the Community, whilst the others, their duty done, went happily about their lawful pursuits.

In this way, catechesis goes beyond the religion class: the entire activity of the Community is part of an organic work of Christian education undertaken as a common effort. Rectors, organizers of group activities, teachers of any subject, assistants and confreres, are all responsible for a united action in catechetics. The whole Community of Salesian educators is therefore a living witness to what is announced in the catechesis (cf. *S.G.C.* 318-321).

They become the verification of their own words, which otherwise lose their credibility and become so much hot air. According to the Italian Bishops' Conference, 'Just as it is impossible to conceive of a Christian community without a good catechesis, so it is impossible to have a good catechesis without the participation of the entire community' (*Il rinnovamento della catechesi*, No. 200).

So the work of catechising requires from the religious community a constant commitment to progressive *conversion* through a living witness of faith and love. This acquires greater depth and urgency these days with the accent of the catechetics-apostolate falling heavily on evangelisation. It is a matter not only of increasing factual knowledge, but also of rediscovering the vital values of the Christian choice. The question is: will our Communities become so convincing that they will persuade the young

that it is worth their while to remain Christians? And it is a question that needs a constructive answer.

3. *To present a new image to the world*

Here is another endlessly thought-provoking theme to sharpen our sense of commitment. Catechetical action nowadays seems to have more to do with a total relationship with the world than with modernizing methods and techniques. Again, the temptation to over-simplify is avoided and stress is laid on the close relationship between the commitment to evangelization and the attitude of service to the world: 'The Gospel would lack credibility if the Christian did not attempt to face up to and resolve the great problems of the world today by coming to close grips with them.' (S.G.C. 315).

We all know the famous saying of Gandhi's: 'For many men, the idea of God is expressed as a piece of bread'. Our Communities will not be able to evangelize if they turn in on themselves and on their work, even though they manage to organize a plush catechetical set-up. It is the contrary that happens: the more they get out of themselves, the more they go out of their way to meet the needs of the people (as Don Bosco and the great missionaries did), the more effective their evangelization will be and the greater its credibility.

So it is that our S.G.C. summons us to do our duty as a 'dedication to justice' for the liberation of the oppressed, and to renew our social and political commitment to work for a society that is less inhuman (cf. S.G.C. 67-77). Again, the Bishops' Synod of 1971 tells us: 'It seems clear that working for justice and helping to transform the world forms part of the task of preaching the Gospel, that is, of the mission of the Church for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every form of oppression' (*La giudizia nel mondo*, Introduction, and also cf. the

Synod 1974, No. 14). In this matter, the Latin-American Provincials were quite right to refer to Don Bosco, who worked for justice rather than thresh about denouncing people here and confronting people there, which is all too often the cause of deep divisions and negative chain-reactions.

2. Our problem: how to evangelize today

Let us now get down to more detailed considerations. The catechesis of evangelization, in its method, assumes the presence of three essentials if the Divine Word and the mystery of salvation are to be transmitted coherently and effectively as a body of truths. These three fundamentals can be worded in this way:

- above all, personal conviction; and with it
- personal conversion;
- personal superabundance of truth and grace.

In short, what the catechist will give to others, whoever they may be, but especially the young, will be only what he has himself in superabundance: the richness of truth and grace that fill his mind and soul, his convictions and his love for Christ, the Redeemer.

This is what the Council says about it, speaking to all the children of the Church: 'Yet let all realize that their first and most important obligation toward the spread of the faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life' (*A.G.* 36)... 'lest any of them become "an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly"' (*D.V.* 25, quoting St. Augustine, Sermon 179,1). Without this listening, any method we care to try will be useless, or downright dangerous, certainly not according to the mind of Christ and the Church.

These are all statements based on a profound reality, and should lead us to a serious examination of conscience.

Leading them to friendship with the Risen Christ

The obligation to catechize is therefore a permanent feature of all our educational work, and not of just one specific sector. Catechesis goes with the liturgy, with religious and secular culture, with group activities, with all our educational action in any form, and, of course, with the living witness of the Community and of its individual members.

The target area that all our evangelizing and catechetical action is converging on, with everything that goes with it, all our love, thinking, expertise, is not an abstraction, but a reality — indeed, a Person, the radiant figure of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, harmonizing in Himself all the work of salvation.

Article 21 of the New Constitutions says this: 'Education to the faith means above all leading people to the person of Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. Our highest knowledge is to know Him, our deepest joy to reveal the unsearchable riches of His grace, so that men may be renewed by discovering the supreme meaning of their lives in Him and in His gospel. As they accept Christ, He draws them into union with the Father, to adore Him in spirit and in truth as servants of His kingdom'. And it is precisely to this friendship, this intimacy with Christ, our Redeemer, that we have to direct our efforts in catechetical evangelization, whether it is instruction as such or the action of witness; a witness that will be given through conduct so thoroughly illuminated by the *Truth* that is Christ, so deeply nourished by His *Life* that anyone listening to us or watching us, or just seeing and judging us, will easily find the *Way* that is Christ Jesus. (Cf. S.G.C. 22; Pope Paul: Address, 3-2-1965).

Encounter in the Eucharist

The supreme moment of this encounter, the fulfilment of all true catechesis, is the Eucharist, the mystery of thanksgiving un-

derstood as far as comprehension goes, accepted fully in faith, lived personally in generous participation with the pascal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ, our Redeemer. Again it is the Council that gives the lead: 'Hence the Eucharist shows itself to be the source and apex of the whole work of preaching the gospel. Those under instruction are introduced by stages to a sharing in the Eucharist. The faithful, already marked with the sacred seal of baptism and confirmation, are, through the reception of the Eucharist, fully joined to the Body of Christ' (P.O. 5).

And we are led on straight away to consider the strategy of Christian education adopted by our Father, which hinged on the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Our whole mission of education is affected.

There remains the question of what part the Eucharist plays in the life of the educational community, and the initiation of the young into a full, conscious and active experience of the liturgical life. Two questions remain to be looked into: first, the part played by the Eucharist in the life of the educational community; and second, the introduction of the young to a full, active experience of the liturgical life. Article 23 of the Constitutions says: 'Our aim must be to encourage all people to "full, conscious and active participation" in the liturgy. Frequent encounter with Christ in the sacraments of penance and the eucharist are invaluable aids to educating Christians to liberty, to persevering conversion and to generosity and love within the Christian Community.'

Wanted: well-prepared Salesians

Obviously, there is no place here for do-it-yourself methods, either for the individual or the Community: preparation is needed. And it has to be specific to a place and its work, not a vague, generalized affair.

The preparation of personnel properly qualified in the catechetics apostolate is a key factor in the Congregation's plans for

catechetics. Without it, all the dedicated paper-work and inspired planning stay as dead as Marley undoubtedly was.

If we have enough experts, it will be possible to revise the methods for teaching religion, instruct and help the confreres in the difficult job of passing on the Word of God to the youngsters of today, organize the training of catechists and parents, and so on.

In short: an imaginative scheme for preparing our men in catechetics at all levels seems to me to be a priority for renewing the Congregation.

Plenty of scope for experts

It is absolutely necessary for each Province to have fully-qualified men working full-time at catechetics:

a) for teaching catechetics in the studentates, many of which have nothing or next to nothing in this line. This is a very serious state of affairs. The important thing is not so much to have it down on the time-table as a subject (perhaps in the form of a crash-course lasting a few weeks and given by outsiders!), but that, for the whole of the period of formation, catechetics should be there as an ingredient educationally active in the whole training programme, so that the right environment is created for those aspiring to become teachers and catechists (cf. *S.G.C.* 341);

b) for working with the staff of the Catechetical Institute at the Università Pontificia Salesiana on the theology and methodology of catechetics, and at the Salesian Catechetical Centres (e.g., Leumann, Turin; Madrid, and any of the national centres) for research, publications, study courses, etc. I am very pleased with the decision taken by Provincials at the Latin-American Meeting to establish two important centres for the Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking areas respectively;

c) for working *at Provincial level* on formulating schemes for catechetics and the Youth Apostolate;

d) for *collaboration with the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians*, and the Salesian Family in arranging catechetical courses and refresher courses;

e) to meet the great demand for help *at diocesan and national level*. Teams of experts in catechetics will enable us to put on adequate training and up-dating facilities for the confreres at these levels:

— *intermediate* (between the academics and the men in the field): preparation of organizers and experts to work in the parishes, schools and youth centres within the field of planning and structuring for the catechetics apostolate at Provincial and Interprovincial level;

— *ordinary training* of all Salesians, specially (as stated above) in philosophy, theology and pastoral work;

— on-going formation for all Salesians carrying out their mission as evangelizers in our various works;

— *advisors, consultants and collaborators* for the whole Salesian Family: Salesians, Salesian Sisters, Volontarie di Don Bosco, Co-operators, Past Pupils, etc. in their educational and catechetical mission.

Catechesis in the liturgy and in life

Let us make it more practical still. In the evangelization through catechesis that goes on in our groups and associations (v. S.G.C. 321-326), there is a close interworking with the liturgical action of the people concerned and with their lives, right down to the arranging of their timetables and the organizing of their activities. The Kingdom of God proclaimed in catechesis needs to be *celebrated* in the liturgy and *shared* in the com-

mon life. With us, then, a balanced creativity and inventiveness is encouraged in preparing our Masses, celebrating the sacraments and in discovering and understanding the 'liturgical signs.'

This is the place and field of action, after the best Salesian tradition, of the associations with their groups, including the informal ones. These constitute a 'privileged place', where the Word of God is welcomed, assimilated and set against the day-to-day problems of the Christian life. The Salesian catechist-educator should guide his youngsters to accept the Word of God 'as a key to their problems, an answer to their questions, a broadening of their values and, at the same time, the satisfaction of their aspirations' (Italian Bishops' Conference, *op. cit.*, No. 52).

In the Christocentric vision mentioned above, there is a confluence of the traditional Salesian values of sacramental, and particularly Eucharistic piety, devotion to Mary and a strong attachment to the Pope as the centre of the Church. It is in this synthesis that such values fall into place and into gear.

I hardly need to say that this work, demanding intelligence, study, self-sacrifice and sublimation to the supernatural, is like the action of grace: intimately personal. Forget mass-production; it is absolutely essential at any given moment to address the individual to the highest degree possible. The young people to whom we direct our apostolate must have ready access to a service of personal spiritual guidance.

Salesian style and atmosphere

Much of what has been said above is of general application to education and evangelization. We cannot claim to lay down any immutable laws or to pull out anything new in this field, which is as vast as the Church and as old as the Gospel itself. But, as I said at the beginning, our outstanding rôle in the Church is that of working for youth. We can therefore talk about a 'Salesian atmosphere' in which our pastoral and apostolic action

takes place (and, I might say, we are not the only ones to recognize this; see the Holy Father's address to the General Chapter XIX, 21st May 1965: v. Acts of the Chapter, pp. 295-300). The friendly presence, the lucidity of Christian doctrine, educating to liberty: there must be something distinctive about it, and that is the 'Salesian style.'

Educating to liberty

I really must add something on educating to liberty. It is more than ever necessary today, and it is an extremely important part of any deliberately formulated and soundly based attempt at Christian formation of the young. But education to liberty, where the young person chooses what he wants, should not be confused with agnosticism or — worse still — the abandonment, on the part of the Salesian educator, of any attempt to make positive suggestions to the boys, or to give them religious guidance and motivation. But, from the very nature of the case, they have *need* of this help, and can claim it from us by right, because we have a strict obligation to provide effective guidance.

I am not speaking here of the abnormal case where an educator gives the boys doctrines or rules of conduct that are clean against the ideology or the pastoral teaching of the Church; this would be a betrayal of our Salesian vocation and mission. The young will accept education to liberty, but they do demand that their educators should prepare them to make proper use of it with guidance that is realistic, intelligent and methodical, culturally adequate and sharpened by insight.

Don Bosco fully accepted the reasonable demands of youth — he gave full rein to good sense in his system of education — and went further. He did not hesitate to have some of his boys undertaking to help him give a Christian education to the others. If this would appear to us, who are witnessing the increasing infiltration of politics into our lives, as an excursion into political

manipulation, it should come as no surprise to find it creeping into the economy of evangelization. At least the growth was a benign one and not a cankerous erosion; and it did answer a keenly-felt need.

The liturgy, the theatre, singing, sport

Turning to the Salesian atmosphere, we have to be able to infuse something eminently characteristic of this atmosphere into our liturgy, while retaining all the formative power that Don Bosco could pack into it (cf. Const. § 23). Also the new forms and the new means of communication, emptied of anything that is unbecoming or slovenly, can become things of dignity when used for the liturgy, rich in signs and values.

And together with the liturgy, we should exploit the present common-places of our Salesian repertoire, singing, theatre, sport and so on, and they should once more be made to reach out beyond themselves and contribute to the work of helping people to become more mature.

A friendly presence

This represents one of the Salesian values, established by Don Bosco and valid everywhere and at any time: the friendly presence of the Salesian among the boys.

Just recently I heard this remark from our Co-operators (these brothers of ours often give us something serious to think about): '*Ma come!* The Salesians were founded to look after the abandoned, and yet they are the ones who are doing the abandoning. Why aren't they in the midst of the boys any more?'

Our friendly presence among the boys is the moment *par excellence* for us Salesians to do our evangelizing (taking the term in its wider sense, but still incisive and still valid), it is the Salesian

educational system: it is what Don Bosco did. Listen to the plea of the collaborator of the Abbé Pierre: 'All right, close a hundred houses, give up any work you like, but for heaven's sake don't abandon Don Bosco and his way!' And the key to Don Bosco's way was the presence of the Salesian among the boys.

I would like you to heighten your awareness of this Salesian characteristic that bears such a high efficiency-rating in the Christian formation of the young. It is all there in our Constitutions (§ 16, 25) and the Acts of S.G.C. (299-300), set down with force and clarity; please give it your serious thought.

'Associationism'

The recent Synod fully recognized the need for the presence of the young wherever evangelization is actually going on: 'We turn in a special way to the young, whom we regard not only as an objects of evangelization, but also as evangelizers, above all of their own age-group. And, what is more, we are firmly convinced that it is the young who must arouse us adults and spur us on incessantly to renew our commitment to evangelization.

'This the young people are well able to do, with their earnest search for the fundamental Gospel values, never satisfied with anything less than the authentic message and honest witness to it' (Statement of the Synod, No. 5).

This involvement of the young today labours under the name of 'associationism', which covers all youth movements and group activities: sport, the arts, the press and the other forms of mass media, social work and religious activities, right up to actual apostolic and missionary work. Let me say a few words on this highly interesting development of our times.

We all know about the difficulties being experienced by the big youth organizations. This constitutes the crisis of associationism. Our own organizations are similarly afflicted. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that we have let them lapse without

putting anything in their place. The phenomenon is part of, and symbolical of, something bigger and deeper that has violently convulsed many institutions in the 70s.

However, from the ashes of the old organizations have arisen new groups, movements and associations, along new lines and with new sensibilities: all shapes and sizes and sorts, many of them doing real spiritual and apostolic work. One thing stands out: the young are not averse to getting together to do something that interests them. But it has to interest them, and here lies the difference that needs to be taken into account.

For instance, the youngsters today are not at all indifferent, given the right handling, to forming a group and doing something of a strictly spiritual nature. They need plenty of time, they go all out, and straight for the essential, and are impatient of too many structures. However, they accept the adult, the priest that understands them, that is an unpretentious and honest witness, and is willing to put himself out for them. And they are open to contact with Christ. They love prayer, including prolonged meditation, their generosity in the service of others, especially the down and out, is often astounding.

These are the positive things on which to build the dialogue with the 'associationists', where externals and formalities come to mean less and less.

Behind the committed youngsters, there is always the Salesian

Don Bosco would not have held back from these young people, but, driven on by love, he would have found some way of bringing them together and taking them to Christ. And here's the point: the man must be there, the priest, the Salesian, the Don Bosco man, who can take an interest in them and win them over. In fact, if you look carefully, you will find that, behind these young neo-Christians, or 'full-time Christians', as one journalist styled them with much more admiration than irony, behind them is the

priest. And how does he do it? By living his priesthood intensely. He prays, he studies, he loves the Church with all its kinks and human miseries, he keeps clear of sterile wrangling; and he passes on to the young the riches of sound doctrine. To be in his presence is to experience the assurance and joy of his own interior life; and that in turn rests on a living faith and the love of a heart in tune with the love of Christ and with His Vicar on earth. Isn't that how Don Bosco was? *E non faceva così Don Bosco*, from his famous Joy Society to his many associations created to bring his boys to Jesus and to His law of love?

Well now, dear Confreres, we have thousands and thousands of young people on our hands. Surely there must be some among us who can stimulate and train flocks of them to acquire this faith, this personal fibre. The import of the question must be examined, and I think it will prove to be something of a nettle. The prickly bit, perhaps, will be the answer in terms of the actual consequences, of the remedies that will have to be applied.

By way of consolation, even partial, you should know that, in the last few years, a start has been made in some places in getting some youth movements going with the new-style associationism and aiming at evangelization. This is happening in both Europe and the New World, and, here and there, there have been some comforting results, some of them on the missions.

Then there are a number of magnificent Brothers who are promoting these movements, in the fullest sense of the word 'promote', and we have already had some first-class vocations from them.

I like to think of how much good will soon be radiating from these groups of young people once they have become men, solidly prepared, strong-willed, generous and well-grounded in doctrine.

3. Situations and stages in our mission

What has been said so far is true of our evangelizing and catechizing mission to youth. The individual stages of our pastoral action vary with the different situations. Some of them we have seen already; let us take another brief look at them.

Club and Youth Centre

In the club and youth centre, we see catechesis under its primary aspect, that is, the passing on of the Gospel message of salvation, because the youngsters come entirely of their own accord and enjoy an experience of Church that is part of a very effective and valuable character-training process. The General Chapter insisted on infusing new life into this activity, which is typical of Don Bosco's work. He popularized the boys' club and with it won the hearts of thousands of boys and the goodwill of the world.

Whatever name it goes under in different parts of the world, the boys' club is still a very popular and simple way of evangelizing, particularly for the pre-adolescents. It is flexible and teeming with possibilities for new ideas, its structures are minimal, it opens up new horizons for boys without subjecting them to means' tests or rigid discipline, and it all happens in a climate of freedom, spontaneity and friendship where a boy can really expand his chest.

A few generous Salesians, full of apostolic zeal, with the help of lay people who have been enthused by the idea (they are often the products of that same club or centre), can change the face of a whole district by stretching out to the parents and other adults through the children.

All this is history, plain facts that we can see for ourselves; but there is another fact, and it is this: to keep the story as it is, we need men with strong faith and sincere love to work in

these areas, which, in some ways, I would call privileged. With faith and love, the rest will materialize, without fail.

The Salesian school

The Salesian school fits naturally into the larger context of the evangelizing mission of Catholic education. The conception of a school completely immersed in work that is broadly evangelizing and involves everyone, Salesians, lay staff, pupils and parents, is no Castle in Spain. I recall the words of a Provincial, who was talking about certain schools organized in this way: 'As far as their activities go, and the spirit that pervades them, they are large parishes brimming with life and activity.' Of course, you have to have the right men to do this sort of thing, patient, steady types.

When the school is genuinely Christian

Brother Buttmer, the Superior General of the De la Salle Brothers, who organized an enquiry into all their schools throughout the world, gave his report to the recent Synod. There follows a summary of this report; you can find the complete text among the documents of the Synod. I would like anyone interested in schools to pay attention to what he says and think about it.

The Catholic school has the responsibility of introducing a spiritual dimension into today's pluralistic society and developing it. This can be done:

- through teaching that is inspired by the Gospel values;
- through moral attitudes that pervade every act of the life of the individual and of the community, attitudes that have as their point of departure a Christian anthropology inspired by the

Gospels and cognizant of the findings of the human sciences so much in vogue today;

— through the direct transmission of the message.

'The Catholic school must be able to satisfy the pupils in its answers to their questions on the ultimate meanings of existence. Catechesis, then, is an integral part of the school apostolate. If the responsibilities outlined above are met, every genuinely Christian school represents an outstanding service to the men of today in procuring their salvation.' So much for Bro. Buttimer's paper at the Synod. It is clear that a school in this sense of the term is performing a very valuable function. Don Bosco would certainly have underwritten this proposition, and we fully agree with it.

The next question, of course, is: do our schools measure up to these criteria? Do they render an outstanding service to the young for the salvation of their souls?

The big questions

We have to answer these questions:

— What are the reasons for the negligible impact of Christian formation on the pupils?

— Why are the numbers of those so affected disproportionately large?

— Why are schools reduced to learning factories, to so many hours of teaching without any other contacts during or after school?

— Why is there such a large number of lay teachers who are not working in harmony with the Salesian apostolate?

— Whatever happened to the educational community as an effective instrument?

— Why are our catechetical and evangelizing operations suffering from a shortage of qualified personnel?

— Have the Salesians, because of the social class of the pupils or the low snob-value of the school, allowed themselves to desert the people they ought to be serving by reason of their vocation?

— Can we eliminate the blank-wall situations?

— How?

— In those cases where we have to give up certain schools, what else do we propose doing as our pastoral commitment?

The answers to these questions may make the next one relevant:

— if there are serious gaps in a work that compromise the reasons for its existence, and if the gaps cannot be filled or adequate adjustments be made to meet the needs of the present work of evangelization or pastoral care, what is the point of keeping a work going that, as far as our mission is concerned, is having negative results?

The S.G.C. urgently invites us to make a serious examination of the state of things, to carry out 'a constant check on syllabuses, on methods, on the culture transmitted, on the values entailed, on relations with the social system, on the image of man which is formed, on religious education and on pastoral vocational guidance.' (No. 384). And it places before us the drastic alternative of EITHER a courageous renewal OR a closure, if it should happen that the work does not answer to the requirements of our basic objectives (cf. S.G.C. 385).

Co-education

This seems to be the right place to deal with the viability of mixed schools. Some of these have been set up on the strength of an interpretation of Reg. No. 12 that, to say the least of it, is

very questionable indeed. Reg. 12 opens: 'When circumstances so require...' According to the thinking behind the article, the 'circumstances' cannot include expediency or opportunity-snatching; nor the desire, nor even the need, real though it may be, of families or friends or past-pupils; and it certainly does not include the desire to give a shot in the arm to a work that has outlived its original purpose.

But we cannot slough these situations off. The question to be faced is this: how will these co-ed. schools get round the requirement that the indisputable object of our mission should be the evangelization of BOYS? How is our catechetics/evangelizing service going to fare in these schools? How is the Salesian method — our presence, our contacts with the pupils, our working with them — going to look once it has been adapted to these conditions, of, indeed, it is possible to adapt it at all? What sort of people in these schools have had sufficient teaching preparation to undertake a delicate task such as this? And how many of them are there? This is a special educational situation with its own requirements, which are recognized as such even by non-religious educators: how will our men react to these requirements?

In fine — and this is a most important question — with all the pressures of the vocations crisis and of qualifying personnel, who are already thin on the ground and completely extended on urgent work, surely the strains imposed by these new obligations will only hold back the vital process of renewal in the Provinces?

I put these questions, to which you yourselves might like to add at some time, as an invitation to all to examine and re-examine similar initiatives with your usual circumspection, so as to avoid creating situations that, sooner or later, can cause serious difficulties.

When there is a plethora of schools

In these times of profound changes, we must have the courage

to look at the individual situations with objectivity and foresight to see where they are taking us. This, after all, is what our boys require of us. It is a bad mistake, for example, to wait for the death-rattle before closing a work, since it only prolongs and aggravates the confreres' frustration and lack of confidence. These are distressing problems, but they must be faced.

For now, I shall make five statements that seem to me to be beyond question, and you must draw the appropriate conclusions.

1. In some parts, the schools are over-developed, especially in the middle/upper-school range, which creates all sorts of critical situations.

2. One consequence of this plethora has been an under-development of the youth centres, clubs and suchlike activities; and it is the quality that is lacking, besides the quantity.

3. Another effect is to put the wrong face on the work as a whole, or at least a face that is not always typically Salesian. It has limited the resources we can throw into the work for the poor and needy, the people who should rank first in our preferences. At the same time, with the way some of the schools are functioning, there has been a flattening of the community profile and a drift towards the bourgeois among the confreres.

4. This commitment to schools is out of all proportion to our available man-power, hobbling and paralysing, or at any rate slowing down, even the qualification of personnel and on-going formation, which are of overriding urgency in the renewal of the Provincial Communities. In plain language, it is holding back the renewal programme to an unwarranted extent.

5. Therefore a serious examination is badly needed to see how the individual situations stand against the state of the Province as a whole, keeping in mind alternative lines of development that are purely Salesian and easier to set going (we were pleased to see that the Provincial Chapters '75 had already moved in that direction with solutions that were well thought-out and courageous).

I wish to lay particularly heavy stress on the following sectors:

a) *technical courses* for apprentices, including evening classes;

b) youth centres, clubs and youth groups, not so much the starting of new ones (although this is not excluded) as the overhaul and refit of existing ones to make them efficient in the context of today's pastoral needs;

c) *hostels* for young apprentices, workers and orphans, but there is no need to abandon the ones we have if they are doing a socially acceptable job;

d) *leaders and organizers for pastoral work at Provincial level*, especially in the field of catechetics and of the mass media. In this latter area there is serious shortage of men, while the needs are mountainous.

It all adds up to an inspection of the workings, carried out without premature judgements in order to see that our work is attaining the end for which it exists, and *that* is evangelization.

Redimensioning takes courage

There are three very important problems here.

First there is the famous redimensioning of the works. Contrary to the image that seems to have formed in some places, it is not a matter of applying a suitable anaesthetic and following it up with a decent burial (for example, the average cadaver would hardly feel the urgent need for training catechists, spirituality teams and prayer-group leaders, which we have noted above). It has to be seen as an action of courage and foresight coupled with the realistic, dynamic assessment of the situation that precedes the assault operation. There follows a period of bold and vigorous adjustment to the changed circumstances. When all is said and done, it is not the bricks and mortar that count, but the persons who live among them. This is work for men who can adapt them-

selves to a juvenile world that is changing fast and will not wait.

It is a great mistake to persist in dragging out the life of a work that, for all its meritorious record, has long lost its apostolic effectiveness. Creeping paralysis overtakes whatever is moving ahead: the interesting opportunities for renewal that could have made the Province a much livelier place, the attraction of vocations struggling to survive the emptiness and boredom of life in the urban jungle. Everything stagnates.

This reshaping operation, then, is a complex but vital one, and the Provincial and his Council needs the direct collaboration of everyone. Remember that, the longer we leave it, the more difficult it is likely to be, and the less effective.

Laymen in the educational community

One important development we have in mind for our evangelization apostolate is to bring the parents into the circle of the educational community, since they have the primary responsibility for the education of their children. It is our duty to help them to shoulder that responsibility and to collaborate in a fuller work of evangelization in which everyone both bears and receives the message of the Gospel.

There is the further problem: it is not only in the schools that lay people have close ties with us, but in the other sectors as well. This duty was clearly indicated by the S.G.C., and we are coming to see the whole thing as of extraordinary importance to our present situation. We recognize that we need lay people, not simply or even primarily out of necessity, but for obvious ecclesiological and educational reasons; lay people who can become capable co-workers with us to accomplish an efficient integration of our work in education, evangelization and pastoral care. There are youth centres, for instance, clubs, parishes, group activities and any number of other activities where lay people are in their element.

The lay people are the first to say to us: 'Leave to us the things that are not part of a priest's ministry, and you get on with the work that no one else can do.'

Obviously, this cannot be done without preparation, which means that ideas, plans, schemes have to be rounded up and considered. Moreover, the Salesian, particularly the Communities, need to be persuaded that the problem exists and has to be solved.

There is no alternative but to have the lay people working alongside us. Some Provinces, and groups of Provinces, have already made a good start in this. For instance, a group of Latin-American Provinces recently held a study-week at Córdoba, where laymen and Salesians met to study the problems of collaboration in teaching and pastoral work. I hear that everyone came away fired with the idea and determined to continue and improve on what they had started.

In the interesting scheme started by the German and Flemish Provinces, the matter was tackled with sensitivity and the will to get things done. I know of other enterprises in this line, where systems are steadily being hammered out and made to work.

But we must not waste any more time. So *avanti*, without letting the difficulties get the better of you. Set your sights accurately on what you intend to do, and then do it systematically. The fruits will appear.

If we prepare laymen for collaboration understood in this way, and not as mere employment for a salary, we shall have some very well-qualified people who can become real Co-operators. It is for us to take the appropriate steps to make them realize what it means to belong to the third branch of our Family, with obvious advantages to our common mission. Clearly, however, our contact with the Co-operators does not end there; they have a much wider scope. But I want to call your attention to the importance of having these people at our side in our work of education. And that wider scope I mentioned above is really

wide. They can work in parishes, with immigrants and social rejects, in boys' clubs and youth centres and other apostolic works. Given the right help and properly integrated, they can perform a valuable service for us, which is already happening in some places.

Our contribution to the catechetical movement

The *Direttorio Catechistico Generale*, in part VI, earnestly recommends collaboration among those who work in the catechetics apostolate. Now, the mission that we have in the Church of carrying the Gospel message to the young obliges us to make our contribution to the progress of the general catechetical movement in fraternal union with those engaged in it: diocesan priests, religious, lay people, etc. Further, a number of circumstances that we regard as providential have already placed our Congregation in the happy position of being able to offer our services to the Local Churches.

By the very fact that we are Salesians we should see the responsibility we have in the Church today to provide an efficient catechetical service. The Provinces must see where they stand in this and organize the training of as many men as are required to meet the actual needs. And don't leave it too long before things start to happen.

Conclusion: tomorrow may be too late

We have dealt with some serious matters regarding our work of evangelization, which is a vital factor in the renewal of the Salesian Congregation, the incarnation in the Church of the charism of Don Bosco.

And here I want to say this: we must seize the providential moment in which we are called to live. Tomorrow it may be too

late to do anything in some local situations for which, at the moment, we are unprepared or undermanned. We must perform our task in the Church and for the Church with conviction and determination, knowing what we have to do and the way we are going to do it. We must have, individually and communally, a nice sense of the hierarchy of values that are current today.

Two exhortations from the Pope

To finish off, I think we should do well to take the words of the Holy Father to the last Synod and apply them to this fundamental problem of our existence as a congregation: 'Our duty is to make a choice, which stands guard over the beginning of the roads the Church must follow in her search for an ever more incisive expression of her doctrine. We cannot afford to take wrong turnings; if we do, we shall fail in our fundamental obligation of confirming our brethren.

'One fact stands out here, and that is the unanimous will to give the Church a new, generous and world-wide impulse towards evangelization. The Church has perhaps never before realized this basic duty to such an extent or so clearly. It seems a worthy chapter indeed of the recent Council: in keeping with the essential action of the Church, meeting the needs of the world, resolving certain countervailing phenomena that we know so well...

'We must do the will of God, Who has sent us on our mission. This whole marvellous world is waiting to hear the message of the liberation from sin and from the evils caused by sin, the message of salvation in the Cross of Christ... And for this we trust solely in the help of the Lord.

'The difficulties are enormous, the expectations manifold, the responsibilities formidable. "But be brave!" says the Lord, "I have defeated the world" (*Jn.* 16, 33). Christ is with us and in us, He speaks in us and through us, and will see that we do not lack the help we need.'

Again, speaking directly to our Family, the Holy Father said with patent sincerity: 'This is no time for the timorous, or the lazy, or the absentees, but for the generous, the strong, the pure, the convinced; for the people who believe, hope and love, who are ready to pay in person for the expansion of Christ's Kingdom and for the dawning of better times' (Audience given in St. Peter's for the boys of the Roman Province, 11-5-1966).

And, dear Confreres, may our beloved Father give us all the light and strength to translate the words of the Vicar of Christ into a fruitful work of evangelization.

Fr. LUIGI RICCERI

Rector Major

II. INSTRUCTIONS AND RULINGS

Among the many suggestions sent in by confreres to underline the spiritual character of our Centenary, there is a special prayer for the Missions to be said every day. This proposal echoes the command of Jesus: "Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest" (Matt. 9, 38), and expresses a sentiment close to the heart of Don Bosco.

As it is felt that it will meet with general approval, communities and individual confreres are urged to append the following invocation to those used at Spiritual Reading, or, better still, to the Intercessions at Morning Prayer/Lauds or Evening Prayer/Vespers; or it can be used at any other suitable time during the day. The text is:

Prayer-leader/Hebdom.: Eternal Shepherd,
It is your will that all peoples should be saved:
Response: Renew the missionary commitment
in the Church and in the Salesian Family,
and rekindle the zeal for the salvation of all men
that Don Bosco inspired in his followers.

The prayer is short but pithy: it is to be said by all, every day, as a reminder of the need to rethink the rationale and the set of values we base our lives on. For Don Bosco they are all contained in the words: "To seek souls and serve you alone".

III. COMMUNICATIONS

1. New Provincials

The Rector Major has appointed the following confreres as Provincials:

<i>NAME</i>	<i>PROVINCE</i>
Fr. José CARBONELL	Philippines: Manila.
Fr. Mauro CASAROTTI	India: Bombay.
Fr. Luis CHINCHILLA	Central America.
Fr. Wallace CORNELL	Australia.
Fr. José MAIO	Portugal.
Fr. Michael HICKS	Ireland.
Fr. José GURRUCHAGA	México.
Fr. Antonio MARRONE	Italy: Subalpine.
Fr. Arturo MORLUPI	Italy: Sicily.
Fr. Salvador NAVA	Guadalajara.
Fr. Pierre PICAN	France: North (Paris).
Fr. Adriaan VAN LUYN	Holland.
Fr. Angelo VIGANÒ	Italy: Lombardy.

2. Salesian Bishops

TWO NEW BISHOPS

The Holy Father has recently raised two Salesians to the bishopric. They are:

Mgr. Edvaldo GONÇALVES AMARAL, formerly Rector of the Salesian House at Natal in the Province of Recife in Brazil, has been appointed Titular Bishop of Zallaca and auxiliary to Archbishop Cabral of Aracajú (announced in the *Osservatore Romano* of 20th Feb., 1975);

and Mgr. Argimiro Daniel MOURE, formerly Provincial of La Plata, has been appointed Titular Bishop of Comodoro Rivadavia in Argentina (O.R., 6.4.1975).

This brings the number of Salesian Bishops consecrated so far to 108.

DEATH OF MGR. SECONDO GARCÍA

Mgr. Secondo García, Titular Bishop of Olimpo and, until 1974, Vicar Apostolic of Alto Orinoco, died of heart failure on 6.6.1975 whilst accompanying a Venezuelan pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Year.

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

In the last few months four Salesian Bishops have been transferred to new sees, with greater responsibilities.

Mgr. Miguel Angel ALEMAN, Titular Bishop of Puppi and Apostolic Administrator of Viedma, has been transferred to the Cathedral Church of Rio Gallegos (O.R., 6.4.1975).

Mgr. Mario PICCHI, Titular Bishop of Orea and formerly Auxiliary to Bishop Eugenio Peyrou of Comodora Rivadavia, has been appointed Auxiliary to Archbishop Plaza of La Plata (O.R., 6.4.1975).

Mgr. José GOTTARDI, Titular Bishop of Belcastro and Auxiliary to Bishop Cabrera of Mercedes, has been appointed Auxiliary to Bishop Parteli of Montevideo (O.R., 12.5.1975).

Mgr. Andrés RUBIO, Titular Bishop of Foro Traiano and Auxiliary to Bishop Parteli, has been promoted to the Cathedral Church at Mercedes (O.R., 29.5.1975).

Two other Salesian Bishops have also been *given heavier responsibilities by the Holy See*:

Mgr. Rosalio CASTILLO, Titular Bishop of Precausa and Coadjutor to Bishop Rojas a Trujillo in Venezuela, has been appointed Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law' (O.R., 21.2.1975).

Mgr. Antoni BARANIAK, Archbishop of Poznań, has been appointed member of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints (O.R., 10.3.1975).

3. Solidarity Fund (16th report)

a) PROVINCES THAT HAVE SENT OFFERINGS

ITALY

Turin (Mother House)	Lire	400.000
Liguria		2.515.000
Lombardy		850.000
Rome - Sardinia		2.120.000
Venetia (St Mark)		600.000
Venetia (St Zeno)		500.000

EUROPE

Austria		1.739.760
Belgium (North)		1.750.000
Belgium (South)		221.827
Ireland		379.687
Germany (South) - for Brazil		6.750.000
Netherlands - for various places		6.446.400
Spain (Bilbao)		1.210.000
Spain (Madrid)		1.000.000

AMERICA

U.S.A. (East)		7.536.000
U.S.A. (West)		3.165.000
Venezuela		210.000

ASIA

India (Gauhati)		1.000.000
Middle East		250.000
Thailand		200.000

<i>Total receipts between 10 March 1975 and 12 June</i>		
1976		38.843.674
<i>Balance b/d</i>		39.171
<i>Total as at 12 June 1975</i>		<u>38.882.845</u>

b) DISTRIBUTION OF MONEY RECEIVED

EUROPE

Belgium (North): Centrum de Waai for young immigrants	1.000.000
Jugoslavia, Ljubljana: the missionary apostolate of the diaspora	1.900.000
Italy: holiday camp at Campo Reale	200.000

AMERICA

Antilles, Haiti: slum-dwellers	1.000.000
Argentina, Bahía Blanca: Patagonia (from Bilbao)	825.000
Bolivia, Sucre: equipment for Youth Centre	1.000.000
Central America, San Salvador: enlarging of the Ricaldone Boys' Club	2.000.000
Brazil: Course of Continuous Formation, Salesian reading-matter	700.000
Brazil: Belo Horizonte, Jacarezinho: slum-area relief	3.000.000
Brazil: Campo Grande (from München, Germany)	1.000.000
Brazil: Guiratinga (from München, Germany)	750.000
Brazil: Humaitá (from München, Germany)	750.000
Brazil: Manaus: studentate (from München)	1.500.000
Brazil: Porto Velho (from München)	1.000.000
Brazil: Recife (from München)	1.000.000
Brazil: Rio Negro (from München)	750.000
Colombia, Bogotá: catechetics at Bucaramanga	1.000.000
do., do.: clothing and medicines for 'Porvenir'	1.000.000
Ecuador, Guayaquil: slum parish of Domingo Savio	700.000

AFRICA

Central Africa: poor students	700.000
Ethiopia, Adigrat: houses for the poor (from the Netherlands)	1.343.000
South Africa and Swaziland: feeding and education of needy Africans	700.000

ASIA

Burma: lepers	1.000.000
Hong Kong: lepers and the handicapped at Coloane (Macao)	700.000
India, Bombay: slum-dwellers at Wadala	700.000
India, do.: work at Panijm, Goa (from the Netherlands)	134.300
India, Calcutta: refugees from Bangladesh	700.000
India, Gauhati: do. do. do.	700.000
India, do.: irrigations works at Golaghat (from the N ^l ands)	2.148.800
India, do.: hospitalization at mission-hospital	500.000
India, Madras: housing for the poor at Cochin	
India, Gauhati: hospitalization at mission-hospital (from the N ^l ands)	390.150
India, do.: lepers and handicapped at Vyasarpady	2.686.000
	1.000.000
Korea: lepers	1.000.000
Middle East: poor Arab children	1.000.000
Thailand: Vietnamese refugees	1.000.000
do.: lepers at Thavá	700.000
do.: mission at Surat Thani (from the Netherlands)	134.300
Refund: Missions Office	550.000

Total disbursements from 10 March 1975 to 12 June 1975 38.861.550

Balance c/d 21.295

Total 38.882.845

c) CASH - FLOW

Total receipts as at 12 June 1975 340.334.714

Total disbursements at same date 340.313.419

Remaining fund 21.295

4. Continuous Formation Course for Missionaries

This course lasts from 10th May till 10 July. It has been promoted by the Rector Major as part of the celebration of the Missionary Centenary and has brought to the Pisana forty-two missionaries from Latin America, Asia and Africa. The analysis is as follows:

Latin America: 18 missionaries, with 7 from Brazil; others from Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Venezuela. Asia: 14 missionaries, 14 from India, the others from Thailand, Japan, Cape Verde and Timor.

Africa: 2 missionaries.

This course differs from its predecessors in two ways. First, it lasts for only two months instead of four so as not to keep the missionaries away from their posts for too long. Second, it is slanted towards missionary pastoral requirements.

Qualified exponents, Salesian and non-Salesian, have lectured on missionary spirituality, the action of the Holy Spirit in missionary work, the missionary's theological problems, the Council document 'Ad Gentes', the Christ of Mark's Gospel, religious instruction on the missions, the elements of sacramental theology, and Salesian topics.

All the participants are feeling the accumulated spiritual effects of the pilgrimages to Valdocco and Colle Don Bosco, Subiaco and Assisi, the repeated encounters with the Pope, and the atmosphere of fraternal cordiality.

This is the first experience of its kind in the Congregation, and it is being followed with particular interest to make sure that it proves a profitable one, and also to pin-point the deficiencies. We shall then know what to avoid when we come to repeat the course, as we hope to do at some time in the future.

5. Other news from the Missions Department

a) *The Centenary Missionary Expedition*

Many confreres have requested to go as missionaries on the Centenary Expedition. Fifty-five have already been informed of their destinations. The many other requests, a considerable number coming

from confreres in training, are receiving the careful consideration of the Superiors.

b) *Requests for personnel*

Continue to arrive at the Department from Salesian missionaries, and also from non-Salesian missionary Bishops. Ten Bishops from Africa alone (e.g., from Ruyigi in Burundi, Brazzaville in the Congo, Tananarive in Madagascar, etc.) have turned to the Congregation. Requests have come from as far away as Tahiti in Polynesia. As for the Salesian missionary Provincials and Bishops, their requests arrive in a continuous stream.

c) *A fine example from Central America*

Many Provinces are particularly sensitive to the needs of the missions. Take the Province of Central America, for example. In its last Provincial Chapter a number of schemes were debated that are worthy of emulation. We read in the documents:

'The Centenary Year, 1975, will receive the special attention of our Province. The Chapter proposes to:

a) respond to the missionary initiatives of the Rector Major and the Missions Department with an extraordinary effort to send economic aid as a sign of solidarity;

b) offer one of their men to the Rector Major for the Missionary Expedition 1975;

c) send another confrere to the San Pedro de Carchá Mission, Alta Verapaz, in Guatemala;

d) establish a new missionary presence at Panamá;

e) offer really generous economic aid to the missionary schemes at Carchá and Campur;

f) establish a common Provincial fund for the missions;

g) establish a missionary exhibition on wheels, etc.'

d) *Missionary Campaign*

Meanwhile the Department is continuing its missionary campaign in various forms. The Councillor, Fr. Bernard Tohill, in the month of May made a short visit to the missionary parishes in the south of Jugoslavia, giving talks to the students of theology of the two Yugoslav Provinces and speaking to more than sixteen groups of Sisters and parishioners.

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

THE RECTOR MAJOR

The Rector Major went to Cachoeira do Campo in Brazil on 23rd May to meet twenty-five Provincials and the accompanying Delegates from Latin America to hold the check-up, provided for by the S.G.C., on how far the directives of the Chapter had been applied. The meetings lasted till the 31st.

Fr. Ricceri was accompanied by some Superior Councillors: Fr. Viganò of Salesian Training, Fr. Raineri of the Adult Apostolate, Fr. Dho of the Youth Apostolate, and the Regionals, Frs. Vecchi and Henriquez.

The agenda covered the problems and options, and therefore the future, of the 550 Houses and more than 4,800 confreres in Latin America.

The Rector Major left Rome in plenty of time to visit the U.S.A. On 16th May he was in the theological studentate at Columbus, Ohio, where he conferred the 'ministries' (olim 'minor orders') on a group of clerics. He also had the satisfaction of seeing for himself the local Recreation Centre in full swing; it is run entirely by the clerics themselves.

On Whit Sunday he was at Newton for the Clothing of the seventeen novices.

The next day he was received by the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Terence J. Cooke, who expressed the greatest satisfaction with the work the Salesians were doing in his immense diocese and he took advantage of the occasion to ask for more Salesians to collaborate in the evangelization of the five million Catholics and more in his charge.

On 20th and 21st May he was at New Rochelle for a meeting with the Rectors and the Provincial Council. The opportunity was seized for celebrating his Jubilee of Ordination.

There were more festivities for the happy occasion on 24th May at Cachoeira do Campo in a 'day of fraternity and prayer' in honour of the Help of Christians, whilst the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians, had their turn on 1st June at Belo Horizonte.

On 4th June Fr. Ricceri returned to Rome, leaving the other Superiors to finish off their programmes, which consists of specialist meetings and individual visits.

FR. TER SCHURE, Regional for Central Europe, presided at two retreats organized for the Rectors of the three German-speaking Provinces, one held at the new Retreat House at Johndorf in Austria, and the other near München.

He also attended the meeting of the French-speaking Provincial Councillors, which was held at Lyon. Amongst other things, they dealt with the problems of the early training and continuous formation of the confreres, and those connected with the Salesian Bulletin.

In April-May he carried out the extraordinary visitation of the Southern French Province.

V. DOCUMENTS

1. Practical Conclusions of the Continental Meeting at Rome

The Continental Meeting took place at the Salesianum, Rome, from 1st to 9th April, 1975. Taking part were the Rector Major, a number of Superior Councillors, the Provincials and Delegates from the Provinces of Europe, the U.S.A. and Australia. The object was to find out what had been done about the recommendations of the S.G.C. (for a report, see the O.R. for 16.4.1975).

INTRODUCTION

With the help of the PC'75s, we have come to the end of our assessment of how far the renewal mooted by the S.G.C. has been realized, and we wish to outline a definite plan of action drawn up in the light of the experiences of the last few years. Without such a plan of dynamic action, we shall have wasted our time over the last week. As it is, we are looking forward to generating an action based on reality and related to the common point of reference offered by the Constitutions and Regulations and by the Acts of the S.G.C. (cf. the Rector Major's Report, p. 1).

Through discussion, exchange of views, research and evaluation, we have determined the priority areas on which to base our operational strategy for the time that remains between now and the next General Chapter.

I. WE ARE FULLY AWARE THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION MAKES AN URGENT DEMAND ON US TO ATTEND TO THE EVANGELIZING OF THE YOUNG AND THEIR EDUCATION IN THE FAITH

The experience of the last three or four years has vindicated the choice of the S.G.C. in clearly marking the upper and lower limits of Salesian identity between which the path to renewal must run.

Educating youth in the faith cannot be considered just as a sector of our work; rather, it is a permanent dimension of all our pastoral work, whatever the sector or structure (school, club, youth centre, parish . . .). Hence the following tasks have top priority:

1. The redimensioning that we are effecting must be centred more and more on the dominant function of our youth apostolate: the education of the man of faith (S.G.C. 279); to renew the existing works (S.G.C. 398); to think out new forms of presence (S.G.C. 361) starting from the premiss given above and from the actual needs of the young (cf. Const. # # 17, 20, 26; S.G.C. 393).

2. To work out, perfect and put into operation the plan for qualifying and updating the Confreres as required by the S.G.C. (v. paragr. 337 b), giving priority to catechetics and Salesiana (S.G.C. 341).

3. To take positive steps to develop apostolic co-responsibility among adult lay people and the more mature youngsters; to select, train and cultivate them, and so form with them genuine educational and apostolic communities (cf. S.G.C. 428).

4. To give teeth to the recommendations of the S.G.C. (para. 338) on the organization at Provincial level of a specialized and flexible service that will launch and run projects for evangelization and catechetics, and also arrange for a merger with the apostolate of the Local Church by establishing links and collaboration with analogous diocesan organizations (S.G.C. 340 c; 399).

II. THE CO-EXISTENCE OF UNITY AND DECENTRALIZATION

Now that the Congregation is busy with decentralization, it is all the more urgent that the value of unity should be clearly seen, because it gives direction and enrichment to pluralism.

Hence it is necessary:

1. To cultivate an appreciation of the potential for unity that is in the Constitutions. After all, they provide a working model of our evangelical life and of faithfulness to our vocation, define our presence in the Church and transmit the riches of our tradition.

So it is incumbent on the Community to find ways of making life deeper and richer. Basically, this will mean studying the Constitutions, meditating on them, and discussing them. The present phase of experimentation does not imply the right to opt out, but should lead to a greater determination to get things done.

2. To strengthen authority at all levels so that, in its turn, the Community mission may be strengthened. This is to be done with a fraternal searching for the will of God, with the aid of the corpus of Salesian rules and practices, and with a judicious decision made by the Superior and accepted as a duty by all. If this is to happen, there must be the proper functioning of the collegial structures provided for in the Constitutions as an aid to the exercise of authority, such as councils, assemblies and meetings of particular groups.

3. To promote Salesian communion through active two-way communication between the centre and the periphery, and everywhere in between.

Hence:

a) the Superiors should try to pack greater punch into Salesian information and to improve the quality;

b) Provincials and Rectors should put it at the disposal of all the confreres and exploit it in every possible way as an instrument of communication, letting the Centre know about any enterprises and schemes that could stimulate inventiveness and creativity in the Congregation (*S.G.C.* 516; 721-722).

4. To defend and strengthen the communal character of our mission (*S.G.C.* 29; 84).

This can be done:

a) by helping the confreres to develop fully their own aptitudes by giving them a chance to contribute to the common plan of action;

b) by giving Community approval to all those who run special activities for the Salesian mission as part of the service rendered by our Family or by the Local Church;

c) by avoiding individualism through the application of the existing code of procedure in an atmosphere of fraternal dialogue with the person concerned;

d) by resolving the abnormal situations that some confreres find themselves in with the decisiveness demanded by the situation and by considerations of humanity.

III. THE PROVINCE AS A 'TRAINING COMMUNITY'

The third field on which to concentrate is *the functioning of the Province as a 'Training Community'*. The S.G.C. (512) saw the 'rediscovery and revaluation of the Provincial Community' as fundamental to our renewal (cf. Const. §§ 57, 162, 167, 168). The process of decentralization that has been going on for three years now has brought out how extremely urgent it is for each Province to assume, deliberately and systematically, its essential rôle of 'Training Community'. The formative function of the Provinces has to be properly defined and carried out, especially under the following aspects:

1. *Our experience of God*

In today's cultural climate, with its horizontalism and pursuit of material well-being, the superiors of the Province must make well-timed moves to deepen the true sense of our Salesian mission (cf. S.G.C. 179), and to re-establish a deep union with God by a life of work and self-restraint (cf. S.G.C. 127).

Hence:

a) particular importance should be attached to making the most of the times of heightened fervour, especially the annual retreats;

b) steps should be taken to educate the confreres to personal and community prayer, as circumstances dictate;

c) ways should be sought of 'renewing the divine element in our

apostolic commitment' (Const. § 48), practising the confreres in revising the motivations that inspire the work.

2. *Cultivating our vocational identity*

One of the most frequently recurring statements in the various reports was that there has been a dilution of the distinctively Salesian characteristics, that the 'generalizing' of the mission and of the spirit is damaging the identity of the Congregation. There is an urgent need for each Province to intensify its efforts to correct this tendency.

Hence:

a) as much as possible should be made of the typically Salesian aspects of our mission and spirit in special meetings, organized as part of Continuous Formation schedules, in each Community, in each Province and in each group of Provinces;

b) great care must be taken in the period of initial training, that is, the steps leading to admission and the early development of the members, to preserve the Salesian quality of the Novitiate, to make sure that there is no loss of unity and continuity in the various stages of the formative process, and to avoid excessive instability and variation in the training structures;

c) to ensure that better arrangements are made and that there is greater stability in the way the Province sets to work on the two sectors mentioned above, a manual of Salesian training should be compiled as soon as possible (cf. Const. # 106), following the criteria suggested by the Formation Department;

d) the concept of the Salesian Family should be put into proper focus: knowing one's rôle in the whole set-up of the Salesian Family is a great help to deepening our identity as a Congregation (cf. Const. # 5; Reg. # 30, 31; S.C.G. 158-170; 740).

3. *Preparation and training of Rectors*

General experience shows that all renewal has to 'take', as the gardeners say, in the Local Community; that all efforts at formation

at Provincial level totter feebly until the Local Community takes them up; and that the Local Community takes its cue from the Rector.

On the other hand, the urgent need is felt everywhere for masters of the spiritual life and for men with drive.

So:

a) the Province should prepare its Rectors for their term of office either by putting them on courses arranged independently, or by organizing Interprovincial/Regional courses of training for Rectors, in which work priorities will be indicated (initiatives, reports, schedules, organizations);

b) the Province should help the Rectors with regular meetings for instruction and prayer, and also with de-briefing sessions on their exercise of authority.

2. Practical Conclusions of the Continental Meeting for Latin America

This meeting, the counterpart of the one at Rome, took place at Cachoeira do Campo, Brazil, from 24th to 31st May, 1975. The Latin-American Provincials and Delegates took part. Here is their report.

Coming together to see how far we have taken our post-capitular renewal, we have been able to experience the vitality of Salesian community, to see the vindication of our conviction that the Spirit of the Lord visited the Congregation in its Special General Chapter, and to find — with gratitude to Don Bosco, Father and Founder — total loyalty to the cause in this centenary of the transplanting of his charism on our Latin-American continent.

We have felt the crisis of recent years acutely. Today, we can state with humility and gratitude that things are coming round, and that there has been a recovery in the crisis-areas of Salesian identity, of the dynamism of our apostolic presence, and of vocations. The seriousness with which this overhaul in common has been carried out over the last week, the comparisons between Provinces, the frank, fraternal

exchange between outpost and Centre, have all gone to show how important it is to apply the capitular policies.

The objective analysis of the realities we face and of the limitations of the forces at our disposal has revealed perilous deficiencies and defects, and has shown us just how far our obligations go. These bind us to a strategy of combined planning to cover the next two years.

Our attention has been centred on three priority areas, and on these we shall concentrate our efforts following the light shed by the Constitutions, Regulations, Capitular Documents and the sources of our Congregation.

1. REALITIES IN LATIN AMERICA ARE PRESSING ON US SALESIANS, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF YOUTH

The urgency of the situation has been made clearer by our reflection together on how much we have to do, as a Congregation, in evangelization and catechetics. These are priority areas and determine our lines of action (restructuring of works, new presences, qualification of personnel, training programmes, etc. (cf. *S.G.C.* 279, 398, 361).

1.1. *Lines of action that we propose to follow*

1.1.1 These priorities will be observed and publicised in all new works, meetings, think-tanks, exchanges of experience, mutual aid contacts, publications, etc.

1.1.2 Each Province will undertake to get catechetics started among the different groups of the Salesian Family, particularly the Co-operators.

1.1.3 In the next two years, each Province will study the problem of launching new experiences in the field of catechetics, especially the priority sectors in the service of the Local Church (*S.G.C.* 340 c), so that Salesians, their lay co-workers, committed youngsters and the fathers of families may be impregnated with and motivated by a new awareness, a new sense of commitment.

1.1.4 Each local Community, whatever its mission and work, will take on the task of involving the lay people in co-responsibility for the spreading of the Word. The Community will select, train and help them as required (S.G.C. 428).

1.2 *Infra-structures that will have to be provided*

1.2.1 At Provincial level:

— perfect and bring to fruition the plan for qualifying Salesians in catechetics, as required by S.G.C. 337 b;

— translate into reality and perfect a flexible, specialized pastoral service for involving every confrere (S.G.C. 341) of the local Communities and all the Provincial Communities (S.G.C. 338, 339) in catechetics.

1.2.2 At Inter-provincial level:

— to study the establishment of one or two Catechetical Centres for training catechists, with the possibility of connections with the U.P.S. and of collaboration with it.

2. THE PROVINCE: A TRAINING COMMUNITY

(Cf. Const. §§ 57, 106, 162, 167, 168, 172, 177; S.G.C. 512, 672, 29, 84, 185, 402, 411, 506, 720; A.S.C. No. 272: Circular on 'Unity and Decentralization').

The process of decentralization in our Regions since the S.G.C. has encountered a readiness to react and to accept responsibility that, as we see it, is entirely positive. Certainly much still remains to be done to attain to the ideal of a Province that is a real 'Training Community'.

2.1 Growth of life in the Spirit, securing the primacy of our personal and community experience of God. To do this, we need to

— educate to prayer and meditation on the Word of God;

- assert the centrality of the Eucharist in every Local Community;
- reassess the whole subject of Christian penance;
- reactivate our devotion to Mary.

2.1.2 deepen the values of Salesian identity.

As we have already mentioned, in this line today there is to be seen not only a greater consciousness of identity, but also a greater striving towards creativity in fulfilling our mission and in faithfulness to the Salesian spirit. However, there is a feeling of urgency in attending to the following aspects:

2.2.1 'Work and self-restraint': to see afresh what our Salesian discipline really means in the light of the 'scrutinium paupertatis' and of true religious chastity, sound in theory and practice;

2.2.2 use and study of the Salesian way:

- reading of the Constitutions, also combined with the liturgy;
- a deeper acquaintance of the S.C.G. documents, the circulars and policy pronouncements of the Congregation;
- knowledge of Salesian literature;

2.2.3 intense effort to build up the figure of the Brother, an indispensable part of our community identity:

- alerting the Provincial Community and Salesian Family to the vocational values of the Brotherhood;
- putting a Brother on the Vocation Team and on the road.

2.3 Maximizing the training capability.

It is felt that there is an urgent need to see that the new generations are safely incorporated into our Salesian Family and that everyone is updated through Continuous Formation.

So:

2.3.1 There should be a commitment to step up the efficiency of the training given during the postulancy, the novitiate and the post-novitiate periods.

2.3.2 The Provincials should see that the Formation Team is doing its job, and he should attend to the editing and periodical revision of the Manual.

2.3.3 Every Provincial Council must have a personnel qualification scheme, particularly with regard to early training.

2.3.4 Collaboration should be organized to the highest possible degree at Interprovincial level (conference or region) in the field of formation, both initial and on-going.

2.3.5 Groups should be formed at continental, regional and conference levels to research and discuss, with maximum Salesian realism, the complex problems of the transformation of Latin America.

3. UNITY AND DECENTRALIZATION

Examining together the problems of unity and decentralization in the light of the new Constitutions (125-127), the Acts of the S.G.C. (720-722), and the letter of the Rector Major (*A.S.C.* No. 272), we can state that, even in the diversity of the social and cultural situations of Latin America, there is a lively and fraternal feeling for Salesian communion.

However, it is clear that there is an urgent need to strengthen this sense of unity. And so we shall pursue the following lines of action:

3.1 We shall take steps to get to know more thoroughly the basic texts of our Salesian life and to hand them on with greater care:

- the Constitutions, which give the broad plan of our vocation;
- the Regulations, which show how the values contained in the Constitutions are to put into practice.

3.2 In order to make the sources of our spirituality more easily accessible,

3.2.1 the Salesian editing houses will collaborate in the preparation of a plan for the production and distribution of Salesian literature;

3.2.2 the superiors, at every level, will give the confreres opportunities to use these aids.

3.3 We take it upon ourselves to see to it that the groups of Provinces, the Provincial Conferences and the Provincials, helped by the Regional Councillor (guaranteeing union with the Rector Major and his Council, and an understanding of the situation as seen from the Centre),

3.3.1 do in fact wield the powers and perform the functions accorded to them by the S.G.C. XX;

3.3.2 instruct those engaged in promoting community affairs in the new thinking and promote the Rector's liaison function, linking the Local Community with the Provincial and world Communities.

3.4. We shall foster active communication at all levels between the Centre and the Provinces, and in all directions, circulating news, information and experiences. We shall study ways of delivering material of particular interest to particular confreres, especially those who are in training and those responsible for promoting the various groups of the Salesian Family (S.G.C. 516, 721, 722).

3.5 We shall reassert the community character of the Salesian mission in a practical way (Const. § 34; S.G.C. 29, 84):

3.5.1 by making the instruments of dialogue work in the exercise of authority, and all the other means of community participation as well: the community search for the will of God, the Rector's decision-making, the exercise of co-responsibility, the community plan (S.G.C. 367, 640).

3.5.2 by helping the confreres to fit their capabilities into the community plan and to develop them within its framework;

3.5.3 by recognizing the community character of those who are performing a mission for the Salesian Family or the Local Church;

3.5.4 by applying a course-correction, discreetly but firmly, to those confreres who are tending towards individualism;

3.5.5 by eliminating, again with charity but with firmness, the irregular situations in which some confreres may be enmeshed.

Here, at Cachoeira do Campo, which is associated with Mgr. Lasagna and the first great sons of Don Bosco to arrive in Latin America, we have borne witness to one and the same vocation through the plurality of our various social and cultural situations. Our meeting has been an experience of identity in diversity, an earnest of growth in Salesian unity.

VI. FROM THE PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTERS

This section is compiled from the P. NLs sent in to H.Q. It is essentially an INFORMATION column (cf. A.S.G.C. 763, 3b: 'digest of the principal initiatives undertaken in the field of Salesian renewal'), and implies no value judgement on the part of the Superior Council.

1. Bahia Blanca Province - Patagonia and the Missionary Centenary

Salesian Patagonia 'feels involved in a particular way in these celebrations, and will try to carry them out with the consciousness of being the first recipients of Don Bosco's missionary efforts.' These are the introductory words of Fr. John Cantini, the Provincial of Bahia Blanca, in his communication to the confreres on the Centenary celebrations to be held in the land of Don Bosco's dreams (Bahia Blanca NL., 11.3.1975, pp. 3, 4). Here is a summary.

Recalling the past is a stimulus and inspiration to revivifying the missionary enterprises of the pioneers who have gone before us. For this reason we are mounting celebrations and initiatives at national, Provincial and local level.

Among the *national projects* there are days of study on evangelization and days of Salesian spirituality; meetings for our lay co-workers, the directors of the Youth Associations, and Co-operators, respectively; the 'Song-message Youth Festival'; the Salesian Youth Olympics; a pilgrimage for the Past Pupils; two publications (a life of Don Bosco and a book on the Salesian missions).

The Provincial projects are particularly interesting. First of all, the religious celebrations in the churches used by the first Salesian missionaries: those at Viedma and Patagones, the first two truly missio-

nary foundations. Then there is the civic commemoration to be held at Bahía Blanca. We are also planning the construction of halls and halls-cum-chapels for the use of the Christian communities in the missionary districts and on their outskirts: seven places are already ear-marked. We plan to expand the work known as the 'Summer Youth Missions'. Groups of young people go to work in the deprived areas under the guidance of Salesians. This has been going on for some years already, with ten groups going strong and many others in the pipe-line. The Salesian Sisters will organize a catechetical meeting to discuss evangelization.

As for the activities at *local level*, here are the words of the Provincial: 'We shall try to encourage people to get to know Don Bosco and his missions better, to look around at the missionary prospects in Patagonia itself and in other places where the needs may be greater. And from knowing we pass on to doing and living, in an attempt to repeat the missionary undertakings launched by Don Bosco in his own day.'

The Provincial goes on to remind his readers that, in fact, it means realizing the aims set by the Rector Major for the Centenary Year: 'To revive the missionary spirit in the whole Salesian Family.'

3. Province of Recife - a Bishop's farewell

Mgr. Edvaldo G. Amaral, who was appointed Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Aracajú last February, sent the following farewell message to his Province. It reflects the state of mind of a Salesian taken away from his confreres in obeying the Holy Father (NL., March, 1975, pp. 7, 8).

Following the Holy Father's decision, I have to leave the educational apostolate and community life in our houses to serve the people of God in the hierarchy of His Church. But this will not take me out of the Congregation, to which I intend to belong to the end of my days.

What I am and have I owe chiefly to the Salesian Congregation: physical sustenance, courses of reading, a wide range of experiences over thirty-six years. The basic training, followed by ten years of pastoral

work with the Co-operators, the years of responsibility and school administration in the houses, the marvellous experience of the General Chapter at Rome . . . are all opportunities offered to me by the Congregation, far beyond what I deserved.

For all this I thank God and our religious family, which I have always wished to serve with complete dedication. But now, dear confreres, after many uncertainties and much parleying, I have not been able to bring myself to say 'no'.

I am not allowing myself to be carried away by the present spate of lionizing and back-slapping; I know that I am in for some difficult times when I shall not be able to fall back on the support provided by the community-structure of the Congregation. I know that I shall not be without loneliness and misunderstanding, that I shall make my mistakes; but I hope to pull through with trust in God. If it is a hard task to head a community of consecrated people, how much more difficult must be the government of a diocese. However, I see that the episcopacy is nothing else but the fulness of the priesthood. If Don Bosco called himself a father, always and everywhere a father, a bishop will also have every reason for being a father, indeed, 'more-than-father', as one of our thinkers has it.

I beg the pardon of all my confreres of the North West for the bad example that I have given over the years, and for the mistakes that I may have committed as Rector of three Communities. I trust in the prayers of everyone.

May the confreres of my Province remain faithful to the ideals of Don Bosco in the service of the youth of our time and of our country. May the older men accept the new times and understand the new historical context we have been given to live and work in. And may the boys prepare to shoulder their responsibilities in the new age of the Congregation and the Church with sincere intentions, self-sacrifice and deep convictions.

VII. PONTIFICAL MAGISTERIUM

1. Need for strength

In spite of all the manifestations of force, including the most savage violence, it is not easy to find today examples of true strength, either as a natural virtue or as a Christian virtue: strength in one's personal life, strength in asserting the values of a decent way of life.

Pope Paul has called everyone's attention to this in the course of his General Audience in St. Peter's Square on 28th May.

Our own vocation, always in need of an increase of faith, needs a constantly renewed spiritual and moral strength, especially today.

(O.R., English Edition, 5.6.1975).

We all remember that one of the programmatic subjects of the Holy Year, which we are celebrating, is the renewal of Christian life. Now, to instil this renewal in our Christian life, we must restore, with other virtues and resources of the Spirit, the virtue of fortitude, as it is understood in our moral teaching.

Yes, fortitude. For is there any justification for the idea of a weak Christianity? A Christianity without firmness in its convictions, agnostic, indifferent, fickle, opportunistic, cowardly? Motivated by fear of what people will say? Is it a new and authentic Christianity, one which, in practice, is ready to conform in every way with the surrounding environment and which is tacitly anxious above all to avoid difficulties, criticism, irony, and is clearly eager to take advantage of every opportunity to cut a fine figure, or gain advantages, steer clear of trouble and carve out a career?

What has become of the old education to personal character, moral courage, social consistency? To the sense of duty? And of responsibility?

Moral and spiritual strength

Let us keep it clearly in mind: a Christian, a Catholic particularly, must be strong. We mean strong spiritually and morally. A follower of Christ must not be afraid. He feels wrapped in an atmosphere of divine Providence, which turns to good even hostile things, which can also cooperate for our good, if we love God (Rom 8, 28). He has a duty of testimony, which frees him from timidity and opportunism, and suggests to him, at the right moment, an attitude and words, coming from an interior source, the existence of which was perhaps unknown to him before the ordeal. Even if you are overcome by adversaries stronger than yourselves, the Lord teaches us in the Gospel, "do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mt 10, 19-20).

At this point there is a paradox to solve: are we not weak owing to our infirm nature? Yes, it is true; even Jesus said so at Gethsemane: "the flesh (that is, our human nature) is weak", but He affirmed at the same time that "the spirit is willing" (Mt 26, 41); and St Paul explained that just when, humbly and realistically, we confess we are afflicted, then we are strong, because the Lord had told him inwardly: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12, 9-10). Weakness and strength, therefore, can be complementary in the Christian (cf. among the ancients: Origen: Exhortation to martyrdom; among the moderns: G. Bernanos: *Les dialogues des Carmélites*).

Truth frees us

And there is a courageous orientation to impress on our Christian life, private and public, in order not to become meaningless in the world of the spirit and perhaps accomplices in common ruin. Do we not seek, moreover, in undue recourse to our personal freedom a pretext to surrender to the yoke of other peoples's inadmissible opinions? "That which is the cause of itself is free" (St Th. *Metaph.* 11, 9); "only beings that move themselves have freedom," Master Thomas teaches us (St Th. *Contra Gentes*, II, 48). And the only thing

that legitimately binds us interiorly, is truth; and truth, the Lord says, "will make us free" (cf. Jn 8, 32).

The modern tendency, therefore, to abolish all ethical or personal effort (except on the sports field, which is all very well, but it is not enough) is not the prelude to real progress in the really human sense. The Cross is always straight in front of us, and it summons us to moral strength, spiritual fortitude and sacrifice (Jn 12, 25), which makes us like Christ and can save ourselves and the world. With our Apostolic Blessing.

2. Vocation

As our faith has its supportive reasoning, so our vocation, and our faithfulness to it, has its rational basis. There are certain moments, certain situations, becoming more and more frequent as the crisis of values becomes more acute, when this basis has to be clearly perceived.

This is asserted authoritatively by Pope Paul, whose words we quote from the 'message addressed to bishops, priests, religious, lay people, educators and the young' given on the occasion of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, held 20th April, the Fourth Sunday of Easter. (From O.R., English Edition, 17.4.1975).

Crux of the problem

But when the Lord calls someone in a special way, through an interior illumination and the voice of the Church, to serve him as a priest, as a religious or as a member of a Secular Institute, he stirs up in him or her and demands an absolute choice for his person and for the work of his Gospel: "Follow me." This choice is enthralling; it can really overwhelm the human heart. It presupposes a very firm attitude of faith. And here, dear sons and daughters, is the crux of the problem of vocations. In our time, when the serenity of believers is to a certain extent shaken, the willingness to commit oneself totally and definitively to following Christ seems still more difficult. This choice also presupposes a willingness to make a break, in the first place of course with sin—deceit, impurity, selfishness and hate—but also with certain human values which are not ends in themselves, but

means: the satisfactions of human love, wealth, professional advancement, pleasure, success and power. For a person who is serious, upright, and generous the values of God's Kingdom can win the day: pure and simple joy, the thirst for God encountered in prayer, the service of others, concern for their spiritual needs. An effort must also be made to free oneself from the materialism of the times in order to make this judgment and take this decision.

3. From the Holy See: the Censorship of Books

On 19th March 1975 the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith promulgated the Decree 'The Censorship of Books'. The text appears below in the translation given in the O.R., English Edition, dated 24.4.1975.

The Pastors of the Church, who are entrusted with the care of proclaiming the Gospel all over the earth (1), have the task of preserving, expounding, spreading and safeguarding the truths of the faith and promoting and defending the integrity of morals. Certainly, "God in his gracious goodness has seen to it that what he had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations. Therefore Christ the Lord, in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to completion, commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching, and thus to impart to them divine goods" (2). Therefore the office of interpreting authentically the word of God, written or handed down by tradition, is entrusted solely to the living Magisterium of the Church (3) The Bishops, successors of the Apostles, exercise this office, and in a special way the successor of Peter exercises it, as the perpetual and visible foundation of unity both of the Bishops and of the multitude of the faithful (4). Even the faithful themselves, each according to his own function, and especially students of sacred sciences, have the duty to cooperate with the Pastors of the Church to preserve and hand on in their integrity the truths of faith and to protect morals.

To preserve and defend the integrity of the truths of faith and morals, the Pastors of the Church have the duty and the right to be

vigilant lest the faith and morals of the faithful be harmed by writings; and consequently even to demand that the publication of writings concerning the faith and morals should be submitted to her prior approval; and also to condemn books and writings that attack the faith or morals. This office belongs to the Bishops both individually and gathered in particular Councils or in Episcopal Conferences, as regards the faithful entrusted to their care, and to the supreme authority of the Church as regards the whole people of God.

As regards the publication of books and other writings, this Sacred Congregation, after consulting various Ordinaries of places where publishing activity is more intense, established the following norms in Plenary Congregation:

ARTICLE 1

1. If not otherwise established, the local Ordinary, whose approval is to be sought for the publication of books, according to the following norms, is the local Ordinary of the author or the Ordinary of the place in which the books are published. If either of them has refused approval, however, the author may not ask for the other's approval without informing him of the previous refusal.

2. What is established by these norms with regard to books, must be applied to all kinds of writings intended for public circulation, unless otherwise established.

ARTICLE 2

1. The books of Holy Scripture cannot be published unless they are approved either by the Apostolic See or by the local Ordinary; similarly for the publication of their translations into the vernacular, there is required the approval of the same authority and also that they be furnished with the necessary and sufficient explanations.

2. With the consent of the local Ordinary, translations supplied with suitable explanations, can also be prepared and published by the Catholic faithful in collaboration with the separated brethren (5).

ARTICLE 3

1. Liturgical Books and also their translations into the vernacular, or their parts, may not be published except by order of the Episcopal Conference and under the surveillance of the latter, after the previous confirmation of the Apostolic See.

2. To publish a new edition of liturgical books approved by the Apostolic See and also their translations into the vernacular, made and approved in accordance with the terms of par. 1, and their parts, it is necessary to obtain from the Ordinary of the place in which they are published an attestation that they conform to the approved edition.

3. Also books that propose prayers for private use may not be published unless with the permission of the local Ordinary.

ARTICLE 4

1. The approval of the local Ordinary, or of the national or regional Episcopal Conference is required for the publication of catechisms and other writings dealing with catechetical instruction, or their translations.

2. Unless they are published with the approval of the competent ecclesiastical Authority, books concerning questions of Holy Scripture, Sacred Theology, Canon Law, Church History and religious or moral disciplines, cannot be used as teaching texts in elementary, intermediate and higher schools.

3. It is recommended that books dealing with the subjects in par. 2 should be submitted to the approval of the local Ordinary, even though they are not used as text books. The same applies to writings that contain anything of special interest to religion or morality.

4. No books or other writings dealing with religious or moral questions can be displayed, sold or distributed in churches and oratories if they are not published with the approval of the competent ecclesiastical Authority.

VIII. OBITUARY NOTICES

Felix Avendaño, Deacon

* Managua, Nicaragua: * 7-9-1946. † Guatemala City: 19-4-1975. 29 years old; 11 prof.

Almost on the eve of his ordination to the priesthood, he was cut down in a bad motor accident. Four boys from the Colegio Don Bosco at Guatemala City were killed with him. They were returning from an educational trip. He was a Salesian of outstanding apostolic spirit, deeply attached to his vocation, generous and self-sacrificing in his work.

Bro. Bernardo Belmonte

* Mojácar, Almería, Spain: 10-12-1903. † Mataró, Barcelona: 11-2-1975. 71 years old; 46 prof.

Orphaned himself at an early age, he was well prepared for the mission that Don Bosco had marked out for him in his forty years plus of Salesian life. He finished his days in Salesian theatricals, tired but happy after a life-time of teaching typography and of endless assisting. Many of his pupils hold highly respected positions in society as a result of his teaching. He was a faithful man, punctual and at the same time humble, simple, not given to idle chatter.

Fr. Alphonsus Di Cairano

* Staten Island, N.Y., U.S.A.: 23-9-1913. † Ramsey, U.S.A.: 29-4-1974. 60 years old; 37 prof.; 28 priest.

An excellent Salesian, faithful to the Rule and the spirit of Don Bosco, he won the affection of confreres and boys by his charity, cheerfulness and optimism. Humble and unpretentious, he did not ask things of others but, on the contrary, was always ready to help anyone who came to him in need. He was an expert in photography and journalism,

and this expertise he put at the service of the school. He was a whole-hearted community man, and he was always seeking to promote its well-being and its human relationships.

Fr. Vitantonio Camarda

* Cisternino, Brindisi, Italy 9-7-1917. † there: 5-4-1975. 57 years old; 38 profession; 29 priest; 6 Rector.

From his family and birthplace he inherited his kindness, and a dignified poverty, a virtue that was to become an ever brighter light in his life. His words went in inverse proportion to his works, which were numerous. The secret of his success as priest and Salesian lay in his ability to love the boys and make them see that he loved them, in spite of his forbidding mien. Whilst his last illness was gnawing at his vitals, he busied himself with visiting the sick, looking after the library, and spreading good literature. He was always available and self-sacrificing to the very end.

Fr. Domingo Correa

* Santa Isabel, Uruguay: 4-8-1895. † Asunción, Paraguay: 19-5-1974. 78 years old; 60 prof.; 52 priest.

He devoted his considerable gifts of mind and body to the most needy. A man of refined appearance, he was distinguished for his missionary spirit. For fourteen years he laboured at the evangelization of China among the poor and the little ones, for whom he had a consuming love. With the ebb and flow of politics, he had to transfer to the Chaco Paraguayo, where he helped Mgr. Muzzolon. There he expended the rest of his energies in a humble and ardent zeal for souls.

Fr. Sabino Doldan

* Montevideo, Uruguay: 16-7-1910. † There: 26-10-1974. 64 years old; 45 prof.; 36 priest; 6 Rector.

'To feel with the Church' was his motto as a priest, and he lived it with total dedication. His ten years of work for the Secretariat of the Apostolic

Nunciature at Montevideo earned him special recognition from the Holy See. The liturgical Eucharist was his great enthusiasm, and this showed in his performance of the ceremonies and in his studies of the subject. He was also very keen on the history of the Society, and he collected valuable documents for a history of the Province. He was orderly and methodical, an affable and solicitous samaritan to the needy of the poorest part of the town, whom he took into his general hospital.

Fr. Vincent Donohoe

* Oswaldtwisle, Lancashire, England: 11-11-1910. † Dublin Ireland: 3-4-1975. 64 years old; 43 prof.; 38 priest.

He was a good Salesian, always willing, affable, cordial and simple, kind and generous, winning the friendship of all who knew him. He spent his time teaching music and did valuable work in a number of houses in England. Then he went to Ireland to do book-keeping, doing a good job of work in administering the agricultural school at Warrenstown.

He passed on to higher things after an illness that had been undermining his constitution for some years.

Fr. Ruben Donoso

* S. Rosario, Aconcagua, Chile: 1-1-1895. † Santiago, Chile: 8-11-1974. 79 years old; 57 prof.; 45 priest.

For more than half a century he held the centre of the stage at the Colegio Don Bosco, Iquique. Cheerful, optimistic, a good sportsman, he gave himself entirely to his mission of Salesian educator, intent on making good Christians and honest citizens of his pupils. Love of God and the fatherland, music, sport, confession and a happy disposition were the means he used to instil into his pupils' hearts love of and loyalty to the fundamental values of life. Hundreds of Past Pupils venerate him as a father. The city of Iquique gave him the freedom of the city and paid him its last respects.

Fr. Carlos Dornak

* Bylnica, Czechoslovakia: 19-1-1924. † Bahía Blanca, Argentina: 22-3-1975. 51 years old; 33 prof.; 23 priest.

He was a very good exponent of Gregorian Chant, organist and choir-master. He gave concerts in various towns in Argentina with the 'Coro de Cámara Bahía Blanca', which he founded and directed till his death. Characteristically, his deep spirit of the priesthood was expressed in his faithfulness to the Office, and in his attention to the decorum of the sacred functions, which was his way of observing his ordination motto: 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house'. He was an upright man, sound as a bell, utterly loyal in friendship. He took his religious poverty as a serious, personal matter, and he practised it as administrator of the school and of the affairs of the Community. He died the innocent victim of a terrorist attack.

Fr. Henrique Ferreira

* S. Salvador de Lavia, Braga, Portugal: 30-3-1881. † Watsonville, Calif., U.S.A.: 15-3-1975. Nearly 94 years old; 76 prof.; 69 priest.

When he was still a cleric, he edited the Portuguese edition of the Salesian Bulletin and became secretary to Blessed Michael Rua. Then for forty-five years he worked at Oakland among the Italian and Portuguese immigrants. Deeply attached to his vocation, he always used his fine gifts of mind and soul as Don Bosco would have wished.

Fr. Juan Fioroni

* Villa Colón, Uruguay: 31-1-1904. † Montevideo, Uruguay: 14-3-1975. 71 years of age; 55 prof.; 47 priest.

Returning to his homeland after nearly forty years of Salesian work in the Antilles, he appeared before the Provincial saying that he was available for any work that was going, even the most difficult. He had worked all his life with an open mind in the Salesian service of the young. His easy command of language was always at the disposal of the Word of God. It cost him much to have to leave l'Avana, where his boys' club was and where he had built a church in honour of Mary, Help of Christians.

Bro. Antonio Gonçalves

* Moredo, Bragança, Portugal: 7-5-1910. † Bragança: 23-4-1974. Nearly 64 years old; 37 prof.

A model Salesian Brother, he was outstanding in spirituality, work, spirit of sacrifice, and love of Don Bosco and the young. His spiritual life was fed on the love of the Eucharist and of Our Lady; before the tabernacle he found the strength to triumph over his trials and sufferings, especially towards the end. He was pained to see how the younger cooled in their love of Don Bosco, whose life he often read. His work for the indigent young led him to offer his life to the Lord to prevent the closing of the house at Vendas Novas. The Lord accepted this offering made with so much love and heroism.

Fr. Stanislav Jurečka

* Lipník nad Bešovou, Czechoslovakia: 4-2-1909. † Olomouc, Czechoslovakia: 9-4-1975. 62 years old; 42 prof.; 37 priest.

He was ordained priest at Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, on 3rd July 1938. From then till 1950 he devoted his life and gifts to the boys in our houses in his own country. In the last ten years of his life he was successively curate and parish priest at Olomouc.

Fr. Franc Kmetič

* Log di Bostanj, Slovenia, Yugoslavia: 14-9-1890. † Bostanj: 16-1-1975. 84 years old; 62 prof.; 53 priest.

Although his health was always on a knife-edge, he managed to achieve old age through rigid self-discipline and a methodical day's round. These enabled him to carry through his mission of the spiritual direction and shriving of generations of Salesians. He followed closely the Don Bosco-St. Francis of Sales axis in his work of education and conscience-formation. With him closed an era of tradition that may be defined as 'the old way'.

Fr. Spartaco Mannucci

* Chianciano, Siena, Italy: 15-4-1901. † Ravenna: 4-3-1975. 73 years old; 53 prof.; 48 priest; 15 Rector.

Rector and Parish Priest in our houses at San Marina and Ravenna, he put all his energies at the disposal of the young, and, during the war, of the evacuees. He was a strong character yet mild and amiable, serene, optimistic, attentive to others' needs, a full-time worker, open to new horizons, a prudent and much sought-after counsellor who encouraged everyone with a friendly smile.

Bro. Miguel Martínez

* Val-La Merca, Orense, Spain: 20-1-1892. † Orense: 30-11-1974. 82 years old; 48 prof.

He spent all his Salesian life in the house at Orense. He was always hard at work at the cost of great sacrifice in the kitchen-garden and with the cattle. He gave this work up only when ordered to do so because of failing energies. His devotions, the motive force of his life, then became his chief occupation. He would spend hours before the Blessed Sacrament and at Our Lady's statue. He may not have been an apostle of the Word, but the eloquence of his prayer and example said more than a torrent of words.

Fr. Walter Montaldo

* Salto, Uruguay: 7-9-1896. † Montevideo: 27-12-1974. 78 years old; 60 prof.; 52 priest.

A well-balanced religious and priest of solid orthodoxy, he led a private life of monastic austerity, whilst working steadily and tirelessly. He was an expert in physics and chemistry and an excellent teacher. He was much appreciated as band-master, and he was the apostle of the boys' club. He stood in for the P. P. at Lascano . . . and was still standing in twenty-five years later. He made great sacrifices to bring the Sisters into the parish to look after the little ones. In the last years of his life he was the efficient and trusted helper to Bishop Nuti of Canelones, who, in his panegyric, called him 'the faithful friend'.

Fr. Duilio Pini

* Florence, Italy: 12-6-1913. † La Spezia: 11-4-1974. 60 years old; 40 prof.; 30 priest.

He lived his vocation as Salesian and priest with great zeal and generosity in his apostolate among the young. As a teacher he prepared his classes meticulously and gave them with great clarity and simplicity, which earned him much esteem. He took great pains to follow up his past pupils, who recognized in him their true educator and master.

Bro. Jorge Richards

* Nuñoa, Santiago, Chile: 12-12-1915; † Talva, Chile: 14-7-1974. 58 years old; 37 prof.

He spent all his Salesian life teaching at elementary level in various houses of the Province. With his fine character and calm bearing he was well liked by boys and confreres. When he started to slow up in his work, it was a sign that the end was approaching. He had a heart attack and passed on to the Father's House surrounded by his confreres and with the serenity that had been with him all his life.

Fr. Esteban Rivas

* Liaño, Santander, Spain: 21-3-1922. † Santiago, Puerto Rico: 27-2-1974. 51 years old; 30 prof.; 22 priest; 15 Rector.

He was charged with positions of responsibility both in his home Province and in the Antilles. He was distinguished as a man of culture and refinement, and worked very hard for vocations. As Rector he bent his energies to the character formation and spiritual development of the aspirants; he was always in their midst. He was highly esteemed as chaplain to communities of nuns and organizer of Catholic leadership groups (to whom he dictated courses on the Bible). Everywhere he made himself loved because his own love was apostolic.

Fr. Adolf Röbl

* Bottrop, Germany: 10-2-1905. † Cologne: 17-2-1975. 70 years old; 45 prof.; 36 priest.

Immediately after his noviciate he left as a missionary for Brazil. After some years of teaching, he went among the tribes of the Upper Amazon, and built them a hospital and a number of small churches. He bore all sorts of troubles with a spirit of self-denial for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. He came home to visit his mother, who was seriously ill, and he was himself seized with an illness that prevented him from returning, much as he champed at the bit in his impatience to return to the missions.

Fr. Rocco Rubino

* Triggiano, Bari, Italy: 12-3-1910. † Bari: 9-2-1975. 64 years old; 46 prof.; 38 priest.

A number of houses of the Roman Province, where he worked with great enthusiasm as teacher, preacher and confessor, have vivid memories of him, especially as he was during the difficult war years. He kept lists of all his pupils, and he maintained a correspondence with them, not to mention affectionate friendship, all his life. For many years he had eye trouble, and eventually he became quite blind, which limited his activity to the confessional. He went to the Southern Province, where he generously offered his services as confessor to various houses and to communities of nuns. The day he died, he had gone to the sacristy to receive Holy Communion. After he had received it, he laid his head on his stick . . . and folded up.

Bro. Tarcisius Sona

* Ghotibera Vill., Norogpur, Arissa, India: 14-8-1922. † Krishnagar: 6-6-1974. 51 years of age; 31 prof.

The thirty-one years of his service of God and his neighbour bear eloquent witness to how much his vocation meant to him. The Mem. Biog. of St. John Bosco were for him an object of frequent study and deep meditation. The scrupulous observance of the Rule was the way

he expressed his love for our Founder. Among the boys he was a multiplier of good works, a promoter of vocations and a missionary apostle.

Bro. Simon Sossau

* Günching, Germany: 13-10-1898. † Helenenberg über Trier, Germany: 28-1-75. 76 years old; 48 prof.

He spent more than forty years in our house at Helenenberg looking after the cattle, which he did very capably and conscientiously. He found comfort and consolation when things got difficult in his deep and simple spirit of prayer, and especially the rosary. His confreres will keep a happy memory of his most characteristic virtues: exemplary willingness, kindness of heart and humble modesty.

Fr. Edward Staszewski

* Opalenca, Poland: 19-9-1909. † Worów: 5-2-1975. 65 years old; 45 prof.; 34 priest; Rector 12.

A zealous, fervent priest, he was Master of Novices for eleven years at Kopic. Richly gifted in music and song, he led the liturgical functions for the fifteen years that he was P. P. at Marszaki. While he was Rector at Kielce, he exercised great charity in helping his friend, the P. P. of Worów. A heart attack did for him during the night: his confreres found him dead the next morning.

Fr. Franciszek Szymanik

* Stanislowice, Poland: 31-5-1915. † Szczek: 17-2-1975. 59 years old; 36 prof.; 30 priest.

Endowed with a strong practical sense, for fourteen years he was administrator in our houses at Kielce, Marszalki and Oswiecim. For ten years he worked zealously as hospital chaplain. From 1971 he stayed at our house in the mountains whilst disease slowly tightened its grip on his frame, and proved resistant to surgery's best efforts.

Fr. Antonio Tavarozzi

* Asunción, Paraguay: 10-1-1886. † Ypacará, Paraguay: 27-12-1974. 88 years old; 72 prof.; 60 priest; 15 Rector.

He spent a life of service in responsible posts and in the ministry. Humble and prudent, a calm and shrewd counsellor, he helped many Salesians to their personal and religious fulfilment. He practised as well as preached poverty. He nourished his spirituality with the simple and deep piety that draws a man close to God. He was a zealous promoter of devotion to Don Bosco. In his last year he was stretched on the cross of illness and he taught us to say 'Amen' to the will of God.

Fr. Luis Torreño

* Madrid, Spain: 12-10-1919. † Logroño: 13-4-1975. 55 years old; 34 prof.; 25 priest; 11 Rector.

Born into a deeply Christian family that gave him the support he needed to overcome the difficulties of following his vocation, he gave himself utterly to youth. An excellent, observant, obedient religious, he spoke out when he saw any breach of the Rule. Always attentive and available to anyone who needed him, he gave of his best with Salesian joy.

Fr. Rosario Tropea

* Giarre, Catania, Italy: 8-7-1882. † Bari, Italy: 28-2-1975. 92 years old; 72 prof.; 64 priest; 6 Rector.

The Rector Major called him a 'venerable and exemplary worker'. At 92 he was a precious living relic, a direct link with the early years of the Congregation. He was to be found in church first thing in the morning at his place in the confessional, which was always crowded. He was highly valued as a confessor, much in demand also by priests both religious and diocesan. He prepared the youngsters for First Communion, and adults as well. He took care of the sick. Fr. Tropea shone with the light of goodness and simplicity in this life, and now he is shining with celestial light with Don Bosco, whom he loved so much.

Bro. George Viegas

* Shagpur, India: 3-12-1897. † Bombay: 18-2-1975. 77 years old; 39 prof.

He was a late vocation, 38 on arrival, but he fitted in immediately with his joviality, his love of prayer and work. From the age of 14, when he became a telegraphist, he worked with loving care and a sense of responsibility. His work became sanctified with his profession. He spent the last thirty-nine years in our house at Bombay, and he became its patriarch. Four months ago, going out of the church, he slipped and broke his femur. This and other ailments were the calvary that prepared his soul for Paradise.

Fr. Jan Wodowski (formerly Kot)

* Rodowice, Poland: 2-4-1914. † Czestochova: 8-4-1975. 61 years old; 38 prof.; 29 priest.

Straight from the novitiate he went to the Middle East Province, where he prepared for the priesthood; then he worked in various houses and countries. In 1966, he returned to Poland. Wherever he was, he worked zealously and happily to the end. And he did it all with a humility that made him an exemplary son of Don Bosco.

Bro. Józef Wrónski

* Przemiarow, Warsaw, Poland: 7-11-1905. † Santiago, Chile: 5-9-1974. 68 years old; 38 prof.

He was 30 when he entered the Congregation, but he always kept the transparent soul of a child. His great joy was to be with the boys not only in the class-room but in the play-ground, where he continued his mission as educator. He spent his Salesian life in the remote province of Magallanes, until the years began to tell and the superiors transferred him to Santiago. A Salesian to the core, he used the few months of rest to potter around the garden, where he did a skilled job. Then a cerebral haemorrhage gave him the coup de grâce and he took off for Don Bosco's garden.

Bro. Eugenio Yáñez

* S. Martín de Grove, Pontevedra, Spain: 26-4-1890. † Gerona, Spain: 30-12-73.
83 years old; 58 prof.

Orphaned early on, he had a try at the priesthood but could not make the grade. Then he found with the Community the understanding and affection he needed. He taught at Gerona, including the backward pupils, and was a model assistant. He was a humble, devout, poor Salesian, very punctual in attending the Community activities. He expressed his love for Don Bosco by observing his Rule faithfully and by his love for things Salesian. He always had a special regard for the Cooperators and the Past Pupils.

Fr. Ernesto Zanon

* San Vito al Tagliamento, Udine, Italy: 23-8-1905. † Calcutta, India: 25-4-75.
69 years old; 48 prof.; 41 priest; 12 Rector.

He was a missionary first in Assam, then at New Delhi, and finally Parish Priest in the parish of St. John Bosco in Calcutta. Tireless in his work, calm and taciturn, he spent the first thirty years of his priesthood in the Brahmaputra valley and on the Garo hills, where there are now many fervent Christian communities. He took easily, indeed, joyfully to the hard pioneering life. Complete forgetfulness of self and a total dedication to souls were his daily bread for the fifty years of his life in India. He was very tough and never had a day's sickness; work for him was his elixir of life. He gave himself entirely to the thousands of souls he accosted, loved and carried to Christ.

Fr. Mario Zanotto

* Gabiano, Alessandria, Italy: 1-5-1903. † Saluzzo, Cuneo, Italy: 16-3-1975:
71 years old; 52 prof.; 45 priest; 15 Rector.

Barring a few years at Turin and Cuneo, he spent his life as a priest in the house at Saluzzo, where he was Rector and the first P. P. He was a great worker in the boys' club, and he gave to generations of boys the riches of his heart and mind. In typical Salesian style, he was faithful to the example of the great Salesians at whose feet he sat, as he himself

made no bones about admitting. As parish priest, he lived his priesthood in complete dedication, 'a convinced and zealous priest always and everywhere'. And as such he was esteemed and loved, and is remembered by everyone.

2° Elenco 1975

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- 48 Sac. CAMARDA Vitantonio † Cisternino (Italia) 5.4.1975 a 57 a.
- 49 Sac. MANNUCCI Spartaco † Ravenna (Italia) 4.3.1975 a 73 a.
- 50 Sac. MINI Duilio † La Spezia (Italia) 11.4.1974 a 60 a.
- 51 Sac. RUBINO Rocco † Bari (Italia) 9.2.1975 a 64 a
- 52 Sac. TROPEA Rosario † Bari (Italia) 28.2.1975 a 92 a.
- 53 Sac. ZANOTTO Mario † Saluzzo (Italia) 16.3.1975 a 71 a.

2

- 54 Sac. RÖHL Adolfo † Köln (Germania) 17.2.1975 a 70 a.
- 55 Coad. SOSSAU Simone † Heleneberg Trier 28.1.1975 a 76 a.

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- 56 Coad. BELMONTE Bernardo † Matarò (Spagna) 11.2.1975 a 71 a.
- 57 Coad. GONÇALVES Antonio † Bragança (Portogallo) 24.4.1975 a 64 a.
- 58 Coad. MARTINEZ Michele † Orense (Spagna) 30.11.1974 a 82 a.
- 59 Sac. TORRENO Luigi † Logroño (Spagna) 13.4.1975 a 55 a.
- 60 Coad. YAÑEZ Eugenio † Gerona (Spagna) 30.12.1973 a 83 a.

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- 61 Sac. JUREČKA Stanislao † Olomouc (Cecoslovacchia) 9.4.1975 a 66 a.
- 62 Sac. KMETIČ Francesco † Bostanj (Jugoslavia) 16.1.1975 a 84 a.
- 63 Sac. STASZEWSKI Edoardo † Wordòw (Polonia) 5.2.1975 a 65 a.
- 64 Sac. SZYMANIK Francesco † Szczyrk (Polonia) 17.2.1975 a 59 a.
- 65 Sac. WŁODOWSKI (già KOT) † Czestochova (Polonia) 8.4.1975 a 61 a.

5

- 66 Diac. AVENDAÑO Felice † Guatemala C.A. 19.4.1975 a 28 a.
- 67 Sac. CORREA Domenico † Asunción (Paraguay) 19.5.1974 a 78 a.
- 68 Sac. DOLDAN Sabino † Montevideo (Uruguay) 26.10.1974 a 64 a.
- 69 Sac. DONOSO Ruben † Santiago (Cile) 8.11.1974 a 79 a.
- 70 Sac. DORŃAK Carlo † Bahía Blanca (Argentina) 22.3.1975 a 51 a.
- 71 Sac. FIORONI Giovanni † Montevideo (Uruguay) 14.3.1975 a 71 a.
- 72 Sac. MONTANDO Walter † Montevideo (Uruguay) 27.12.1974 a 78 a.
- 73 Coad. RICHARDS Giorgio † Talca (Cile) 14.7.1974 a 58 a.
- 74 Sac. RIVAS Stefano † Santurce (Puerto Rico) 27.2.1974 a 51 a.
- 75 Sac. TAVAROZZI Antonio † Ypacaraí (Paraguay) 27.12.1974 a 88 a.
- 76 Coad. WRONSKI Giuseppe † Santiago (Cile) 5.9.1974 a 68 a.

6

- 77 Sac. DI CAIRANO Alfonso † Ramsey (USA) 29.4.1974 a 60 a.
78 Sac. DONOHOE Vincenzo † Dublin (Irlanda) 3.4.1975 a 64 a.
79 Sac. FERREIRA Enrico † Watsonville (USA) 15.3.1975 a 93 a.

7

- 80 Coad. SONA Tarcisio † (India) 6.6.1974 a 51 a.
81 Coad. VIEGAS Giorgio † Bombay (India) 18.2.1975 a 77 a.
82 Sac. ZANON Ernesto † Calcutta (India) 25.4.1975 a 69 a.