GENERAL REGULATIONS
First Part

Sent to the young in communities following Christ
I. THOSE TO WHOM OUR MISSION IS ADDRESSED

1. Keeping in mind its own social milieu, every province should study the situation and condition of youth and the common people, and periodically verify that its works and activities are providing an effective service for young people who are poor: in the first place for youngsters who because of economic, social and cultural poverty, sometimes of an extreme nature, have no possibility of success in life; for those who are poor at an affective, moral and spiritual level, and therefore exposed to indifference, atheism and delinquency; and for those who live on the fringe of society and of the Church.

2. The provinces should encourage a commitment to the education of young workers. They should take part in the pastoral activity of the particular Churches by offering initiatives and special services. They should try to be well informed about the world of work and the conditions in which young people are working. They should see that centres of professional training pay heed to pastoral, pedagogical and technical aspects, and adequate programmes should be drawn
up to educate the youngsters to the spiritual aspects of work.

3. Our educative and pastoral service is directed primarily to boys and young men.

In our works girls are also welcomed in line with the criteria and norms indicated by the Provincial Chapter.
II. OUR PASTORAL
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE

4. Each provincial community should draw
up its educative and pastoral plan, based
on the preventive system, to respond to the
youth situation and to the conditions in poor
areas.

A local plan should also be drawn up with the
involvement of all the members of the pasto-
ral and educative community and in harmony
with that of the province, for the purpose of
directing all initiatives to the task of evangeliza-

5. The application of the plan requires
that in all our works and settings we
establish the educative and pastoral commu-
nity, whose animating nucleus is the salesian
community.

Let all the salesians play an active part in
the drawing up, realization and subsequent
revision of the plan, and let them see to
it that in a family spirit the young people,
their parents and other collaborators also take
part, according to their different roles.

6. Characteristic aspects of our pedagogy
should be expressed in the plan and realized
in practice through stable processes; such aspects are: the active and responsible involvement of the young people themselves; a sensitive education for love; a serious cultural, social and professional preparation; communication in its artistic and recreational expressions.

7. A central nucleus of the plan should be an explicit programme of education to the faith, which will accompany the general development of the youngsters and coordinate the different forms of catechesis, celebrations and apostolic undertakings.

8. In our educational work and pastoral settings the formation of groups and associations should be encouraged, according to age and interests, and their continuity should be ensured. Special care shall be taken of groups having a christian commitment, and those shall be fostered which share the salesian mission and live in its spirit.

Attention should also be given to local ecumenical movements, especially in areas where different religious denominations exist.

9. With the help of trained educators and a programme of suitable activities, due attention should be given to the vocational guidance of young people.
Special regard should be paid to the discovery, and subsequent follow-up by suitable initiatives, of those youngsters who show signs of lay, religious or priestly vocations.

10. To maintain and provide for the ordered development of its various pastoral and educative activities, each province is to draw up a programme for the training and updating of personnel for the different sectors, due regard being paid to the aptitudes and inclinations of the confreres and the needs of the works.
III. ACTIVITIES AND WORKS

The Oratory and the Youth Centre

11. The Oratory is an educational environment with a strong missionary slant, and open to all boys and young men.

It should be organized as a service to the neighbourhood with the object of evangelizing, and offers to individuals and groups the opportunity of developing their own interests, using ways and means appropriate to their different ages.

The activities should always have an educational scope and should foster a healthy use of spare time.

12. The youth centre is an environment intended for older boys with their different requirements. It preserves the characteristics of the Oratory, but the emphasis on group activity is more marked and personal contacts are facilitated to a greater extent.

Formative and apostolic activities should play a more important role than those which are only recreational.
The school, vocational training centres and institutions of higher education

13. The salesian school at various levels, vocational training centres and institutions of higher education foster the total development of the young person through the assimilation and critical re-elaboration of culture and education to the faith in view of the christian transformation of society.

The educational process, carried out in a saleian manner and with recognized technical and teaching ability, should be based on solid cultural values, and be tailored to the needs of the young. The programme should provide a harmonious balance between intellectual and technical training and extracurricular activities.

A periodic examination should be made to ensure that the contents of the curriculum and pedagogical and training methods are still valid as regards their relationship with the social milieu, the world of work and the pastoral indications of the Church.

14. A salesian school should be for poorer people: this should be reflected in its setting, its culture, its curriculum and its choice of students. Services to meet local needs should be provided, such as courses for cultural and professional training, literacy and remedial programmes, scholarships and other initiatives.
Hostels and boarding schools

15. Hostels and boarding schools are a service offered to youngsters who have no family or who are temporarily away from home. In such establishments priority should be given to whatever fosters personal relationships, enables the boarders to share the responsibility for the organization of their daily life, and offers them scope for different group activities. Contact should be maintained with their families or those responsible for them, and also with their school or the places where they work.

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Initiatives at the service of vocations

16. Vocational guidance centres welcome and keep in touch with young people who feel called to some commitment in the Church and in the Congregation.

This service can also be carried out by organizing local and regional meetings, by means of activities of special groups, or by inserting young people in one of our communities.

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17. The aspirantate is a centre of salesian vocational guidance. It keeps itself open to the neighbourhood and in contact with families and helps older boys and young men who show an aptitude for the religious
and priestly life to know their own apostolic vocation and to correspond with it.

The missions

18. It is the duty of each provincial with his council to lay down norms for the animation and coordination of missionary activity.

Provinces which have mission territories within their boundaries should have at heart the service to be rendered to the missions and should prepare personnel for dialogue with cultures not yet evangelized even though they represent ethnic minorities.

19. Every missionary should be afforded the possibility of frequenting study centres organized by the particular Churches or by provinces for his specific preparation and updating, for learning languages, and for ethnic and anthropological studies.

20. Normally no missionary residence should have fewer than three confreres. Periodic meetings should be arranged among the missionaries to foster community life, mutual help, spiritual growth, and the exchange of pastoral experiences.

21. Every missionary may return periodically to his native land, in accordance with the
norms of his province or provincial con-
ference. His provincial will present him to the
provincial of the area where he intends to pass
his time and will provide him with what is nec-
essary for his stay.

The confreeres of the province which receives
him should see to it that he is given a generous
and fraternal welcome.

22. In non-christian countries salesians, by
the application of their educational and pasto-
ral method, should create conditions favouring
a free process of conversion to the christian
faith with respect shown for the cultural and
religious values of the neighbourhood.

In places where the religious, social or po-
itical context does not allow of forms of ex-
plicit evangelization, the Congregation should
maintain and develop a missionary presence
of witness and service.

23. In accordance with the prescriptions of
the Congregation for the Evangelization of
Peoples, formal agreements are to be drawn
up with the ecclesiastical authorities in the ter-
ritories where an apostolic work is entrusted to
us.

24. To support our missionary activity, the
Rector Major with the consent of his coun-
cil and in agreement with the local provincial, may set up mission offices to serve the whole Congregation.

Their organization and method of functioning will depend on the provincial or provincials in whose territory the offices operate, in the light of a statute made previously with the Rector Major, and in agreement with the councillor general for the missions and with the economer general.

For the setting up of local offices or the making of twinning arrangements the provincial is competent, with the consent of his council and in agreement with the councillor general for the missions.

Parishes

25. We carry out our mission also in parishes; in this way we respond to the pastoral needs of the particular Churches in those areas which offer us adequate scope for service to the young and to the poor.

The acceptance of a parish is effected by means of a contract between the provincial and the Local Ordinary, after obtaining the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his council.

26. A parish entrusted to the Congregation should be distinguished by its low-income
population and its interest in the young, especially those who are poorer.

The religious community is responsible for its animation. It should consider the oratory and youth centre an integral part of its pastoral project; it should set great store by the systematic catechisis of all and show zeal for bringing back those who have lapsed; it should see that evangelization is linked with human advancement, and should favour the vocational development of each individual.

27. The parish priest or moderator is chosen by the provincial after hearing the opinion of his council, and is presented by him to the Local Ordinary.

He is responsible for the discharge of the obligations assumed by the Congregation before the Church, and fulfils them in collaboration with the other confreres assigned to the parish.

28. The confreres attached to the parish should have that stability which the office and the good of the faithful demand. Nevertheless the superior will judge when the moment is opportune for a necessary rotation of persons and duties, according to the practice of the particular Churches. The parish priest should not normally remain in office for more
than nine years. When he is changed, the bishop must be informed in advance.

29. Where the situation allows it, the house serving the parish should itself be canonically erected with the parish priest as its rector.

Whenever the offices of rector and parish priest remain distinct, the rector must see that the unity and salesian identity of the community is preserved, and should stimulate the sharing of responsibility of the confreres in the realization of the parish pastoral plan.

30. In respect of administrative operations, the prescriptions of article 190 of the general Regulations are to be followed, due regard being paid to obligations to the parish community in accordance with canon law.

There must be a clear distinction, with appropriate registers and documentation, between what belongs to the parish qua talis and to the Congregation.

Social communication

31. As far as local possibilities permit, the provincial with his council should promote our pastoral presence in the social communication sector: he should prepare confreres to enter the fields of publishing, the cinema, radio
and television, he should establish and build up our centres for the publishing and diffusion of books, aids and periodicals, and found centres for the production and transmission of audiovisual, radio and television programmes.

These services should be established on secure juridical and economic foundations, and there should be liaison and cooperation between those in charge of them and the councillor general for social communication.

32. Salesians should take care to educate their charges to an understanding of the language of the social communication field, and to a critical aesthetic and moral sense. They should also encourage musical and dramatic activity, and promote reading circles and cine-forum groups.

33. The channels of information and dialogue both inside and outside the Congregation and Salesian Family (bulletins, ANS, short films, video-cassettes, etc.), should be developed, with appropriate use also of the means offered by recent advances in technology.

Publishing houses in the same country or region should devise suitable methods of collaboration so as to adopt a unified plan.
34. Whenever required by canon law, the ecclesiastical revision of matter for publication will be preceded by that of censors appointed by the provincial.

Service in non-salesian structures

35. Service to the young may sometimes require our presence in non-salesian institutes for a more immediate collaboration with the particular Church in pastoral work for youth or for the world of work, and in the care of vocations.

It belongs to the provincial with the consent of his council to accept such undertakings and to assess their validity.

Members assigned to such activities must take care to remain a real part of the salesian community. The latter will in turn show a fraternal and responsible interest in their work.
IV. SERVICE TO THE SALESIAN FAMILY

36. It is the duty of the provincial and the rector, assisted by their respective delegates, to sensitize the communities so that they may discharge their duties in the Salesian Family.

The community, in agreement with those responsible for the various groups, with respect for their autonomy and in a spirit of service, offers them spiritual assistance, promotes meetings, encourages collaboration and initiatives in the educational and pastoral fields, and cultivates the common commitment for vocations.

37. In response to their requests and as far as lies within our power, we offer to the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians our fraternal help and our priestly ministry.

We collaborate with them in deepening our understanding of Don Bosco's spirituality and pedagogy, and particularly in keeping alive the Marian dimension of the salesian charism.

38. Every community should feel it its duty to increase and support the Association of
Salesian Cooperators for the good of the Church. It should help in the formation of its members, promote and spread knowledge of this particular vocation, especially among our more committed young people and among our lay collaborators.

39. The community should maintain friendly relations with the past pupils, giving special attention to the younger ones. It should show a real interest in them and promote opportunities for meetings, formation and collaboration.

It should encourage and support the Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, and through it try to contact those who have distanced themselves.

It should help those who are more sensitive to salesian values to develop in themselves the vocation of a cooperator.

40. We provide a service of spiritual assistance to the Don Bosco Volunteers and to the religious and secular institutes which affirm in their statutes that they have a project of apostolic life according to the salesian spirit, which have made the request to belong to the Salesian Family through a general chapter, and which have received official recognition by the Rector Major.
41. The Salesian Bulletin, founded by Don Bosco, spreads knowledge of salesian spirit and activity, especially in its missionary and educational aspects.

It is concerned with the problems of youth, encourages collaboration and tries to foster vocations.

It is as well an instrument for formation and a bond of union between the different branches of the Salesian Family.

It is edited in accordance with the directives of the Rector Major and his council in various editions and languages.
V. FRATERNAL AND APOSTOLIC COMMUNITIES

42. Once a year let both the local and provincial communities, gathered around the rector and provincial respectively, celebrate the community Feast-Day as a sign of its fraternal communion and an expression of its gratitude.

43. For reasons of health, to foster apostolic activity and life together and an atmosphere of prayer and recollection, every confrere should regulate his work in an orderly manner, and the local community should see to it that there is a balanced distribution of duties with opportune periods for rest and silence, and for suitable relaxation in common.

44. Following the example of our Founder and aware of the austerity demanded by religious life and the obligations arising from our work, the superior and every member of the community should keep their conscience alert to their moral obligations in the choice of reading matter, film and stage presentations, and in the use of the means of social communication.

45. The community should receive with cordiality those who come in contact with us or
are guests, especially if they are confreres. A previous understanding with the rector is needed before invitations to meals are given. Externs however are not permitted to live with the community except with the permission of the provincial.

46. The community maintains cordial relations with the family of each confrere, and shows them love and gratitude.

The salesian who has left his home to follow Christ loses none of his love for his relatives and especially for his parents; he gives it expression by his prayers, letters and visits.

47. Each community, as a sign of brotherly communion, should remember in a special way all deceased confreres; for this purpose individual communities should decide on an opportune moment for the daily reading of the necrology in one of the community practices.

48. In keeping with the salesian tradition, the rector or someone in his place should address the community by way of a 'good-night', preferably after evening prayer.
VI. FOLLOWING CHRIST
OBEDIENT, POOR, CHASTE

Our obedience

49. In an atmosphere of mutual trust every confrere should frequently see his rector to let him know the state of his health, how his apostolic activity is proceeding, the difficulties he faces in religious life and fraternal charity, and everything that may contribute to the welfare of the individual members and of the community.

Let the rector consider as one of his principal duties that of being always available to receive and listen to the confreres.

50. To promote family spirit and avoid upsetting the community programme, a confrere who has to be absent from the house, especially for visits, journeys or holidays, should have an understanding with his rector. In the case of a prolonged absence he will follow what is prescribed by the Church's norms. (cf. CIC, can. 665,1)
Our poverty

51. The ceding of the use and enjoyment of his goods and of their administration carries with it the express condition that the member shall not be involved in responsibility for their management.

With the permission of the provincial and for a just reason he can change this cession and arrangement concerning his goods and can perform those acts with regard to property which the civil law prescribes.

All this he must also observe with regard to goods which come into his possession after profession.

He will also inform the provincial from time to time of the goods of which he retains the ownership, and of their condition.

52. The will by which in accordance with civil law a member disposes of his present and future goods, is to be drawn up in two copies, one of which will be kept in the provincial archives. For any eventual changes in it the provisions of canon and civil law shall be observed.

53. In the spirit of gospel detachment a member, after at least ten years of perpetual profession and with the consent of the Rector Major, may definitely renounce the
ownership of all his personal goods. This act of renunciation shall be drawn up in accordance with the prescription of the civil law of his own country.

54. Should a confrere leave the Society, he shall once again have full rights over the movable and immovable goods the ownership of which he reserved to himself, but he shall not have the right to demand any of their fruits, nor any account of their administration.

Fraternal help will be afforded him to face the initial difficulties of his new situation, but he shall not be entitled to anything for the period he has spent in the Congregation.

55. Every member lives out his poverty by temperance in the use of food and drink, by simplicity in dress and by moderate use of holidays and amusements.

He furnishes his room in a simple manner, taking care not to make it a refuge which keeps him separated from his confreres and from young people.

He is watchful so as not to become a slave to any habit opposed to the spirit of poverty.

Faithful to a constant tradition he abstains from smoking as a form of salesian temperance and as a witness in his personal work of education.
56. The members cannot retain for themselves anything they may acquire by their own work or because of their membership of the Society, but everything must be placed among the common goods.

Whatever money they receive from the community to carry out their work or for small individual needs they will use with a sense of responsibility and give an account to the superior of how it was spent.

57. Royalties received by salesians for their publications or other productions are fruits of work which as members they fraternaly place in common for the benefit of the Society.

Hence every confrere, whether author or publisher, shall cede the copyrights he acquires according to the norms of the province and in the manner prescribed by the laws of the respective countries.

58. It belongs to provincial chapters to lay down norms with a view to establishing throughout the province a modest and effectively uniform level of community life, while taking into account special situations.

In particular they will regulate:

1. the use of personal equipment which can be taken to another house when a member is transferred;
2. the holidays permitted to members for a proper restoration of their physical and mental energies;

3. the norms for a practical exercise of solidarity between the houses of the province, and the help the communities will offer for the general needs of the province.

59. The Society should not retain possession of any real estate apart from its houses and the property needed for its work, in accordance with article 187 of the Constitutions.

In every case whatever has the appearance of counter-witness to poverty should be avoided, remembering that effective service can often be rendered with very simple material structures and in works we do not own.

60. The purpose of our works is to give service to others; they should therefore be open and available for the needs of the neighbourhood. Space and facilities required for the pastoral needs of the area should not be left unused.

61. Our tenor of life should conform to the demands of religious poverty in line with the customs of the different countries.

The interior decoration of the house, the furniture and equipment should be simple and
functional and should never give the impression of wealth and luxury. This holds good also for our churches, while maintaining in them a proper decorum.

62. Proper attention should be given to the maintenance of goods and property. Special importance attaches to the preservation of libraries, archives and other documentary material, because of their cultural and community value.

63. Means of transport shall be the property of the house or province; they should not be for exclusive personal use but at the disposal of the community, which will make use of them only as a means of service and with criteria of poverty.

64. With a sense of economy and in keeping with our family spirit, domestic work and services should as far as possible be done by the confreres, who will thus try to learn by experience, especially during the period of initial formation.

65. The community, whether local or provincial, should examine at intervals it considers opportune its own state of poverty, both as regards its collective witness and the services it renders and should study the means to ensure a constant renewal.
Our chastity

66. The giving of witness and pastoral service requires the presence of the salesian in the world.

Faithful to the vocation he has chosen he will avoid the comforts and attractions of the world. He will be prudent in making visits or frequenting amusements, excluding anything not in keeping with religious chastity.

67. Female personnel should be employed in our houses and works only when necessary and due regard should be paid to the requirements of religious life.

68. In his relationships with others and in his friendships, the salesian should be consistent with the obligations assumed at his profession. Let him therefore avoid any ambiguous or dangerous conduct or behaviour, which could obscure his witness to chastity.
VII. IN DIALOGUE WITH THE LORD

69. At the beginning of the year every community should draw up the programme for its life of prayer, bearing in mind its apostolic commitments and the demands of fraternal life.

70. The members will celebrate Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer in common if possible. Other vocal prayers may be substituted, according to circumstances. All the members will be faithful to the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

71. Every day the members will spend in common at least half an hour for meditation and some time in spiritual reading. It is for the local community to devise different ways in which this can be done and encourage the confreres in the fulfilment of this duty.

72. The community will devote at least three hours to the monthly recollection, and every three months a whole day will be given over to a suitably prepared retreat. Every year the members will make a retreat of six days in the manner laid down by the provincial chapter, which they will con-
clude with the renewal of the commitments assumed at religious profession.

73. In harmony with salesian tradition and the teaching of the Church, Friday is to be for the members a day of community penance. In Lent the community should establish some common practice of mortification, which helps the members to prepare for Easter and opens them to a greater sharing with the poor.

74. As well as the Rosary, by means of which Mary teaches her children how to unite themselves with the mysteries of Christ, the monthly commemoration, the daily prayer after meditation and the frequent use of the Blessing of Mary Help of Christians are other signs of unity in our Marian devotion. The details will be laid down in the provincial directory.

The members, both individually and as a community, should feel the obligation of zealously spreading devotion to Mary Help of Christians and of fostering, wherever possible, the Association of the Clients of Mary Help of Christians.

75. On the last day of each month our father Don Bosco will be commemorated. The feasts of our saints and beatified members should be celebrated as family events and de-
votion to our servants of God should be fos-
tered.

76. Salesians will express love and grati-
tude to confreres, relatives and benefactors
who have been called by the Father to eternal
life, by praying for the repose of their souls
both privately and as a community.

In particular:

1. on the death of a confrere or novice the
community to which he belonged will have
thirty Masses said, and one Mass will be said
in every house of the province;

2. on the death of the Rector Major or
a Rector Major emeritus, in addition to the
thirty Masses one Mass will be said in every
house of the Congregation;

3. on the death of parents of confreres,
the house to which the confrere belongs will
have ten Masses said;

4. each year:

– for the deceased confreres every priest
will say Mass on the day following the liturgical
solemnity of Don Bosco; in addition the pro-
vincial will have one Mass said during every
retreat;

– for the deceased parents of the confreres
one Mass will be celebrated in every house
on November 25, anniversary of the death of Mamma Margaret;

– for deceased benefactors and members of the Salesian Family, a Mass will be celebrated in each community on November 5.

77. Our community life of prayer will have a practical guide in the form of a manual to be prepared by the provinces, provincial conferences or regions, which will contain a common nucleus of prayers as indicated by the Rector Major with his council.
Second Part

Formed for the mission of pastors and educators
VIII. GENERAL ASPECTS OF FORMATION

Formation communities

78. Formation communities must have a rector and a team of formation personnel who are specially prepared, above all as regards spiritual direction which is ordinarily given by the rector himself.

Those being formed and their guides must carry out with shared responsibility a periodic planning and evaluation of their work.

Those in formation should play their part in practical ways in the running of the community.

79. During the period of initial formation the confreres will have once a month the talk with the superior referred to in article 70 of the Constitutions.

80. To educate those being formed to a sense of personal responsibility in the use of time and to encourage the spirit of initiative, there should be a reasonable and gradual flexibility in the timetable and the day's activities, with priority for the more pressing needs of the community.
81. The local community, since it shares the responsibility for the development of each confrère, is invited to express its opinion whenever one of its members seeks admission to profession or to holy orders. This will be done in the form most in keeping with charity.

Intellectual formation

82. Our salesian mission orientates and characterizes at all levels the intellectual formation of the members in a way that is original and unique. Therefore the programme of studies must preserve a balance between serious and scientific reflection and the religious and apostolic dimensions of our way of life.

Those branches of study shall be cultivated with special care which deal with the education of and pastoral work for youth, catechesis and social communication.

83. During the years of initial formation the studies should be so structured as to lead to degrees and qualifications recognized by the State, whenever that is possible.

84. The provinces able to do so should have their own study centre for the formation of
the confreeres and to provide qualified services of spiritual, pastoral and cultural animation.

When the study centre is interprovincial, the provinces concerned shall give their responsible collaboration to enable it to achieve its aim.

As far as possible it should also be open to externs, religious and lay, as a service to the particular Church.

85. The assimilation of the salesian spirit is fundamentally a fact of living communication. But for this vital experience to be really efficacious it should be accompanied throughout the whole process of the initial formation by a gradual and systematic study of salesian spirituality and the history of the Society.

Pastoral experiences

86. The pastoral experiences should be carried out in activities proper to our mission, and should have as their purpose the development of an apostolic spirit and of the educative and pastoral potential of the salesian in formation. Such experiences should be diversified and graded so that they respond to the personal and religious development of the individual confere and to the phase of formation he has reached.
The community has the responsibility for programming these pastoral experiences, for following up their realization with the presence and guidance of the formation personnel and for their periodic evaluation.

**Practical guide for formation**

87. At world level the practical guide for formation will be the salesian “Ratio fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum”, and at provincial level a directory approved by the Rector Major with the consent of his council.

The “Ratio” sets out in an organic and instructive way the complexus of principles and norms concerning formation which are found in the Constitutions, General Regulations and other documents of the Church and of the Congregation.

The provincial directory applies the principles and norms of salesian formation to the concrete local situations.
IX. THE FORMATION PROCESS

Immediate preparation for the novitiate

88. Under ordinary circumstances the period of immediate preparation for the novitiate should not be less than six months in length and should be spent in a salesian community.

The details are to be laid down in the provincial directory.

The novitiate

89. The house of novitiate should be in contact with the social and apostolic realities of the neighbourhood. If circumstances make it desirable, the novitiate may be established alongside another suitable community.

90. When the candidate considers himself ready and sufficiently prepared he makes his application to begin the novitiate.

To be admitted he must be free from the impediments listed in Canon Law (CIC can. 643-645 §1), show the aptitudes and maturity necessary for entering upon the salesian life, and his health must be such as
to enable him to observe all the Constitutions of the Society.

The eventual dismissal of a novice belongs to the provincial of the novitiate house.

91. Studies during the novitiate should be carried out seriously and follow a precise programme which forms part of the overall plan of studies. They should have as their overriding objective initiation into the mystery of Christ, so that the novice by means of contact with the word of God may develop a deeper life of faith and a loving knowledge of God.

A solid theological basis for the religious life should also be presented. The Constitutions, the life of Don Bosco and our traditions should be studied.

92. At an appropriate time at the beginning of the novitiate, and again before making vows, the novices are to make a retreat.

93. During the novitiate the novice may freely leave the Institute. If he remains he will be admitted to profession after he has made the necessary application and if he is judged suitable; otherwise he is sent away.

In special cases the provincial may prolong the novitiate, but not beyond a further six months in accordance with can. 653.
94. When a religious in perpetual vows asks to pass from his own institute to our Society, he must undergo a period of trial of at least three years' duration in one of our communities, so that he may assimilate our spirit.

At the end of this time he may make a formal request for admission, and if he is accepted may make his perpetual profession in accordance with canon law.

Formation after the novitiate

95. Immediately after the novitiate all confreres must continue their formation for at least a two-year period in formation communities, preferably studentates.

During this period the general philosophical and pedagogical formation is given, with an introduction to theology. Technical, scientific or professional training may also be commenced or continued with specific qualifications in view.

96. Practical training lasts ordinarily for two years and is carried out before perpetual profession in a community that can provide whatever is necessary for the validity of this experience.

97. Members who are preparing for the priesthood must receive, over a minimum
period of four years, a more intense and specifically priestly formation in formation communities, preferably studentates.

They must attend seriously to theological studies, preferably in salesian centres.

During this period they must not undertake duties or other studies that will interfere with the specific purpose of this formative phase.

98. In the phase which completes their initial formation following the practical training, lay salesians must be afforded the possibility of acquiring a serious theological, salesian and pedagogical preparation suited to their cultural level.

They should be engaged also, according to their talents, in studies aimed at their professional preparation in view of the apostolic work they will later carry out.

Ongoing formation

99. Ongoing formation requires that each conferee develop his capacity for communication and dialogue; he should form in himself an open and discerning mentality and a spirit of initiative and in this way conveniently renew his own plan of life.

Each one should cultivate the habit of reading and the study of those branches of knowledge
proper to his mission; he should maintain his openness to prayer, meditation, and to personal and community spiritual direction.

100. Let every confrere study with his superiors the field of further qualifications best suited to his abilities and to the needs of the province giving preference to whatever concerns our mission.

He should preserve that availability which is characteristic of our spirit and be ready for periodic requalification.

101. It is the duty of the provincial and his council to promote ordinary means and also extraordinary initiatives for spiritual and cultural formation.

Meetings of rectors, of pastoral animators, of economers and of other confreres should be occasions for deepening our Salesian identity in its educational and pastoral dimensions.

An attitude of ready acceptance should be fostered to formative opportunities offered by different organisms of the Church and of society.

Interprovincial initiatives should be carried out by the provincials concerned in agreement with the regional councillor.
102. All salesians in their mature years should periodically be offered the possibility of spending an appropriate period of time for their renewal.

Provinces should take this need into account in their planning, and each confreere should respond to it for his own good and that of the community.
Third Part

The service of authority in our Society
X. THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY
IN THE WORLD COMMUNITY

The Rector Major and his council

103. The Rector Major shall be attentive to the needs of the universal Church, and shall keep in active contact with provinces, houses and members. He shall seek the collaboration of all, promote formal and informal meetings, and spread knowledge of the apostolic activity of the congregation within the Salesian Family.

The members in turn shall express their love for Don Bosco and the Congregation by keeping united with the Rector Major and accepting his directives. They shall help him by prayer and dialogue, and above all by fidelity to the Constitutions.

104. Personally or through others the Rector Major may visit each and every province and local community whenever the need arises.

In particular he will arrange for an extraordinary visitation of every province during his six-year term of office. This may be carried out as he thinks fit, either by the regional counsellor or by another visitor delegated by the Rector Major to whom he
gives the powers of jurisdiction required by the nature itself of the visit.

105. The Rector Major, as Superior of the Society, is the Grand Chancellor of the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS). He is the representative of the Apostolic See for the UPS and the representative of the UPS before the Apostolic See.

In virtue of the mandate of the Congregation for Catholic Education, he has full power over the University, and is the guardian and interpreter of its statutes.

He carries out the functions of Grand Chancellor either personally or through a delegate, chosen preferably from among the members of the general council.

106. In addition to the cases enumerated in article 132, §1 of the Constitutions, the Rector Major requires the consent of his council:

1. for beginning extraordinary juridical proceedings which could compromise the Society;
2. for setting up mission office at the level of the whole Congregation [R 24];
3. for accepting parishes [R 25];
4. for the approval of provincial formation directories [R 87];
5. for the appointment of a delegate for a central secretariat [R 108];

6. for establishing technical offices and consultative boards referred to in article 107 of the General Regulations, and determining their mode of operation and the offices and roles of their members;

7. for the appointment of his personal delegate for a delegation [R 138];

8. for the approval of binding decisions made by provincial conferences [C 139];

9. for establishing the manner of making the consultation preceding the appointment of provincial councillors [R 154];

10. for the approval of the financial budget and balance sheet prepared by the economist general’s department [C 190, R 192].

107. The animation of the Salesian mission at world level calls for the identification of common objectives and for synergy among the councillors in charge of specific sectors and for the coordination of their interventions with the regional councillors, through systematic meetings of planning and evaluation.

The general councillors in charge of specific sectors can avail themselves of the services of technical offices and consultant boards in carrying out the duties confided to them.
Their establishment, mode of operation and internal organization are to be determined by the Rector Major with the consent of his council.

108. For sectors of particular importance which do not form part of the duties assigned by the Constitutions to individual councillors, appropriate central secretariats may be set up depending directly on the Rector Major.

The establishment of such secretariats belongs to the general chapter. Their immediate responsibility is entrusted to a central delegate who is appointed by the Rector Major with the consent of his council and remains ad nutum.

109. To ensure a more regular discharge of business with the Apostolic See it is desirable that this be done through the Rector Major.

110. The official organ for the promulgation of directives of the Rector Major and his council and for official information are the ‘Acts of the General Council’. Their publication is the responsibility of the general secretariat.
The general chapter

111. Except in the case provided for by article 143 of the Constitutions, the convocation of the general chapter will be made at least one year before it opens. It will be announced to all members by means of a circular letter which will indicate the principal purpose, place and opening date of the chapter.

112. For the preparation of the general chapter the Rector Major, or in his absence the Vicar General, will appoint a moderator; to him the provincial chapters, local communities and individual members will send their proposals and study contributions if any. He will also nominate a technical commission to work with the moderator in establishing a plan of preparation for the general chapter and in securing the interest and active participation of the members.

113. The Rector Major, or in his absence the Vicar General, will also appoint a precapitular commission which, under the responsibility of the moderator and in agreement with the Rector Major, will draw up the reports or schemata to be sent in good time to those taking part in the general chapter.
114. Provinces with less than 200 professed members, and vice-provinces, will send to the general chapter one delegate elected by the respective chapters. Moreover, provinces will send another delegate for every additional two hundred members or fraction thereof. Other eventual juridical circumscriptions referred to in article 156 of the Constitutions will have their representation defined in their decree of erection.

115. At least three months before the opening of the general chapter, the provincials will send to the moderator the minutes of the elections, which will be examined by an appropriate commission appointed by the Rector Major, or in his absence by the Vicar General.

If any defects should be discovered, the moderator will see that they are rectified in good time, and if necessary the elections will be repeated.

116. In the first session of the general chapter the president will appoint two or more secretaries and if necessary also other chapter officials. If necessary the president can also choose other secretaries and officials who are not members of the general chapter. It is the duty of the secretaries to record accurately in the minutes, the acts and deliberations of the general chapter, the
decisions made and a summary of the discussions.

117. Once the secretaries have been appointed, the moderator in the name of the president and with the consent of the assembly will declare the chapter lawfully opened.

118. If at the opening of the general chapter the election of any delegate is found to be invalid or still doubtful, the moderator will inform the chapter of this at the first session.

The first act of the chapter will then be to pronounce on each case, so that with the authority with which it is invested it may either declare an election null and void, or rectify its invalidity.

119. In one of the early sessions, the Rector Major, or the one who takes his place, shall present a general report on the state of the Congregation, and this shall be the object of study and analysis by the assembly.

120. The meetings of the general chapter will be presided over by the Rector Major, or in his absence, by the Vicar General. He will be helped in the direction and conduct of the work by the moderator and by three chairmen, elected by an absolute majority by the general
chapter from a list of names prepared by the president.

The president, the moderator and the three chairmen constitute the presidency of the general chapter.

121. The general chapter will elect by absolute majority at least five members who, with the moderator and chairmen, will form the central commission which, under the presidency of the Rector Major, has the duty of coordinating the work of the chapter and ensuring its smooth functioning.

122. The general chapter works through groups called commissions, which have the task of studying the schemata or reports assigned to them. As soon as possible the moderator will inform the general chapter of the commissions and the themes they deal with and will ask for its approval. The commissions will be constituted by the president who will keep in mind each one's preferences.

123. It is the duty of the members of the chapter to be present at its meetings; for this reason they may not absent themselves without the permission of the president.

124. The conferees shall be given full and timely information about the chapter's work.
A commission of chapter members, chosen from the various groups of provinces, is responsible for such information and in general for all contacts with the mass media. It will function in agreement with the presidency of the chapter.

All who take part in any way in the general chapter must exercise discretion and respect for persons concerned, whenever referring to the work, events or discussions of the chapter.

125. The Rector Major and the capitular assembly have the faculty of calling to the general chapter other persons as experts or observers without the right to vote; they may or may not be salesians.

Experts may take part in discussions in the commissions to which they are invited; they may speak in the assembly only when requested. Observers may speak both in the commissions and in the assembly.

126. It is for the general chapter to decide on the date for the elections, providing for an appropriate period for reflection before the election of each council member.

127. The election of the Rector Major and members of his council is an act which calls for the full responsibility of every capitular
before the Congregation. It must therefore be prepared for by prayer and carried out in a spirit of faith.

Every elector may request and provide information about the qualities of those eligible, but must avoid whatever may offend against fraternal charity.

With reference to art. 133 of the Constitutions the election of the councillors for the sectors is to be preceded by a process of discernment on the part of chapter members divided according to regions, on the important challenges of the sector and on the profile of the candidates. Such a process of discernment concludes with the proposal to the assembly of one candidate from one's own region and of another from outside the region, identified through secret ballot.

128. In accordance with the prescription of article 141, §1 of the Constitutions for the election of regional councillors, the members from each group of provinces will choose by secret vote in a single ballot the confreres to be presented to the assembly, writing one name on each voting paper. They will then present to the assembly a list containing the names of those who have received votes with the number given to each.
129. At the beginning of the electoral session, the president will announce its purpose. Two secretaries and three scrutineers will then be elected by secret ballot; the scrutineers and the president are obliged to maintain secrecy even after the chapter.

130. Should any elector be ill in the house where the general chapter is being held, and be unable to be present but able to write, two scrutineers will go to him to receive in a ballot-box his vote which will be added to the others.

131. Once all the votes have been gathered together in a ballot-box, the scrutineers will count them to see whether the number of votes corresponds to the number of voters. If the number of votes exceeds the number of voters the election is null; if the number of votes corresponds or is inferior, the scrutiny is to begin. The secretaries will record the names as they are read out by a scrutineer.

132. Whoever has received the votes of an absolute majority of those present is elected and will be proclaimed as such by the president; on accepting he will immediately enter into office. If the president himself is elected, the proclamation will be made by the oldest member of the assembly.
133. After the elections the Rector Major will inform all members of the Society of the names of those elected and the offices assigned to them.

134. In the last session of the chapter, after everything prescribed by the regulations has been carried out, the moderator in the name of the president and with the approval of the assembly will declare the general chapter closed.

Regional structures

135. The regional councillors will keep in touch with the individual provinces. They may visit them, arrange meetings of provincials, provincial councils and, in agreement with them, of other categories of confreres, to point out to them whatever they consider more opportune for the welfare of the Congregation and for the provision of a better service for the province and the particular Church.

136. In addition it is the duty of the regional councillors:

1. to further a concrete and creative family sense in the relationship of confreres and provinces among themselves and with the Rector Major and his council;
2. to attend diligently to the official business of the provinces of the group and of the provincial conferences;

3. to foster the efficient functioning of inter-provincial structures, where they exist and the setting up of regional offices of documentation regarding the religious, cultural and social services of the areas of their competence, where this is possible and advisable.

137. In the fulfilment of their office, regional councillors will act with proper discretion so as not to substitute themselves unduly for the local, provincial or other superiors, nor intrude in matters of their specific competence.

138. If particular reasons require that certain provinces be detached from one or more groups, without an entirely new group entrusted to a regional councillor being constituted, the general chapter may unite them in a delegation, for which the Rector Major with the consent of his council and after consulting the provinces concerned will appoint a personal delegate, to whom he will assign such duties as he considers opportune.

139. The provinces of each conference meet at least once a year to study problems
concerning the animation and coordination of their joint salesian activity.

The conference is presided over by the regional councillor or his delegate.

The conclusions of the conference are ordinarily orientative.

In special cases the conference can make binding decisions, which acquire their force only after the approval of the Rector Major with the consent of his council.

140. The following take part in the meetings of the conference:

1. the regional councillor or his delegate;
2. the provincials of the conference;
3. one or more delegates for each province, selected according to the norms laid down in the regulations of the provincial conference.

141. Consultants and observers, both religious and lay, may be invited to participate in the work of the conference in the manner to be laid down by each conference in its own regulations.

142. The following tasks, among others, are assigned to the provincial conference:

1. to study and further the application of the general directives of the Congregation
regarding its government and work, and particularly those of the general chapter;

2. to provide for the coordination of common pastoral activity, of the formation, qualification and updating of confreres, and of the means of social communication, by promoting generous collaboration in the exchange of members and resources;

3. to promote liaison and collaboration with other organizations and institutions interested in the problems of youth and of development;

4. to examine and encourage appropriate experimentation, particularly in the field of community poverty and in that of our service to the young who are poor and to the working classes;

5. to draw up its regulations and decide upon eventual interprovincial secretariats, structures and offices for animation and coordination.
XI. THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY
IN THE PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY

The provincial and his council

143. Before appointing a provincial the Rector Major will consult the professed members of the province in accordance with article 162 of the Constitutions, and will ask each one for a list of three names of members of their own or other provinces and arranged in order of preference.

144. The provincial is the bond of union between the province and the Rector Major with his council; he fosters relationships with the civil authorities and with ecclesiastical and religious organizations in his area.

145. The provincial should keep in contact with the rectors and give them special attention. He should call them together at least once a year to treat of matters of general interest for the province.

146. The provincial will see to it that he has frequent personal contact with the members, always in a spirit of service and fraternal communion.
1. Once a year he will make with particular care the provincial visitation to each community.

2. During the visitation he should meet each member, hold a meeting of the local council, and carry out with the community a review of their religious observance, the witness of their consecrated life, their apostolic zeal in pastoral activities, their concern for fostering vocations, and the financial situation. The provincial councillors may assist him in this task.

3. At the end of the provincial visitation he should write down in the register kept for this purpose in the archives of the house his observations and decisions of a general character. Those of a confidential nature he should communicate separately. At the next visitation he should verify that they have been carried out.

147. By means of opportune contacts with the various groups of the Salesian Family and through his delegate for this sector, the provincial will seek to promote the sense of belonging to a common vocation and a deeper understanding of what this means.

148. Aware of the important role played by our lay collaborators, the provincial should show a keen interest in their salesian
preparation and should ascertain how they are integrated in our works.

149. The provincial may stay the execution of a superior order, in accordance with universal law, if there are motives to the contrary so grave and evident as to justify him in believing that if the superiors concerned had known of them they would have acted otherwise, but in such a case he must inform them fully and immediately. If the suspended order concerns a member, the latter shall place himself at the disposal of the provincial while a reply is awaited (cf CIC, can. 41).

150. A member is assigned to a specific salesian house by a precept of obedience from his own provincial or other competent authority. The number of conferees in a house shall normally be not less than six.

151. For a just reason the provincial, after hearing the opinion of his council and the member concerned, may on request send him temporarily to another province under a written agreement with the provincial who receives him. Permanent changes of province require the authorization of the Rector Major.
152. Members will exercise the ministry of hearing confessions with the permission of the provincial, in accordance with canon law.

153. To change the provincial house the provincial must have the consent of his council and seek the authorization of the Rector Major.

He shall also have an understanding with him if he will be absent from the province for a considerable length of time.

154. The manner in which the consultation preceding the appointment of provincial councillors is made shall be laid down by the Rector Major with the consent of his council.

155. It is the duty of the provincial council to collaborate with the provincial for the development of the Salesian life and mission, to help him to gain knowledge of situations, and to see that the provincial plan is being put into practice through contacts with those responsible and with the respective commissions.

The council shall be called together by the provincial at least once a month, and the agenda to be dealt with shall be made known in advance.
156. In addition to those already indicated in the Constitutions, the provincial needs the consent of his council according to the General Regulations in the following cases:

1. authorizing coeducational schools [R 3];

2. drawing up contracts with Local Ordinaries and other bodies [R 23, 25];

3. setting up eventual mission offices and twinning arrangements [R 24];

4. allowing a confrere to carry out pastoral work in non-salesian institutions [R 35];

5. changing the location of the provincial house [R 153];

6. appointing the moderator of the provincial chapter and inviting experts and observers [R 168];

7. establishing the manner in which the consultation for the appointment of rectors shall be carried out [R 170];

8. transferring a rector to another office during his term of appointment [R 171];

9. requesting authorization for the financial operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions [R 193];

10. approving the financial budget and balance sheet of the province [C 190; R 196];

11. fixing the contributions to be requested from the houses for the needs of the province [R 197];

12. authorizing modifications, or solutions to economic problems, or other under-
takings of considerable importance in the houses [R 200].

157. The provincial must hear the opinion of his council, according to canon law and the General Regulations, in the following cases:

1. for the choice and preparation of personnel for formation communities;

2. for the selection of parish priests [R 27];

3. for the temporary transfer of a confere to another province [R 151];

4. for the appointment of the provincial secretary [R 159];

5. for the setting up of offices and secretariates, and the establishing of commissions for consultation or pastoral activity at the provincial level [R 160];

6. for setting in motion the process of dismissal of a member [ClC, can. 697].

158. When matters of particular importance concerning a local community are dealt with in the provincial council, care shall be taken to ascertain the views of the community concerned.

159. The provincial and his council have at their service a secretary who has the role of a notary.
He is present at the meetings of the council without the right to vote, unless he is one of the councillors; he records the minutes. He is in charge of the provincial archives and sees to the collecting and recording of statistics. He is appointed by the provincial after hearing the opinion of his council and remains ad nutum.

160. It belongs to the provincial, after hearing the opinion of his council, to set up offices and secretariats and to establish commissions for consultation or pastoral activity at the provincial level.

**The provincial chapter**

161. The elections of the delegates of the local communities to the provincial chapter and of the delegates of the provinces to the general chapter will be made separately by secret ballot according to the norms of article 153 of the Constitutions.

162. After the delegates are chosen, an equivalent number of substitutes will be elected to take their place if they are definitively prevented from taking part in the provincial or general chapter. The manner in which the substitution is to take place for the general chapter will be decided by the provincial chapter.
163. In the case of local communities having less than six professed members, if circumstances permit, the provincial should arrange that they meet together so as to form the number of at least six professed members, under the presidency of the rector who is senior by first profession. Thus united they will elect the delegate for the provincial chapter and his substitute according to the norms of the Regulations.

If however because of special circumstances the members of a house with less than six professed members cannot join with another in like condition, with the consent of the provincial, the members of such a house shall join the members of a house with six or more professed members and together with them and with equal rights, active and passive, will proceed to the election of the delegate and his substitute.

164. Besides what is prescribed in article 165 of the General Regulations, voting by letter is allowed, with the approval of the provincial in the following cases:

1. when because of distance or other serious reasons the members of communities with less than the minimum of six professed members cannot meet together nor join the members of another house with six or more
professed members for the election of the delegate to the provincial chapter;

2. when a confrere cannot be present for serious reasons at the election of the delegate of his own community;

3. when a member of the provincial chapter cannot attend the chapter for the election of the delegate of the province to the general chapter.

165. For the election of the delegates of the provincial community the following is to be observed:

1. When the election of the delegates of each community has been completed, the provincial will notify the confreres of the names of those elected, and will send them a list of the perpetually professed members of the province who are eligible for the provincial chapter. This list will include confreres temporarily and lawfully absent from the province and exclude confreres of other provinces present for the same reasons;

2. confreres who for lawful reasons are temporarily absent from their province will participate in the election of the delegate of the community in which they reside, but for the election of the delegates of the provincial community they will receive from their own provincial a voting-paper which they will return to him duly completed;
3. the number of those to be elected is in the proportion of 1 for every 25 or fraction of 25 members of the province; in arriving at this number both temporarily and perpetually professed members are included as well as confreres temporarily absent from the province for lawful reasons;

4. each confrere with the right to vote will receive from his provincial a voting-paper on which he may indicate as many names as there are members to be elected;

5. it is for the provincial to collect the voting-papers and guarantee the secrecy of the voting;

6. the counting of the votes will be done by scrutineers appointed by the provincial. Those who have the highest number of votes in successive sequence will be elected. If votes are equal the senior by profession will be elected, or in the case of further equality the senior in age;

7. if the substitute of a delegate of a community is elected on the provincial list a new election for the substitute will be made. If one of those elected on the provincial list cannot take part in the chapter, he will be substituted by the first of the non-elected members who received the highest number of votes.

166. The following confreres are to be considered as lawfully absent from the province:
1. those who by express mandate of their own provincial are living temporarily in houses of other provinces for reasons of health, study or other duties;

2. those who received permission for *absentia a domo* without giving up their right to active and passive voice;

3. those with permission for *absentia a domo* who have renounced their right to active and passive voice; but this last group, while being included for the purpose of article 165 of the General Regulations, are not to be included in the list for the election referred to in nn. 1 and 2 of the same article.

167. In addition to what is prescribed in article 171 of the Constitutions, it belongs to the provincial chapter:

1. to study and analyse the report of the provincial on the state of the province;

2. to verify what has been done in response to the guidelines issued by the previous provincial chapter;

3. to suggest ideas and criteria for the planning and reorganization of the works of the province;

4. to establish standing orders for the functioning of the provincial chapter in accordance with canon law (cf. CIC, can. 632);

5. to forward proposals to the moderator of the general chapter.
168. With the consent of his council, the provincial has the power of appointing the moderator and of inviting to the provincial chapter salesians and non-salesians as experts or observers, without the right of vote.

169. In elections, consultations and appointments, it should be kept in mind that it is desirable for chapters and councils to express by the significant presence of clerical and lay members the complementary relationship between them that is characteristic of our Society.
XII. THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY
IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Rector and his council

170. The manner of making the consulta-
tion for the appointment of the rector will
be determined by the provincial with the
consent of his council and in the light of any
indications made by the provincial chap-
ter. When a rector is confirmed for a second
three-year term of office in the same commu-
nity, the approval of the Rector Major referred
to in article 177 of the Constitutions is not
required.

171. The period of service of the rector shall
not normally exceed six years without an in-
terruption of at least one year.

Even during his three-year term he may
be appointed to some other office if the pro-
vincial, with the consent of his council, deems
it necessary.

172. The rector should keep himself free
from commitments which could interfere
with his fundamental duties of service to
the confreres. He should not absent himself
from the house for any notable length of
time without necessity and without an understanding with the provincial.

173. He must see that the confreres practise co-responsibility and collaboration in the family spirit desired by Don Bosco. He should respect areas of responsibility, fostering in an atmosphere of healthy freedom the employment of natural gifts and personal talents for attaining the common end.

He must ensure that the assembly of the confreres and the council of the community function in the most effective way.

He should encourage meetings and events which contribute to brotherhood, updating and relaxation.

174. He should programme with the community the best way of carrying out and periodically reviewing the community expression of its prayer life, allowing scope for opportune initiative.

He should ensure that the confreres have opportunities for frequent confession and freedom as regards direction of conscience.

175. Basing himself on salesian sources and by means of common spiritual direction, conferences, good-nights and informal meetings, he should take care that the
community becomes deeply imbued with our spirit, and lives it in an intense way.

In addition he will see to it that official documents of the Church and the Congregation are brought to the knowledge of all the confreres.

176. He should show, especially in his personal relationships with the confreres, his concern for their health and particular needs. He should show special care for the confreres still in the period of initial formation, for the sick and the aged and for those who are in difficulty.

He should take an interest also in the parents of confreres, and consider them as united to the community in a special way.

177. On the death of a confrere the rector is to write his obituary letter without delay. He shall send copies to the general secretariat, to the provinces and communities particularly interested and to formation communities.

178. He should keep the archives in order and up to date, and compile or see to the compiling of the house chronicle.

179. Conscious of the fact that he belongs to the provincial community, he should give
to the provincial a clear and simple account of how the community is progressing.

180. The local council will meet as often as the council itself determines, but at least once a month. In addition it must be called together whenever the rector considers it necessary or whenever he is asked to do so by at least one third of its members.

The agenda to be dealt with should be made known in advance and the minutes are to be signed by the rector and by the members of the council and kept in the archives.

The rector should keep the confreres duly informed about decisions of common interest.

The members of the council must remember their solidarity as regards decisions taken, and that in any case they are obliged in conscience to have respect for persons and to be discreet regarding matters discussed.

181. Where there is no local council, the rector must consult the provincial in those cases in which the Constitutions call for the opinion or consent of the said council.

182. It is customary for the vice-rector to be responsible for one of the principal sectors of the educative and pastoral activity of the community. Ordinarily however the office of
vice-rector should not be combined with that of economer.

The community should be informed of the special duties of the vice-rector referred to in article 183 of the Constitutions.

183. The appointment of the vice-rector, the economer and those responsible for the principal sectors of the activity of the community is made by the provincial. In the case of the appointment of the vice-rector and the economer he shall first hear the opinion of the rector.

The assembly of the confreres

184. With regard to the community the principal tasks and duties of the assembly of the confreres are:

1. to seek appropriate means of fostering religious and apostolic life;

2. to identify and examine the more important problems;

3. to draw up a programme each year covering the life, activities and updating of the community, and to review this programme;

4. to participate in the elaboration of the educative and pastoral plan;
5. to be informed and reflect on the financial situation, in view also of community poverty.

The frequency of meetings is decided by the assembly itself, but they shall take place at least three times a year.
XIII. THE ADMINISTRATION OF TEMPORAL GOODS

General norms

185. Where necessary advisory groups of confreres should be set up at various levels to provide advice and guidance in the solution of administrative problems, in the drawing up and examination of financial budgets and balance sheets, in the preparation of economic programmes and the realization of building projects. The expertise of non-salesians may also be made use of.

186. To ensure the availability of personnel with the necessary competence for the administrative sector, specialized courses for economists should be organized periodically within a province or group of provinces.

187. Any money surplus to the requirements for running expenses at different levels should, when convenient, be deposited in banks in the account of a house or institute of the Society and not in the name of an individual person. These accounts should be operable by three, or at least two, signatures, with one signature sufficient for transactions.
When the responsible superior considers it opportune, two signatures together may be required for transactions.

188. The following operations in favour of third parties are forbidden: making loans, acting as guarantors, accepting obligations, issuing or backing letters of credit, mortgaging the property of the Society and similar operations.

189. As far as non-salesian employees are concerned, the legislation of the country must be followed in regard to the documentation needed on taking up or leaving employment, social security, social welfare and insurance, and a just wage must be paid.

It is also necessary to take out and keep up to date insurance policies against damage or harm to property or persons, to the extent judged appropriate by the competent superiors.

190. To provincial chapters is left the formulation of detailed norms of administration at provincial and local levels.

In particular they will give directives concerning:

1. the keeping of official records, administrative archives for official documents,
agreements and covenants, wills, registers, files of obligations, inventories, etc.;
2. property registration, the safe custody of articles of value and of important documents;
3. legacies for religious purposes and charitable bursaries;
4. the keeping of accounts and centralization of administration where there are different groups involved in a single work;
5. financial arrangements between parish and house in conformity with canon law and the Constitutions;
6. every other norm which local experience may suggest.

The provincial chapter may delegate this task to the provincial with his council.

191. If any member, no matter what office he holds, should contract debts or any other kind of obligation without authorization from a competent superior, he alone remains responsible. Neither the Society nor the province nor the house to which he belongs accepts any responsibility in the matter.

Should a corporate body – province or house – raise a loan, even with due authorization, it alone remains responsible for repayment; a clause to this effect should be written into the loan contract.
At world level

192. The economer general supervises on behalf of the whole Society the operations listed in article 188 of the Constitutions.

He supervises the administration of the provinces and the houses, and in particular examines the annual report which is drawn up and despatched according to the indications of article 196 of the General Regulations.

He renders an account of his administration to the Rector Major and his council at least once a year and whenever he is called upon to do so.

The provinces

193. The provincial economer administers those goods which do not belong to a particular house of the province, and those which individual conferees have entrusted to the Congregation; he supervises and controls the administration of each house. He carries out his duties in dependence on the provincial, who will make decisions with the consent of his council in the case of operations referred to in article 188 of the Constitutions and others of a certain importance.

194. The provincial economer will have an understanding with the provincial concerning:
1. the help he gives to local economers to ensure the exact fulfilment of their duties and in coordinating initiatives at provincial level;

2. the visits he makes to the houses to examine the condition of buildings and property, and to check the administration, maintenance and hygienic conditions;

3. the calling of the annual meeting of local economers;

4. the prompt submission of the annual financial report and other periodic reports on forms supplied by him;

5. the withdrawal from the houses of the contributions referred to in article 197 of the General Regulations.

195. Among the rights and duties of the provincial economer is also included the supervision of all building operations in the province, even when these concern a house already in existence and where the work is to be carried out under the immediate control of the local economer and the responsibility of the rector.

196. The provincial economer should be solicitous in keeping the provincial and his council periodically informed about his administration, and in drawing up the annual financial budget and balance sheet which they have to approve.
The balance sheet will include the cash income and expenditure and the situation of the province in regard to capital assets and liabilities, together with a summary of the financial reports of the individual houses; a copy, signed by the provincial and his council, will be sent to the economer general.

197. The provincial with the consent of his council will decide on and inform the houses of the contributions required from them for the needs of the province, and will likewise withdraw surplus funds that may be available in certain houses.

He will draw up a periodic plan of financial solidarity among all the houses of the province, in order to help those in greater need and to provide funds for extraordinary works and purchases programmed in the provincial chapter.

He will also ensure solidarity with the worldwide Congregation, especially at moments and in ways called for by the Rector Major and his council.

The houses

198. The administration of the goods of each house is entrusted to the local economer, who will act in dependence on the rector and his council.
Every financial transaction in any sector of the house, even that of the rector, must be referred back for accounting purposes to the economer's office, which will be organized in a manner proportionate to the importance and complexity of the work involved.

Even confreres in charge of works which by statute or agreement have a separate administrative council, must render an account of their administration to the religious superiors. This must be done even when there exist separate administrations for the community and the work concerned.

199. It is the economer's duty to manage affairs with diligence and precision.

In agreement with the rector he will make the necessary purchases, look after employees and take care of insurance matters; he will be watchful to see that abuses and waste of every kind are avoided, and that furnishings and rooms are kept simple, functional, clean and well ordered.

The rector will keep himself frequently informed of everything that relates to the financial state of the house.

200. Without prejudice to what is laid down in article 188 of the Constitutions, the rector and the economer will not make modifi-
cations, seek solutions to economic problems, or take other initiatives of any considerable importance without the consent of the local council and without the authorization of the provincial and his council.

201. The rector and the economer will be solicitous in satisfying their financial obligations to the provincial in the manner laid down, and in transferring to him any surplus remaining at the end of the financial year, in obedience to article 197 of the General Regulations.

They will also diligently fulfil any other obligations they have undertaken and pay any debts contracted both with other salesian houses and with externs.

202. The economer will keep himself always ready to give an account of his management to the rector and his council. He will send a report of his administration to the provincial and provincial economer annually and whenever he is asked to do so.

As opportunity offers, and especially when the programme for the year's work and the economic situation are being discussed, he will interest the entire community in the ordinary and extraordinary expenditure involved in the running of the house.
WRITINGS OF DON BOSCO

The following pages contain some writings of our Father and Founder which the 20th, 21st and 22nd General Chapters considered to be of special significance for the faithful living out of our vocation.
I.
TO THE SALESIAN CONFRERES*

The constitutions of our Society were definitely approved by the Holy See on April 3rd 1874.

We should welcome this fact as among the most glorious in the annals of our Society, since through it we have the assurance that, in observing our rules, we rest upon a firm, secure and, I may add, infallible basis, since, the judgement of the supreme Head of the Church, sanctioning them, is infallible.

Yet no matter what its inherent value may be, this approbation would be of little avail, if the rules were not known, and faithfully observed; and it is precisely that they may be easily known, read, meditated upon, and then put into practice by everyone, that I think it well to present them to you translated from the original text. [...].

Moreover, I think it useful to bring to your notice some things of a practical nature which will make it easier to understand the spirit that inspires the rules, and will help you to observe them faithfully and with love. It is from my heart that I speak, whilst briefly placing before you what experience leads me to judge to be conducive to your spiritual good and to the benefit of the whole Congregation.

* Regole o Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales, Torino 1885, (Introduzione), pp. 3-46 passim.
The vows

The first time the supreme Pontiff, Pius IX, spoke of the Salesian Society, he said: "In a religious congregation or society vows are necessary, so that all its members may be united by a tie of conscience to their superior, and the superior holds himself united with the Head of the Church, and as a consequence with God himself."

Our vows therefore may be called so many spiritual cords by which we consecrate ourselves to God, and place our will, our goods, and our spiritual and moral faculties in the power of the superior, so that we may all form but one heart and one soul, in order to promote, according to our constitutions, the greater glory of God: precisely as the Church invites us when in prayer she says: "That the faith in their minds and the piety of their actions may be one."

The vows are a generous offering by which the merit of our works is greatly increased. St Anselm teaches that a good work without vow is like the fruit of a tree. He who does it by vow offers up to God the fruit and the plant itself. St Bonaventure likens the work done without vow to the offering up of the interest without the capital, but with a vow both interest and capital are offered to God. The holy Fathers of the Church unanimously teach that every act performed by vow has a twofold merit, that of the good work itself, and that of carrying out the vow which has been made.

Furthermore, the act of pronouncing the vows restores to us once again, according to the teaching of St Thomas, our baptismal innocence, that is to say, puts us in the state as though we had just received baptism. The Doctors of the Church compare the religious vows to martyrdom, saying that the merit of one who takes his vows is that of one who receives martyrdom, because what the vows fall short of in intensity, is made up for in duration.
If the religious vows so greatly increase the merit of our works and make them so acceptable to God, then we ought to strive with earnestness to fulfil them. He who feels that he is not able to keep them should not make them, or should defer his profession until he feels in his heart that he is firmly resolved to abide by it. Otherwise, he makes to God a faithless and foolish promise, which cannot but displease him: "... for he will have no light and rash promises,"\(^1\) says the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore prepare ourselves well for this heroic consecration. Once we have made it, let us be prepared to keep it even at the cost of long and burdensome sacrifice: "... pay your vows to the Most High,"\(^2\) this is what he himself commands.

**Obedience**

"In true obedience," says St Jerome, "lies the perfection of every virtue." "All religious perfection," says St Bonaventure, "consists in suppressing one’s own will, in other words, in the practice of obedience." "... The speech of the obedient will always be heard,"\(^3\) says the Holy Spirit. St Gregory concludes that "obedience leads to the possession of all other virtues and likewise preserves them all."\(^4\)

This obedience moreover ought to be after the example of our divine Saviour, who practised it even in things most difficult, even to the death on the cross\(^5\), and should the glory of God demand as much from us, we ought also to be obedient to the sacrifice of our own lives.

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1. Qo 5,3.
2. Ps 49,14.
3. Prov 21,28. (JB.)
4. Moral. 1,35.
5. Phil 2,8.
The express orders therefore of the superior, and the rules of the congregation and also the customs of each house, ought to be carefully observed; and should anyone at times be guilty of failing in them, let him readily ask pardon of the one whom he has disobeyed. This act of humility helps immensely towards obtaining forgiveness for the fault committed, and obtains grace from God for the future, and also keeps us on our guard against falling into the same fault again.

The apostle St Paul, in recommending the practice of this virtue says: "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you."\(^6\)

It should be noted that doing only those things which are pleasing to us, and which turn to our own gratification, is not true obedience, but is merely following our own will. True obedience, which makes us dear to God and to our superiors, consists in doing cheerfully whatever is commanded by the constitutions or by our superiors themselves; for as St Paul affirms: "God loves a cheerful giver,"\(^7\) It consists too in showing ourselves docile, even in things which are most difficult and contrary to self-love, and performing them courageously even at the cost of pain and sacrifice. In these cases obedience is more difficult, but it is also more meritorious, and leads us to possession of the kingdom of heaven, according to the words of our divine Redeemer: "... the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force."\(^8\)

If you practise obedience in this way, I guarantee, in the name of God, that you will lead a peaceful and happy life in our Society. But this also I must tell you, from the day you choose

\(^6\) Heb 13,17.
\(^7\) 2 Cor 9,7.
\(^8\) Mt 11,12.
to do your own will and not act obediently, you will begin to feel disconnected with your life; and if in religious orders some are found to be discontented or to whom community life is a burden, it will be seen on close observation that this springs from the want of obedience and of submission of their own wills. If you become discontented reflect on this and know how to remedy it.

Poverty

If we do not leave the world for the sake of God, one day we shall have to leave it of necessity. Those, on the other hand, who leave it spontaneously, will receive a hundredfold of grace in the present life and an eternal reward in the life to come. He who cannot make this sacrifice voluntarily, will have to make it at the point of death, yet without recompense for it, and with the obligation of rendering to God strict account of all the things he has possessed.

It is true that our constitutions admit the possession and use of all civil rights; but after entering the Society one cannot any longer administer and dispose of things that are his own without the consent of the superior, and then only within the limits prescribed by him, so that in the Society one is considered as literally possessing nothing, having made oneself poor to become rich with Jesus Christ. He is following the example of our Saviour, who was born in poverty, lived deprived of all things, and died stripped of his clothes on the cross.

Let us then listen to what our divine Master says: “So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”

9 Lk 14,33.
To another who desired to be numbered among his followers, he said: “Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

To his disciple he used to say that they should not have more than one garment, nor give thought to what they might need in their preaching. In fact, we do not read that Jesus Christ himself, or his apostles, or any of his disciples possessed land, houses, furniture, clothes, meat or drink, or the like. And St Paul says clearly that the followers of Christ, wherever they go and whatever they do, ought to be content with the food which is strictly necessary for life and with clothing to cover them: “But if we have food and clothing with these we shall be content.”

All that is beyond food and clothing is superfluous for us, and contrary to a religious vocation. It is true that at times we shall have to suffer some inconvenience on our journeys, in our work, in time of health and of sickness; we shall sometimes have food, clothing and other things not to our liking, but it is precisely then that we ought to bear in mind that we have made profession of poverty, and that if we wish to have its merit and reward, we ought to bear with its consequences. Let us be on our guard against the sort of poverty censured by St Bernard, who says: “There are some who glory in being called poor, but who will not bear the consequences of poverty; there are those too, who are content to be poor, provided they want for nothing.”

Should our state of poverty however cause us any inconvenience or suffering, let us rejoice with St Paul, who declares that he is overjoyed with all his affliction. Or again let us do as did the apostles, who were filled with happiness when they returned from the Sanhedrin, because they had been counted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. It is precisely to this sort

10 Mt 19,21.
11 1 Tim 6,8.
12 2 Cor 7,4.
13 Acts 5,41.
of poverty that heaven is not only promised but assured by our
divine Redeemer when he said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Moreover to live in such
a state, to dwell willingly in a room that is uncomfortable, or
poorly furnished, to wear plain apparel, to eat coarse and
common food, greatly honours him who has made the vow of
poverty, because it makes him like Jesus Christ.

It is also part of poverty not to damage anything, to take care
of books, clothes, shoes etc., and also not be ashamed of using
things or of wearing garments that are old, or mended, or getting
somewhat threadbare.

Chastity

The virtue that is supremely necessary, the great virtue, the
angelic virtue, the one to crown all others, is chastity. He who
has this virtue, can apply to himself the words of the Holy
Spirit: "All good things came to me along with her."

Our Saviour assures us that those who gain this priceless treasure become,
even in this life like the angels of God.

But this spotless lily, this precious rose, this pearl beyond price is
everywhere beset by the enemy of souls, because he well knows
that, if he succeeds in snatching it from us, the whole affair
of our sanctification may be said to be ruined. Light is changed
into darkness, flame into black coal, and the angel of heaven
into Satan, so that every virtue is lost. Here, my dear sons,
I believe it will be spiritually useful, if I single out things, which
if put into practice, will be to your great advantage; indeed I feel

14 Mt 5:3.
15 Wis 7:11.
16 Mt 22:30.
that I can assure you they will preserve this virtue for you, and all others as well. Bear well in mind then what follows.

1. Do not enter into the Society before you have consulted some prudent person, who will judge if you are likely to be able to keep this virtue.

2. Avoid familiarity with persons of the other sex, and never indulge in a special friendship with any of the boys divine providence entrusts to our care. Charity and good manners to all but sentimental attachment to none. On this point St Jerome says: "Either love none, or love all equally well."

3. After night prayers go straight to rest, and hold no further conversation with anyone until after holy Mass the next day.

4. Keep the senses under control. The Holy Spirit clearly says that a perishable body weighs down the soul.\textsuperscript{17} St Paul therefore, although worn out by his labours, subdued his body by severe self-discipline, and wrote: "I pommel my body and subdue it."\textsuperscript{18}

I recommend to you special moderation in eating and drinking; wine and chastity cannot go together.

5. The haunts, the persons and things of the world present grave dangers for chastity. Keep away from them with all care, and not only in body but also in mind and heart. I do not remember to have read, or to have heard it said that a religious had visited his native place and brought back any spiritual advantage. Thousands and thousands on the contrary there are who, showing themselves unconvinced of this, have tried the experiment, but were bitterly deceived; while not a few found themselves the unhappy victims of their own imprudence and temerity.

6. The exact observance of our holy rules, and especially of the vows and the practices of piety, triumphs over every vice, and is

\textsuperscript{17} Wis 9,15.
\textsuperscript{18} 1 Cor 9,27.
the faithful guardian of chastity. The Christian religion may justly be compared to a strong and fortified city. Isaiah says: "We have a strong city: he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks."¹⁹ The vows and rules of a religious community may well be regarded as so many lesser strong points in advance. The walls and the ramparts of religion are the commandments of God and of his Church. To cause their violation the Devil makes use of every stratagem and deception. But in order to induce religious to transgress, he contrives in the first place to level to the ground the outposts and forts in advance, the rules and constitutions of their order. When the great enemy of souls seduces a religious, and makes him violate the divine commandments, he first causes him to be careless in things of less importance, and then in those of greater moment; afterwards he leads him readily enough to break the law of God, so proving the truth the Holy Spirit proclaims: "He who despises small things will fail little by little."²⁰

Let us then, dear sons, be faithful to the exact observance of our rules, if we are to be faithful to the divine precepts, especially to the sixth and ninth. Let us also with constancy and diligence be solicitous for the exact observance of the practices of piety, which are the foundation and support of all religious orders, and then we shall live chaste, almost angelic lives.

**Brotherly Charity**

We cannot love God without also loving our fellow man. The same precept which commands us to love God commands us also to love our neighbour. In the first epistle of St John the evangelist we read in fact these words: "... And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also."

¹⁹ Is 26,1.
²⁰ Sir 19,1.
In the same verses the apostle warns us that “if one says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar.”

When this brotherly love reigns in a community towards one another and all rejoice in another's good just as though it were their own, then that house becomes heaven itself, and justifies the words of the Prophet David: “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live in unity.” But as soon as self-love gains dominion there, and disagreements and dislikes arise among the members, then that house quickly resembles hell. Our Lord takes great pleasure in seeing brethren dwelling in his house in unum, that is, united in heart and mind, serving God and helping one another in charity. This is the praise given to the early Christians by St Luke, that they so loved one another that it seemed that they had but one heart and soul.

A great deal of harm is done in religious communities by fault-finding which is directly opposed to charity. “A whisperer defiles his own soul and is hated in his neighbourhood.” On the contrary, what edification that religious gives, who always speaks well of his fellow religious, and when occasion arises seeks to excuse his failings. Be careful therefore to avoid all that savours of fault-finding, especially against your companions, and still more against your superiors. It is also a form of fault-finding and rather worse, to put a bad interpretation on virtuous actions or to say they were done with a bad intention.

Be on your guard against telling a companion the evil another may have said of him, for such trouble and rancour arise that may last for months and even for years. What an account these tale-bearers in communities will have to render to God. “A man who

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21 1 Jn 4,20,21.
22 Ps 132,1.
23 Acts 4,32.
24 Sir 21,28.
sows discord among brothers ... is an abomination to him." If you hear anything against another do what the Holy Spirit enjoins: "Have you heard a word? Let it die with you."

Be careful not to vex anyone of your brethren even though it be in jest; jokes which cause displeasure to our brother and give him offence are contrary to charity. Would you like to be derided and laughed at by others as you hold up your brother to be?

Be on your guard too against disputes. About trifles which are mere nothings, disagreements will sometimes arise, from which it is easy to pass to insults and wrangling which destroy unity and offend deplorably against charity.

If you love charity, strive to be affable and gentle in manner to everyone. Meekness is a virtue well loved by Jesus Christ: "Learn from me," he said, "for I am gentle and lowly in heart." Whatever you do or say, show well-mannered kindliness, not only towards superiors but towards all, especially towards those who have offended you in the past, or who look upon you now with an unkindly eye. "Love bears all things." So that he who will not bear another’s defects will never have true charity. There is no man on earth who has not his faults however good he may be. If therefore he wishes others to bear his defects he should begin by bearing those of others, and thus as St Paul enjoins, fulfil the law of Christ: "Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

We now come to the practice: in the very first place, control of one’s temper, so easily lost when there is disagreement; then be careful not to use words which displease; and still more

25 Prov 6,16,19.
26 Sir 19,10.
27 Mt 11,29.
28 1 Cor 13,7.
29 Gal 6,2.
guard against crude and harsh ways of dealing with people, for a rude manner can often be more offensive than insulting words.

Whenever a brother who has offended you comes to ask your pardon receive him well, do not treat him curtly and give a harsh reply; quite otherwise, show true kindness, affection and goodwill.

If it should happen that it is you who offended another, put things right at once and try to remove from the heart of the other all feeling against you, mindful of the teaching of St Paul: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger,”\textsuperscript{30} and do this as soon as you can, overcoming the repugnance that you have in your heart.

Do not be satisfied with just loving your companions with words only, but go out to help them. St John, the apostle of charity, advises: “Let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth.”\textsuperscript{31}

Charity also requires the compliance with the reasonable requests of others. But the best of all acts of charity is to have zeal for our brother’s spiritual good. Whenever an occasion arises for doing good, never say: ‘This is not my business, I shall not meddle with it.’ This is the answer made by Cain, who dared to give answer to God: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”\textsuperscript{32} Everyone is bound when he can do so to save his brother from ruin. God himself commands that we take due care of our fellowman.\textsuperscript{33} Endeavour therefore to help all, both by word and deed and especially by prayer.

It is a great stimulus to charity to see Jesus Christ in the person of our neighbour, and to recall that the good we do to him is regarded by our Lord as done to himself: “Truly I say to you, as you

\textsuperscript{30} Eph 4,26.

\textsuperscript{31} 1 Jn 3,18.

\textsuperscript{32} Gen 4,9.

\textsuperscript{33} Sir 17,14.
did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."\textsuperscript{34}

From what has been said you see how necessary, and how desirable is this virtue of charity. Practise it and you will receive blessings in abundance from heaven.

**Practices of piety**

Just as food nourishes and preserves the body, so do the practices of piety nourish the soul and make it strong in time of temptation; as long as we observe our practices of piety, we shall live in harmony with everyone and we shall see the salesian cheerful in spirit and happy in his vocation. If on the other hand he neglects them, he will begin to have doubts about his vocation and will undergo strong temptations. Church history shows us that religious orders and congregations have all flourished and promoted the good of religion, as long as piety was maintained in vigour among them; on the other hand, we have seen not a few fall into decay, and others cease to exist – and when? Only when the spirit of piety grew lax and their members began to seek the things that were their own, and not the things which are of Jesus Christ,\textsuperscript{35} as St Paul lamented concerning certain Christians.

If therefore, my sons, we value highly the glory of our Society, if we want it to spread and keep its prosperity for the good of our own and for our neighbours' souls, let us be really solicitous never to omit our meditation or spiritual reading, our daily visit to the most holy Sacrament, our weekly confession, our frequent and devout holy communion, the rosary of Our Lady, the little mortification of Friday and similar things. Although each one of these practices, taken by itself, does not seem to be a thing of

\textsuperscript{34} Mt 25,40.

\textsuperscript{35} Phil 2,21.
any great necessity, nevertheless it contributes efficaciously to
the building up of our Christian perfection and salvation. “If,”
says St Augustine, “you would increase and grow great in the
sight of God, begin with things that are the least.”

The fundamental practice of piety which in some way embraces
them all, consists in making the spiritual retreat each year, and
the *Exercise for a Happy Death*, every month.

He who cannot make this latter exercise in common, should with
the permission of his superior make it by himself, and he whose
occupations will not allow him to employ a whole day upon it,
should employ at least a part, putting off such work as is not
strictly necessary to another day. But let all, more or less, follow
these rules:

1. Besides the usual morning meditation, let there be made as
well a half-hour’s meditation, or conference be given in the
evening, and this should deal with one of the four last things.

2. The Confession which all should make on that day should
be more than ordinarily exact, having in mind that it may
indeed be the last, and holy communion should be received as
though it were Viaticum.

3. Let each one reflect for at least half an hour on the progress
or otherwise in virtue achieved during the month, and this
especially with regard to the observance of rule; and let firm reso-
lutions be made.

4. Let all the rules of the Society, or at least part of them, be
read through on the day.

5. It would be well to choose on that day some saint as a protector
for the coming month.

It is my belief that the salvation of a religious may justly be
said to be assured, if he approaches the sacraments every
month and puts his conscience in order as if he were really
about to leave this life for eternity.
If therefore we hold the honour of our Society dear, if we really desire the salvation of our soul, let us be observant of our rule and let us also be exact in the most ordinary things, for he who fears God neglects nothing which contributes to his greater glory.\(^{36}\)

**The “Rendiconto” and its importance**

Confidence in superiors is one of the things which contribute in a special way to the well-being of a religious society, and to the peace and happiness of each member.

By this confidence the members open their hearts to their superior to find relief for the troubles they may have, anxieties connected with their duties cease, and the superiors are able to make provision to avoid unpleasantness and discontent. They get to know the moral and physical strength of the confreres and in consequence can give them those tasks for which they seem best suited. Should any disorder creep in, it is at once discovered and a remedy applied. For this reason it has been laid down that each one should meet with his superior at least once a month. In this connection our Constitutions say that each member should make known with simplicity and readiness his external faults against the rule, progress made in virtue, difficulties met with, and whatever else he feels the need to reveal to receive counsel and comfort.

The chief points with which such a *rendiconto* ought to deal are:

1. health;
2. study or occupation;
3. whether he is able to fulfil his obligations and what diligence he shows;
4. whether he has sufficient time to perform his religious duties and what diligence he shows in fulfilling them;

\(^{36}\) Qo 7,19.
5. how he manages at prayer and meditation;

6. with what frequency, devotion and fruit he approaches the sacraments;

7. how he observes his vows, and whether he has any doubts about his vocation. But, it should be noted well, that the *rendiconto* concerns external matters only and not matters for confession;

8. whether he has any vexations or troubles, or feels any coolness towards anyone;

9. whether he knows of any disorder to which a remedy can be applied, and especially if it is a case of preventing some offence against God.

Here now, are some words of St Francis de Sales on this subject:

“Every month let each one, in a brief and concise manner, open his heart to his superior, and in all simplicity and faithful confidence lay before him all his secrets, with the same simplicity and candour that a child has, when it shows its mother the scratches, bruises, wasp stings it may have received. In this way each one shall give an account, not so much of his acquisitions and progress, as of his losses and failings in the exercise of prayer, virtue and the spiritual life, indicating also his temptations and interior troubles not only for his consolation, but for his humiliation too. Happy are those who sincerely and devoutly practise this rule, which contains a portion of that holy infancy, which is so much recommended by our Lord from which proceeds and by which is preserved all true tranquillity of mind.”

Rectors are earnestly recommended never to omit receiving the *rendiconto* of the members, and let all be persuaded that if they make it well, with perfect openness and humility, they will find in it great relief of soul, and a powerful aid to progress in virtue, and the whole Congregation will greatly profit by it.

One point in which I recommend the greatest clearness is that of vocation. Let no mystery be made about this with superiors.
This is the most important point of all, because on it depends the thread of the life we have to lead. Unhappy he who hides doubts he has about his vocation and determines to leave without seeking good advice and without the opinion of his spiritual director. Such a one might endanger his eternal salvation.

The first reason why it is important and necessary to deal with superiors in all sincerity is because it enables them the better to govern and direct the members. The superior is obliged both to rule and direct; this is his office. To be a Rector and superior is precisely this. But if he does not know them because they are not open with him, he cannot possibly direct and help them with counsel and suggestions.

The second reason which makes what has gone before the more obvious, is that the greater the knowledge the superiors have of the confreres, the greater will be their care and concern to guard and guide them in times of danger and in difficulties of all kinds arising from time and place.

There is a third reason why sincerity and confidence with superiors is important: they are thus the better enabled to arrange for and provide what is best for the whole Congregation of whose wellbeing and honour, together with the honour of each member, by their office they have the duty to take care. When anyone therefore deals frankly with them and gives a full account of himself, the superior while safeguarding the member's honour and never compromising him, can then have regard for the general good of the whole Congregation. But if the member does not so open his heart, he could perhaps expose to danger both his own honour and his own soul, and also the honour of the community itself which depends in some measure on his own.

Very great indeed is the happiness and the satisfaction of a religious who is as an open book to his superior to whom all that disturbs him is well known; if he is charged with office, then he can put his whole trust in God who will come to his
aid and keep him free from trouble. "Lord," he will be able to say, "I did not put myself here; I made known my lack of qualities, my too small spiritual worth: you, Lord, it is who have sent me; you have commanded it. Do you therefore supply for my own shortcomings." With this trust he can say with St Augustine: "Lord, give me what you command and command what you will." God is placed, as it were, under an obligation of giving what he asks. But he who is not open, who does not reveal his weaknesses, what consolation can he expect? It is neither God nor obedience that sends him, but his own will to put himself forward; he is an intruder, neither called nor bidden and he will not succeed.

**Five faults to be avoided**

Experience shows us five faults, which like woodworm destroy religious observance and ruin religious Congregations. They are: an itching for reform; personal selfishness; complaining; neglect of duty; forgetfulness that we work for God.

1. Let us fight shy of all itching for reform. Let us instead apply ourselves to the observance of the rule without being preoccupied with its improvement or reform. "If the Salesians," said our great benefactor Pius IX, "without pretending to make their constitutions better, take care to observe them exactly, their Congregation will flourish ever more and more."

2. We renounce our own self-interest. Therefore, let us not seek our own personal good, but rather let us work with zeal for the common good of the Congregation. We have to love one another, help one another by counsel and prayer; we have to advance the honour of our confreres not as if it concerned just one alone, but as a noble and essential heritage in which we all share.

3. Let us not complain about superiors nor disapprove of the arrangements they make. Whenever we become aware of some-
thing materially or morally wrong, with humility let us point it out to the superiors. They have the duty before God to watch over both persons and things, so that they, and they alone, have to give an account of their government and administration.

4. Let no one neglect his own duty. The Salesians considered together form one single body – the Congregation. If all members do what is expected of them, then things will proceed with order, and give satisfaction; otherwise there will be disorder, disunion, rupture and the final undoing of the body itself. Let everyone do his duty well, with zeal and humility, with confidence in God; let him not yield in defeat if he is called to some sacrifice which costs much. Let him take heart that his endurance and fatigue benefits the Congregation to which we are all consecrated.

5. In all we do, our duty, work, troubles or sufferings, we must never forget that we are consecrated to God; it is for love of him alone we work and from him alone we hope for the reward. The least thing done for his name’s sake is not left forgotten; it is of faith that in his own good time he will give us rich recompense. At the end of our lives as we stand before his judgement seat, he will say, radiant with love: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.”

37 Mt 25,21.
II.  
THE PREVENTIVE SYSTEM  
IN THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG*

On several occasions I have been asked to express verbally or in writing some thoughts about the so-called preventive system, which is in general use in our houses. Through lack of time I have so far been unable to meet these wishes; but as I now intend to print the rules of the houses, which until now have nearly always been used traditionally, I think it opportune to give a brief sketch, which may perhaps serve as an outline to a small book which I am preparing and hope to finish, if God gives me life enough, my sole purpose being to help in the difficult art of the education of the young. Wherefore I shall explain: in what the preventive system consists; why it ought to be preferred; and its practical application and its advantages.

1. In what the preventive system consists  
and why it should be preferred

There are two systems which have been in use through all ages in the education of youth: the preventive and the repressive. The repressive system consists in making the law known to the subjects, and afterwards watching to discover the transgressors of these laws, and inflicting, when necessary, the punishment deserved. According to this system, the words and looks of the superior must always be severe and even threatening, and he must avoid all familiarity with his dependents.

* Regolamento per le case della Società di S. Francesco di Sales, Torino, Tipografia Salesiana, 1877 p. 3-13; [OE XXIX, 99-109].
In order to give weight to his authority the Rector must rarely be found among his subjects, and as a rule only when it is a question of punishing or threatening. This system is easy, less troublesome, and especially suitable in the army and in general among adults and the judicious, who ought of themselves to know and remember what the law and its regulations demand.

Quite different from this and I might even say opposed to it, is the preventive system. It consists in making the laws and regulations of an institute known, and then watching carefully so that the pupils may at all times be under the vigilant eye of the Rector or the assistants, who like loving fathers can converse with them, take the lead in every movement and in a kindly way give advice and correction; in other words, this system places the pupils in the impossibility of committing faults.

This system is based entirely on reason and religion, and above all on kindness; therefore it excludes all violent punishment, and tries to do without even, the slightest chastisement. This system seems preferable for the following reasons:

1. Being forewarned the pupil does not lose courage on account of the faults he has committed, as is the case when they are brought to the notice of the superior. Nor does he resent the correction he receives or the punishment threatened or inflicted, because it is always accompanied by a friendly preventive warning, which appeals to his reason, and generally enlists his accord, so that he sees the necessity of the chastisement and almost desires it.

2. The primary reason for this system is the thoughtlessness of the young, who in one moment forget the rules of discipline and the penalties for their infringement. Consequently, a child often becomes culpable and deserving of punishment, which he has not even thought about, and which he had quite forgotten when
heedlessly committing the fault he would certainly have avoided, had a friendly voice warned him.

3. The repressive system may stop a disorder, but can hardly make the offenders better. Experience teaches that the young do not easily forget the punishments they have received, and for the most part foster bitter feelings, along with the desire to throw off the yoke and even to seek revenge. They may sometimes appear to be quite unaffected but anyone who follows them as they grow up knows that the reminiscences of youth are terrible; they easily forget punishments by their parents but only with great difficulty those inflicted by their teachers, and some have even been known in later years to have had recourse to brutal vengeance for chastisements they had justly deserved during the course of their education. In the preventive system, on the contrary, the pupil becomes a friend, and the assistant, a benefactor who advises him, has his good at heart, and wishes to spare him vexation, punishment, and perhaps dishonour.

4. By the preventive system pupils acquire a better understanding, so that an educator can always speak to them in the language of the heart, not only during the time of their education but even afterwards. Having once succeeded in gaining the confidence of his pupils he can subsequently exercise a great influence over them, and counsel them, advise and even correct them, whatever position they may occupy in the world later on.

2. Application of the preventive system

The practice of this system is wholly based on the words of St Paul who says: Caritas patiens est, benigna est. Omnia suffert, omnia sperat, omnia sustinet.¹ "Love is patient and kind. ... Love bears

¹ 1 Cor 13,4,7.
all things... hopes all things, endures all things.” Hence only a Christian can apply the preventive system with success. Reason and religion are the means an educator must constantly apply; he must teach them and himself practise them, if he wishes to be obeyed and to attain his end.

1. It follows that the Rector must devote himself entirely to the boys; he should therefore never accept engagements which might keep him from his duties, and he should always be with his pupils whenever they are not engaged in some occupation, unless they are already being properly supervised by others.

2. Teachers, craftmasters and assistants must be of acknowledged morality. They should strive to avoid as they would the plague every kind of affection or sentimental friendship for their pupils, and they should also remember that the wrongdoing of one alone is sufficient to compromise an educational institute. Care should be taken that the pupils are never alone. As far as possible the assistants ought to precede the boys to the place where they assemble; they should remain with them until others come to take their place, and never leave the pupils unoccupied.

3. Let the boys have full liberty to jump, run and make as much noise as they please. Gymnastics, music, theatricals and outings are most efficacious means of obtaining discipline and of benefiting spiritual and bodily health. Let care be taken however that the games, the persons playing them as well as the conversation are not reprehensible. “Do anything you like,” the great friend of youth, St Philip, used to say, “as long as you do not sin.”

4. Frequent confession and communion and daily Mass are the pillars which must support the edifice of education, from which we propose to banish the use of threats and the cane. Never force the boys to frequent the sacraments, but encourage them to do so, and give them every opportunity. On occasions of retreats, triduums, novenas, sermons and catechism classes let the beauty, grandeur and holiness of the Catholic religion be
dwelt on, for in the sacraments it offers to all of us a very easy and useful means to attain our salvation and peace of heart. In this way children take readily to these practices of piety and will adopt them willingly with joy and benefit.

5. Let the greatest vigilance be exercised so as to prevent bad books, bad companions or persons who indulge in improper conversations from entering the college. A good door-keeper is a treasure for a house of education.

6. Every evening after night prayers before the boys go to rest, the Rector or someone in his stead shall address them briefly, giving them advice or counsel concerning what is to be done or what is to be avoided. Let him try to draw some moral reflection from events that have happened during the day in the house or outside; but his words should never take more than two or three minutes. This is the key to good behaviour, to the smooth running of the school and to success in education.

7. Avoid as a plague the opinion that the first communion should be deferred to a late age, when generally the Devil has already gained possession of a boy’s heart, with incalculable prejudice to his innocence. According to the discipline of the early Church, it was the custom to give little children the consecrated hosts that remained over after the Easter communion. This serves to show us how much the Church desires children to be admitted to holy communion at an early age. When a child can distinguish between Bread and bread, and shows sufficient knowledge, give no further thought to his age, but let the heavenly King come and reign in that happy soul.

8. Catechisms invariably recommend frequent communion. St Philip Neri counselled weekly and even more frequent communion. The Council of Trent clearly states that it greatly desires that every faithful Christian should receive holy communion whenever he hears Mass, and that this communion should not only be spiritual but also sacramental, so that greater
fruit may be reaped from this august and divine sacrifice (Conc. Trid., Sess. XXII, Chap. VI).

3. Advantages of the preventive system

Some may say that this system is difficult in practice. I reply that for the pupils it is easier, more satisfactory and more advantageous. To the teacher it certainly does present some difficulties, which however can be diminished if he applies himself to his task with zeal. An educator is one who is consecrated to the welfare of his pupils, and therefore he should be ready to face every difficulty and fatigue in order to attain his object, which is the civic, moral and intellectual education of his pupils.

In addition to the advantages already mentioned, the following may be added:

1. The pupil will always be respectful towards his educators, and will ever remember their care with pleasure. He will look upon them as fathers and brothers. Wherever they may go, Salesian pupils are generally the consolation of their families, useful citizens and good Christians.

2. Whatever may be the character, disposition and moral state of a boy at the time of his admittance, parents can rest assured that their son will not become worse; indeed, it can be held as certain that he will always make some improvement. In fact, certain boys who for a long time had been the scourge of their parents, and had even been refused admittance to houses of correction, have changed their ways and habits when trained according to these principles, and begun to live upright lives, and are now filling honourable positions in society, and are the support of their families and a credit to the country they live in.

3. If it should happen that any boys who have already contracted bad habits enter the institute, they could not have a bad influence on their companions, nor would the good boys suffer any harm
from association with them, since there is neither time, place nor opportunity, because the assistant, whom we suppose to be present, would speedily intervene.

A word on punishments

What rules should be followed in inflicting punishments? First of all never have recourse to punishments if possible, but whenever necessity demands stern measures, let the following be borne in mind:

1. An educator should seek to win the love of his pupils if he wishes to inspire fear in them. When he succeeds in doing this, the withholding of some token of kindness is a punishment which stimulates emulation, gives courage and never degrades.

2. With the young, punishment is whatever is meant as a punishment. It has been noticed that in the case of some boys a reproachful look is more effective than a slap in the face would be. Praise of work well done and blame in the case of carelessness are already a reward or punishment.

3. Except in very rare cases, corrections and punishments should never be given publicly, but always privately and in the absence of companions; and the greatest prudence and patience should be used to bring the pupil to see his fault, with the aid of reason and religion.

4. To strike a boy in any way, to make him kneel in a painful position, to pull his ears, and other similar punishments, must be absolutely avoided, because the law forbids them, and because they greatly irritate the boys and degrade the educator.

5. The Rector shall make sure that the disciplinary measures, including rules and punishments, are known to the pupils, so that no one can make the excuse that he did not know what was commanded or forbidden.
If this system is carried out in our houses, I believe that we shall be able to obtain good results, without having recourse to the use of the cane and other corporal punishments. Though I have been dealing with boys for forty years, I do not recall having used punishments of any kind; and yet by the help of God I have always obtained not only what duty required, but also what was simply a wish on my part, and that from the very boys in regard to whom all hope of success seemed lost.
III.

LETTER FROM ROME*

Rome, 10 May 1884

My dear sons in Jesus Christ,

Whether I am at home or away I am always thinking of you. I have only one wish, to see you happy both in this world and in the next. It was this idea, this wish of mine, that made me write this letter. Being away from you, and not being able to see or hear you, upsets me more than you can imagine. For that reason I would have liked to write these few lines to you a week ago, but constant work prevented me. And so, although I shall be back very soon, I want to send you this letter in advance, since I cannot yet be with you in person. These words come from someone who loves you very dearly in Christ Jesus, someone who has the duty of speaking to you with the freedom of a father. You'll let me do that, won't you? And you will pay attention to what I am going to say to you and put it into practice.

I have said that you are always and exclusively in my thoughts. Well, a couple of evenings ago I had gone to my room, and while I was preparing for bed I began to say the prayers my good mother taught me, and whether I simply fell asleep or became distracted I don't know, but it seemed that two of the former pupils of the Oratory in its early days were standing there before me. One of them came up to me, greeted me warmly, and said: "Do you recognize me, Don Bosco?"

“Of course I do”, I answered.

“And do you still remember me?”, the man went on.

“I remember you and all the others. You’re Valfré, and you were at the Oratory before 1870.”

“Tell me”, went on Valfré, “would you like to see the youngsters who were at the Oratory in my time?”

“Yes, let me see them”, I answered, “I would like that very much.”

Valfré then showed me the boys just as they had been at that time, with the same age, build and looks. I seemed to be in the old Oratory at recreation time. It was a scene full of life, full of movement, full of fun. Some were running, some were jumping, some were skipping. In one place they were playing leapfrog, in another tug, and in another a ball-game was in progress. In one corner a group of youngsters were gathered round a priest, hanging on his every word as he told them a story. In another a cleric was playing with a number of lads at “chase the donkey” and “trades”. There was singing and laughing on all sides, there were priests and clerics everywhere and the boys were yelling and shouting all round them. You could see that the greatest cordiality and confidence reigned between youngsters and superiors. I was overjoyed at the sight, and Valfré said to me: “You see, closeness leads to affection, and affection brings confidence. It is this that opens hearts and the young people express everything without fear to the teachers, to the assistants and to the superiors. They become frank both in the confessional and out of it, and they will do everything they are asked by one who they know loves them.”

At that moment the other past pupil, who had a white beard, came up to me and said: “Don Bosco, would you like to see and know the boys who are at the Oratory at the present time?” This man was Joseph Buzzetti.

“Yes”, I replied, “It is a month since I last saw them.” And he showed them to me.
I saw the Oratory and all of you in recreation. But no more could I hear the joyful shouts and singing, no longer was there the lively activity of the previous scene. In the faces and actions of many boys there was evident a weary boredom, a surliness, a suspicion, that pained me. I saw many, it is true, who ran about and played in light-hearted joy. But I saw quite a number of others on their own, leaning against the pillars, a prey to depressing thoughts. Others were on the steps or in the corridors, or up on the terraces near the garden so as to be away from the common recreation. Others were strolling about in groups, talking to each other in low tones and casting furtive and suspicious glances in every direction. Sometimes they would laugh, but with looks and smirks that would make you not only suspect but feel quite certain that St Aloysius would have blushed to find himself in their company. Even among those who were playing, there were some so listless that it was clear they were not enjoying their games.

"Do you see your boys?", asked my former pupil.

"I can see them", I replied with a sigh.

"How different they are from what we used to be", went on the past pupil.

"Too true! What an apathetic recreation!"

"This is what gives rise to the coldness of so many in approaching the sacraments, to neglect of the prayers in church and elsewhere; to their reluctance to be in a place where Divine Providence heaps every possible blessing on their bodies, their souls and their minds. This is why so many do not follow their vocation, why they are ungrateful to their superiors, why they are secretive and grumble, with all the other regrettable consequences."

"I see, I understand", I said. "But how can we bring these youngsters to life again, so that we can get back to the liveliness, the happiness, the warmth of the old days?"

"With charity!"
“With charity? But don’t my boys get enough love? You know how I love them. You know how much I have suffered and put up with for them these forty years, and how much I endure and suffer even now. How many hardships, how many humiliations, how much opposition, how many persecutions to give them bread, a home, teachers, and especially to provide for the salvation of their souls. I have done everything I possibly could for them; they are the object of all my affections.”

“I’m not referring to you.”

“Then to whom are you referring? To those who take my place? To the rectors, the prefects, the teachers, the assistants? Don’t you see that they are martyrs to study and work, and how they burn out their young lives for those Divine Providence has entrusted to them?”

“I can see all that and I am well aware of it, but is not enough; the best thing is missing.”

“All right then. What is it that is missing?”

“That the youngsters should not only be loved, but that they themselves should know that they are loved.”

“But have they not got eyes in their heads? Have they no intelligence? Don’t they see how much is done for them and all of it out of love?”

“No, I repeat: it is not enough.”

“Well, what else is needed?”

“By being loved in the things they like, through taking part in their youthful interests, they are led to see love in those things too which they find less attractive, such as discipline, study and self-denial, and so learn to do these things too with love.”

“I’m afraid you’ll have to explain that more clearly.”

“Look at the youngsters in recreation.”

I looked, and then asked: “Well, what is special about it?”
“You’ve been educating young people for so many years and you don’t understand! Look harder! Where are our Salesians?”

I looked, and I saw that very few priests and clerics mixed with the boys, and fewer still were joining in their games. The superiors were no longer the heart and soul of the recreation. Most of them were walking up and down, chatting among themselves without taking any notice of what the pupils were doing. Others looked on at the recreation but paid little heed to the boys. Others supervised from afar, not noticing whether anyone was doing something wrong. Some did take notice but only rarely, and then in a threatening manner. Here and there a Salesian did try to mix with a group of boys, but I saw that the latter were bent on keeping their distance from teachers and superiors.

Then my friend continued: “In the old days at the Oratory, were you not always among the boys, especially during recreation? Do you remember those wonderful years? They were a foretaste of heaven, a period of which we have fond memories, because then love was the rule and we had no secrets from you.”

“Yes, indeed! Everything was a joy for me then, and the boys used to rush to get near me and talk to me; they were anxious to hear my advice and put it into practice. But don’t you see that now with these never-ending interviews, business matters, and my poor health I cannot do it any more.”

“Well and good; but if you cannot do it, why don’t your Salesians follow the example you gave? Why don’t you insist, why don’t you demand, that they treat the boys as you used to do?”

“I do. I talk till I’m blue in the face, but unfortunately not everyone nowadays feels like working as hard as we used to.”

“And so by neglecting the lesser part they waste the greater, meaning all the work they put in. Let them like what pleases the youngsters and the youngsters will come to like what pleases the superiors. In this way their work will be made easy. The reason for the present change in the Oratory is that many of the
boys no longer have confidence in their superiors. There was a
time when all hearts were wide open to their superiors, when
the boys loved them and gave them prompt obedience. But
now the superiors are thought of precisely as superiors and no
longer as fathers, brothers and friends; they are feared and lit-
tle loved. And so if you want everyone to be of one heart and
soul again for the love of Jesus you must break down this
fatal barrier of mistrust, and replace it with a happy spirit of
confidence. Then obedience will guide the pupil as a mother
guides her baby; and the old peace and happiness will reign
once again in the Oratory."

“How then are we to set about breaking down this barrier?”

“By a friendly informal relationship with the boys, especially in
recreation. You cannot have affection without this familiarity,
and where affection is not evident there can be no confidence.
If you want to be loved, you must make it clear that you love.
Jesus Christ made himself little with the little ones and bore
our weaknesses. He is our master in the matter of the friendly
approach. The teacher who is seen only in the classroom is a
teacher and nothing more; but if he joins in the pupils’ recrea-
tion he becomes their brother. If someone is only seen preaching
from the pulpit it will be said that he is doing no more and
no less than his duty, whereas if he says a good word in
recreation it is heard as the word of one who loves. How many
conversions have been brought about by a few words whispered
in the ear of a youngster while he is playing. One who knows
he is loved loves in return, and one who loves can obtain
anything, especially from the young. This confidence creates
an electric current between youngsters and their superiors.
Hearts are opened, needs and weaknesses made known. This
love enables superiors to put up with the weariness, the anno-
yance, the ingratitude, the troubles that youngsters cause. Jesus
Christ did not crush the bruised reed nor quench the smouldering
flax. He is your model. Then you will no longer see anyone work-
ing for his own glory; you will no longer see anyone punishing
out of wounded self-love; you will not see anyone neglecting the
work of supervision through jealousy of another's popularity; you won't hear people running others down so as to be looked up to by the boys: those who exclude all other superiors and earn for themselves nothing but contempt and hypocritical flattery; people who let their hearts be stolen by one individual and neglect all the other boys to cultivate that particular one. No one will neglect his strict duty of supervision for the sake of his own ease and comfort; no one will fail through human respect to reprimand those, who need reprimanding. If we have this true love, we shall not seek anything other than the glory of God and the good of souls. When this love languishes, things no longer go well. Why do people want to replace love with cold rules? Why do the superiors move away from the observance of the rules Don Bosco has given them? Why the replacement little by little of loving and watchful prevention by a system which consists in framing laws? Such laws either have to be sustained through punishment and so create hatred and cause unhappiness or, if they are not enforced, cause the superiors to be despised and bring about serious disorders. This is sure to happen if there is no friendly relationship. So if you want the Oratory to return to the happiness of old, then bring back the old system: let the superior be all things to all, always ready to listen to any boy's complaints or doubts, always alert to keep a paternal eye on their conduct, all heart to seek the spiritual and temporal good of those Divine Providence has entrusted to him. Then hearts will no longer be closed and deadly subterfuge will no longer hold sway. The superiors should be unbending only in the case of immoral conduct. It is better to run the risk of expelling someone who is innocent than to keep someone who causes others to sin. Assistants should make it a strict duty in conscience to refer to the superiors whatever they know to be an offence against God."

Then I asked a question: “And what is the best way of achieving this friendly relationship, this kind of love and confidence?”

“The exact observance of the rules of the house.”
“Nothing else?”

“At a dinner the best dish is a hearty welcome.”

“With that my past pupil finished speaking, and I went on looking at that recreation with great displeasure. Little by little I felt oppressed by a great weariness that became worse at every moment. Eventually it got so bad that I could resist no longer, and I shook myself and woke up. I found myself standing beside my bed. My legs were so swollen and hurt so much that I could not stand up any longer. It was very late and I went to bed, resolved to write these lines to my sons.

I wish I did not have these dreams, they tire me so much. The following day I was dead tired, and I could hardly wait for the hour to come to go to bed that evening. But I was hardly in bed when the dream began again. Before me once again was the playground, with the boys at present at the Oratory and the same past pupil as before. I began to question him.

“I’ll let my Salesians know what you have told me, but what should I say to the boys of the Oratory?”

“Tell them”, he said, “to realize how much the superiors, the teachers, the assistants, plan and wear themselves out for love of them, since they would not sacrifice themselves so much if they didn’t love them. Let them never forget that humility is the source of all peace of mind; let them be able to put up with each other’s shortcomings, because there is no perfection in this world, only in heaven. Tell them not to grumble because it freezes the heart. But especially, tell them to live in the holy grace of God. If you are not at peace with God, you cannot be at peace with yourself, nor with others.”

“Are you telling me then that among my boys there are some who are not at peace with God?”

“Among other reasons you already know, this is the principal cause of bad spirit. There is no need for me to tell you that you must do
something about it. The one without trust is the one with secrets to guard, the one who is afraid the secrets will become known and bring him shame and trouble. At the same time, if his heart is not at peace with God he will be a prey to restless anxiety, intolerant of obedience, and get upset over nothing. Everything seems to go wrong for him, and because he has no love for himself he thinks the superiors do not love him.”

“But see here, my friend; look how many go to confession and communion here at the Oratory.”

“It is true that many go to confession, but what is *radically* lacking in the confessions of so many youngsters is a firm resolution. They tell their sin but they are always the same, always the same occasions, the same bad habits, the same acts of disobedience, the same neglect of duty. This goes on, month in, month out, even for years and some even continue in this way till they leave school. These confessions are worth little or nothing, and so they do not restore peace, and if a youngster in that state were to be called before God’s judgement seat, it would be a serious matter indeed. But in comparison with the whole group in the house they are only a few. Look.” And he pointed them out to me.

I looked, and I saw those boys one by one. There were not many, but in them I saw things that brought profound bitterness to my soul. I do not want to put such things in writing, but when I come back I want to have a word with each one about what I saw. For the moment I limit myself to saying that it is time to pray and make firm resolutions, with facts and not just words, so as to show that the Comollos, the Dominic Savios, the Besuccos and the Saccardis are still among us.

I put a final question to my friend: “Have you anything else to tell me?”

“Preach to all, young and old alike, that they must remember they are children of Mary Help of Christians. Tell them she has gathered them here to take them away from the dangers of the world,
so that they may love one another as brothers and give glory to God and to her by their good behaviour. Tell them that it is Our Lady who provides them with bread and the means to study, by endless graces and wonders. Remind them that they are at the vigil of the feast of their holy Mother, so that with her help that barrier of mistrust will fall which has been raised between boys and superiors by the devil, who knows how to use it to ruin certain souls."

“And will we be successful in breaking down this barrier?”

“Certainly you will, as long as young and old are ready to put up with some small mortifications for love of Mary and do what I have told you.”

Meanwhile I continued to watch my youngsters, but at the sight of those I had seen heading for eternal damnation I experienced such heartache that I awoke. I still have to tell you many important things that I saw, but I have neither time nor opportunity at present.

And now I must finish. Do you know what this poor old man who has spent his whole life for his dear boys wants from you? Nothing else than, due allowances being made, we should go back to the happy days of the Oratory of old: the days of affection and Christian confidence between boys and superiors; the days when we accepted and put up with difficulties for the love of Jesus Christ; the days when hearts were open with a simple candour; days of love and real joy for everyone. I want the consolation and hope that you will promise to do everything I desire for the good of your souls.

You do not realize how lucky you are in having come to the Oratory. I declare before God: it is enough for a young person to enter a salesian house for Our Lady to take him under her special care. Let us all agree on this then: may the charity of those who command and the charity of those who must obey cause the spirit of St. Francis de Sales to reign among us. My
dear children, the time is coming when I will have to tear myself away from you and leave for eternity. (Secretary's note: at this point Don Bosco broke off the dictation; his eyes filled with tears, not of sorrow but because of the inexpressible affection that was evident from his face and voice; after a few moments he went on.) And so I want to leave you, my dear priests and brothers and my dearest boys, on the road the Lord himself wants you to follow. For this purpose the Holy Father, whom I saw on Friday, 9 May, sends you his blessing from the bottom of his heart.

I will be with you on the feast of Mary Help of Christians, before the statue of our loving Mother. I want this feast to be celebrated with full solemnity, and that Fr. Lazzerio and Fr. Marchisio see to it that you have a good time in the dining-room as well. The feast of Mary Help of Christians should be a prelude to the eternal feast that we will all celebrate one day together in heaven.

With much love, your friend in Christ Jesus.

Father John Bosco
IV.

SOUVENIR OF ST JOHN BOSCO
TO THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

Recommendations given as a souvenir to the salesian religious, 11 November 1875, on their departure from the Church of Mary Help of Christians to travel to the Argentine Republic.*

1. Seek souls and not money, honours or dignities.

2. Be charitable and most courteous towards all, but avoid conversations and familiarity with persons of the other sex or with persons whose conduct is open to suspicion.

3. Do not go visiting, except for motives of charity or necessity.

4. Do not accept invitations to dinner, except for very grave reasons. In such cases arrange for a confrère to accompany you.

5. Take special care of the sick, of the young, of the old and of the poor; and you will win the blessing of God and the goodwill of men.

6. Show respect towards all persons in authority whether civil or religious.

7. On meeting a person in authority, take care to salute him with due respect.

8. Do the same towards ecclesiastics and persons belonging to religious institutes.

9. Shun idleness and disputes, and observe great moderation in eating, drinking and sleeping.

* DB, Ricordi ai primi missionari, ASC 132, quademi-taccuini 5.
10. Love, reverence and respect other religious orders, and always speak well of them. In this way you will be esteemed by all, and will promote the good of our congregation.

11. Take care of your health. Work well, but only do as much as your strength will allow.

12. Let the world know that you are poor in clothing, food and abode, and you will be rich in the sight of God, and will win the hearts of men.

13. Love one another, advise one another, correct one another and do not be carried away by either envy or rancour. Let the good of one become the good of all, and let the troubles and sufferings of one be regarded as the troubles and sufferings of all, and let each one strive to banish or at least to mitigate the sorrows of others.

14. Observe your rules, and never forget the monthly Exercise for a Happy Death.

15. Every morning commend to God the occupations of the day, especially confessions, lessons, religious instructions and sermons.


17. Recommend to the boys frequent confession and communion.

18. In order to cultivate ecclesiastical vocations, constantly inculcate: (a) love of chastity; (b) horror of the opposite vice; (c) avoidance of bad companions; and (d) frequent communion. Always be charitable, gentle and kind.

19. Hear both sides before making up your mind regarding reports and matters in dispute.

20. In time of fatigue and suffering do not forget that we have a great reward prepared for us in heaven. Amen.
V.
FROM THE SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT
OF SAINT JOHN BOSCO*

My dear and beloved Sons in Jesus Christ,

Before leaving this world for eternity, I wish to fulfil a duty towards you and so satisfy an ardent desire of my heart. First of all, I thank you with the most ardent affection of my soul for the obedience you have given me, and for all you have done to sustain and propagate our Congregation.

I leave you here on earth, but only for a short time. I hope the infinite mercy of God will enable us all to meet one day in Heaven. There I await you.

Do not grieve over my death. This is a debt we must all pay; but afterwards, every fatigue sustained for the love of our Master, the good Jesus, will be greatly rewarded.

Instead of weeping, make firm and efficacious resolutions to remain staunch in your vocation until death. Watch, so that neither the love of the world, nor the affection of parents, nor the desire of a more agreeable life induce you to make the great mistake of profaning the sacred vows, and so transgressing the religious profession by which you are consecrated to God. Let none of us take back that which we have given to God.

If you have loved me in the past, continue to love me in the future by the exact observance of our Constitutions.

* DB, Memorie dal 1841 al 1884-5-6, ASC 132, quaderni-taccuini 6.
Your first Rector is dead. But our true Superior, Jesus Christ, will never die. He will always be our Master, our guide, our model. But remember that he, in his own time, will also be our judge and the rewarer of our faithfulness in His service.

Your Rector is dead. But there will be another elected, who will have care of you and of your eternal salvation. Listen to him, love him, obey him, pray for him as you have done for me.

Adieu, dear children, adieu. I wait for you in Heaven. There we shall speak of God, of Mary, the Mother and support of our Congregation; there we shall bless eternally this our Congregation, the observance of whose rules will have powerfully and efficaciously contributed to our salvation.

Sit nomen Domini benedictum, ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum. In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.

... The God of mercy and his holy Mother came to our help in our needs. This was especially true whenever it was a case of providing for our poor and abandoned boys, and even more so when their souls were in danger.

... The blessed Virgin will certainly continue to protect our Congregation and our salesian works if we maintain our trust in her and promote devotion to her.

... Our work, the good and austere behaviour of our confrères will draw and almost compel their pupils to follow their example. Let the preventive system be practised even at the cost of personal and financial sacrifice and we shall have vocations in abundance.

... All salesians living in the same house must be one in heart and soul with the rector.

But let them keep well in mind that grumbling is a plague to be avoided at all costs. Let every possible sacrifice be made, but never tolerate criticism of superiors.
... I do not recommend any special penances or mortifications to you; you will gain great merit and give glory to the Congregation if you are able to bear the sufferings and annoyances of life with Christian resignation.

... Rather than make remarks about what others do, let each one take the greatest care to fulfil the duties entrusted to him.

... All are enjoined and recommended before God to pay particular attention to morality amongst salesians themselves and amongst those who for any reason at all have been confided by divine providence to our care.

... Let no one be able to say: These furnishings do not suggest poverty; the poor do not eat or dress or have rooms like this. Whoever gives cause for remarks of this kind brings disaster upon our Congregation which must be able to pride itself on its vow of poverty.

Woe to us if those from whom we seek alms are able to say that we live an easier life than they do.

... Remember that it will always be a red-letter day when you are able to win over an enemy or make a friend by charity.

... Divine Providence has prepared a happy future for our Congregation and its glory will endure as long as the rules are faithfully observed.

When the desire for ease and comfort grows up amongst us, our pious Society will have run its course.

The world will always welcome us as long as all our concern is for the under-developed peoples, for poor children, for those members of society most in danger. This is our real wealth which no one will envy and no one will take from us.
... Let us never forget that we exist for poor and abandoned boys. Amongst those who know little or nothing of the true God you will see taking place wonders formerly thought incredible but which almighty God will make manifest to the world.

Let us not keep any property other than the dwelling places we need.

When it happens that a salesian yields up his life whilst working for souls, you can say that our Congregation has registered a great triumph and that on it will descend in abundance the blessings of heaven.
INDICES
ANALYTICAL INDEX

- Numbers in heavy type indicate articles of the Constitutions.
- Numbers in ordinary type indicate articles of the General Regulations.

Absences
- "a domo" 165, 10, 166, 3
- occasional of confreres 50
- of the provincial from the province 153
- of chapter members from the general chapter 123
- lawful – from one’s own province 166
- of the rector from his house 172

Action
- apostolic – and vows 61
- Don Bosco, contemplative in – 12

Acts
- of general chapter, validity of 152
- of general council, official organ 110

Administration
v. Temporal goods; Economy; Economer

Admissions
- general procedure 108 165 81
- to novitiate 165 90
- to first profession 165 93
- to perpetual profession, ministries and ordinations 108 117 165
- from another institute 94

Adolescents
- and Dominic Savio 9
- in the aspirantate 17
Adults

- their place in the educative and pastoral community 47

Advancement

v. Development

Affection

- for aged and sick confreres 53

Aged

- confreres in the community 53
- care of – 177

Agreements

- for parishes 25
- for mission territories 23

Alienation

- of the goods of the Congregation 132,1° 188

Animation

- of groups and youth movements 35
- of salesian parish 26
- a duty of salesian authority
- at every level 121
- of the RM with his council 130-138
- of the provincial with his council 161
- of the rector with his council 55 176 178
- of the director of novices 112
- provincial services for – 142,5

Apostle(s)

- Christ – of the Father 11
- salesians – of young 35 96
- young salesians – 46
- imitation of – 72
- call of – by Christ 96
Apostolic
- projects produced by Don Bosco 1
- project of Don Bosco and ourselves 2
- our consecration and our Society 4
- fruitfulness in salesian family 5
- charity 10
- life and penance 18
- animation of groups of – action 35
- renewal of – commitment 88
- creativity 118
- purification of – intentions 90
- concern and prayer 93
- salesian – vocation 96
- Constitutions and – project of the Society 192

Apostolic See
- approves Constitutions and deliberations of general chapter 148
- supreme interpreter of Constitutions 192
- RM representative of – for UPS and vice versa 105
- discharge of business with – 145 109
- consent of – needed for resignation of RM 128

Appointment(s)
- of provincial (or superior of other circumscriptions) 132 158 162 143
- of provincial councillors 132 166 167 106,9 154
- of substitute of member of general council 132 142
- of secretary general 132 144
- of procurator and postulator general 132 145
- of rector 165 177 156 170
- of director of novices 112 165
- of provincial delegate 159 165
- of local councillors 180
- of vice-rector, economer and those responsible for local sectors 183
- of parish priest or moderator 27 157
- of delegate for a delegation of RM 106 138
- of moderator (and technical commission) for general chapter 112
- of precapitular commission 113
- of secretaries and other officials of general chapter 116
- of moderator of provincial chapter 156 168
- of provincial secretary 157 159

Archives
- central, responsibility for 144
- of a province 62 159
- of a house 62 146 178 180 190

Ascesis
- daily 18
- community 52 53 73
- and obedience 69
- and poverty 73 75 58
- and chastity 84 66
- and reconciliation 90
- as a response to the Word of God 90
- in the formation experience 98
- in the use of the means of social communication 44 66

Aspirantate
- characteristics and functions of 17

Assistance, educative
- as an attitude and method 39 115
v. also Presence

Associations
- and groups: promotion of 8
v. also Groups

Atmosphere
- salesian – as family 16 37 5
- of oratory of Don Bosco, a permanent criterion 40
- salesian community – of orientation and vocational growth 37 49 109

Attitudes
- and means of growing in chastity 84
Authority
- service of -
  - style 65 121
  - method 66 121
  - unity 122
  - sharing in 123
  - subsidiarity 124
  - and priestly ministry 121
- of Sovereign Pontiff 125
- of Rector Major 127 104 105
- of general chapter 120 147 104
- of provincial 162
- of superior of vice-province 158
- of extraordinary visitor 104
- of provincial chapter 170
- of rector 176
- of provincial conferences 139

Authorizations
- concerning: real estate; loans; legacies, bequests or donations with obligations attached; establishing annuities, student burses, Mass obligations, foundations; construction, demolition, transformation of buildings 188 165 156,9
- opening or closing houses, modifying scope of existing works or starting unusual works 132 165,5
- new experiments, and substantial changes in the nature of a work 181
- living away from religious house 165, 10
- opening our schools to girls 3 156, 1
- accepting parishes 25
- accepting obligations outside the community 69 35 156, 4
- acts of administration of goods after profession 51
- permanent change of province 151
- change of location of provincial house 153 156,5
- approval of modifications, solutions to economic problems, or other initiatives of importance in the houses 156,12 200
- contracting debts or loans 191
Balance
- of the salesian 15
- of Don Bosco and the salesian 19
- psychological – and chastity 82

Balance sheet
v. Financial report

Banks
- title of account-holders in 187

Baptism
- salesian life a development of 2 60
- religious profession a confirmation of 23
- in the profession formula 24
- development of in the young by service of education 37

Beatification
- causes of – 145

Beatitudes 25 62 75

Bequests, legacies and donations 188,3

Bishop
v. Local Ordinary

Boarding establishments
- form part of works of the Society 42
- characteristics and services 42 15

Bosco, Don
- founder 1 4 8 96 100 192
- at origin of salesian family 5
- our model 21 97 196
- fidelity to 6 118 146 103
- and Mary 8 9
- at origin of salesian spirit 10-21
- and pastoral charity 10
- and union with God 12 95
- and prayer 86 89 91
- and the Church 13
- and predilection for the young 14
- and loving kindness 15
- and family spirit 16 173
- and the preventive system 20 38 39
- and those for whom we work 26 27 30
- and integration and social advancement 31 33
- oratory of – the permanent criterion 40
- and social communication 43
- and the vows 61 71 73 78-79 81-82
- and formation 97
- study of – 21 37 85 91
- monthly commemoration of 75

**Boys in the oratory** 11

**Brother**

v. **Salesian Brother**

**Budget**

v. **Financial Report**

**Buildings** 188,5

**Bulletin, Salesian**

- function of 41

**Bursar**

v. **Economer, local**

**Canonization**

- causes of 145
Catechesis
- fundamental dimension of our mission 34
- in the local educative and pastoral plan 7
- and the salesian parish 26
- study of – in initial formation 82
  v. also Evangelization

Causes
- of beatification and canonization 145

Censorship
- of publications 34

Centre(s)
- for pedagogical and catechetical services 42
- for vocational guidance 16
- salesian – of studies 84
- youth –
  • characteristics 42 12
  • and salesian parish 26
- professional training – 42 13
- for social communication 137
- publishing –
  • setting up of 31
  • collaboration between 33
- for audiovisual production and transmission 31

Chapter, general
- ordinary and extraordinary 149
- nature and scope of 146
- authority and tasks of 120 147
- deliberations of 149
- convocation of 132,1° 143 150 111
- members of 151 114
- preparation of (moderator and technical commission) 112 113 115
- opening of and first official acts 116-119
- presidency of 120
- course of work of 121-123
- transmissions of news of – to conferes 124
- experts and observers at 125
- election of RM and members of general council v. Elections
- constitution of groups of provinces by 154
- requisite numbers of those present 152
- interpreter of Constitutions 192
- closing of 135

Chapter, provincial
- nature and deliberations of 170 132,1°
- convocation of 165,6 172
- competence of 120 171 167
- ordinary and extraordinary – 172
- members of 173
- electors of delegates 174
- election of delegates and substitutes 161 166 169
- modertor of – and those who can be invited 168

Charism
- of Founder, principle of unity 100
- fidelity to – of Founder 126 146
- Marian dimension of salesian – 37
- missionary dimension of salesian – 30

Charity
- of Christ source of our – 15 41 95
- pastoral – in salesian spirit 3 10 14
- Mary model of pastoral – 92
- pastoral – and evangelical counsels 61
- and preventive system 20
- and mission to working classes 29
- inspiration of activities and works 41
- fraternal – in salesian community 50 54 61 194
- and obedience 65-67
- and chastity 83
- and authority 121 161
- in colloquy with rector 49
- and scrutinies 81
- continual growth in 25
Chastity
- and salesian loving-kindness 15
- evangelical meaning of vow of 80
- and salesian mission 81
- and human maturity 82
- and community life 83
- and relationships and friendships 68
- means of approach for growth in – 84
- and insertion in the world 66
- employment of female personnel 67

Christ
v. Jesus Christ

Chronicle
- of the house 179

Church
- our Society in the – 4 6 146
- sense of – an element of salesian spirit 7 13 24
- educative initiation to life of the – 35 47
- the community, expression of – 85
- knowledge of documents of – 175

Church, particular
- solidarity with and service to 42 48 57 157 2 3 84 135
- service to – in non-salesian structures 35

Coadjutor
v. Salesian Brother

Coeducation 3 156, 1

Collaboration
- with the design of God 37
- in the salesian family 5
- between confrères 66
Colloquy
- with the superior 70 49
- during initial formation 79

Commemorations, monthly
- of Don Bosco 75
- of Mary Help of Christians 74

Communal reflection
- in general chapter 146

Communication
- brotherly – in community life 51
- regarding work of confreres 59
- social – v. Social communication
  v. also Information

Communion
- unity of – in the salesian spirit 11
- with all forces in the Church 13
- fraternal – (commitment) 24 46 51
- bonds of fraternal – 50 88 90
- of the Society in the universal Church 59
- fraternal – and profession of the counsels 61
- of goods 73 76
- with dead confreres 94
- in the exercise of a single authority 122
- within a province 157

Community day
- annual (local and provincial) 42

Community, educative and pastoral 47 5

Community, formation 103 109 110
Community, local
- identity of 175 150
- roles in 183-185
- fraternal and apostolic:
  - its value 49
  - bonds 50
  - relationships 51
  - the confrere in 52 53 94
  - the rector in 55
  - open 57
  - expression of mystery of the Church 85
  - listening to the Word 87
  - united by the Eucharist 88
  - in continual conversion 90
  - natural setting for vocational growth 99
- balance in work of 43
- welcoming of visitors to 45
- sectors reserved for confreres 56
- relationship of – with families of confreres 46
- feastday of 42

Community, parish 20

Community, provincial
- annual – feastday 42

Complementarity
- between priests and lay members in salesian vocation and mission 4 45
- in composition of chapters and councils 169

Concelebration 84

Conferences
- episcopal – and salesian mission 48
- provincial –:
  - nature, scope and constitution of 132, 1a 155
  - meetings 139
  - participants 140 141
  - tasks of 142
Confession
v. Reconciliation

Congregation
v. Society, Salesian

Consecration
- nature of our apostolic – 3 195

Constitutions
- a way that leads to love 1 64 196
- particular law of the Society 191
- authentic interpretation and sense of 192
- and vow of obedience 68
- binding quality of 193
- modification of text of 148 152
- study of – in the novitiate 91
- fidelity to 55 103
- and deliberations of general chapter 148

Consultant groups
- economic and administrative 185
- at provincial level (offices, secretariats) 157 160
- at service of general council (technical offices) 107
- at interprovincial level 142

Consultations
- and principle of shared responsibility 123
- for appointment of provincial 162 143
- for appointment of provincial councillors 167 154
- for appointment of rectors 177 170 156
- for constitution of juridical circumscriptions 156

Consultative vote
v. Vote, consultative

Contemplative
- the salesian a – in action 12
Contracts
v. Authorizations, agreements

Contributions
from houses 194 197 201

Conversion
- community in continual – 90
- confères in continual – 99 99
- and retreats 91

Cooperators, salesian
- in the salesian family 5
duties of each community to – 38 39

Copyrights and royalties 57

Co-responsibility
v. Shared responsibility

Correction, fraternal 52 90 121

Council, general
- function and duties of 130 131
- cases in which deliberative vote of – is required 132 106
- composition of 133
- election of members of 132, 1° 141 153
- technical offices and consultant boards 107
- central secretaries 108
- acts of 110
v. also Councillors, general

Council, local
- convocation and duties of 178
- members of 179
- composition of 165,8 178 180
- deliberative vote of 181
- possible modification of structure and roles in 165, 9 182
- meetings of 181

Council, provincial
- composition and duties of 164 155
- cases in which consent of is required 165 156
- cases in which consultative vote is required 157 158
- secretary of 159
- other offices 160
v. also Councillors, provincial

Councillors, general
- for formation 135
- for youth apostolate 136
- for salesian communication 137
- for the missions 138
v. also: Council, general; Councillors, regional

Councillors, provincial
- appointment and duration in office 132, 2° 167
- requirements for eligibility 166
- functions and tasks of 168 169
- consultation preceding appointments 154
v. also Council, provincial

Councillors, regional
- duties of 140 154 135-137
- election of 141,1

Counsels, evangelical
v. Vows

Covenant
- religious profession a confirmation of baptismal – 23

Creativity and flexibility
- components of the salesian spirit 19
- apostolic – 118
- in prayer 86

Cross
- and obedience 71
- acceptance of daily – 90 92

Culture
- formation of – in educative and pastoral plan 6
- formation of youth to – 32 6 13
- and ‘poverty’ of youth 1
- and social communication 43
- attention to working-class – 14
- and the preservation of documentary material 62
- centres for the animation of 84
- and the duties of the regional councillors 136,3
- integration of – with faith and life 114
v. also Formation, intellectual; Updating

Culture, salesian
- during initial formation 85 91 98

Cultures, local
- and salesian mission 7 30
- attention to context of 57 77
- unity of salesian formation and 100 101

“Da mihi animas” 4 85

Daughters of Mary Help of Christians
- in the Salesian Family 5
- service to and collaboration with 37

Deacons, permanent
- formation of 106
Dead
- memory of – confreres 25 54 58 94
- reading of necrology 47
- suffrages for 76
- obituary letters of – confreres 177

Death
- of salesian 54
- of R.M. 143
- of a member of general council 132, 1°, 7
- of provincial 168
- of rector 183
v. also Suffrages

Debts 191 201

Decentralization
- and subsidiarity 124

Decoration
- of houses 77 61 199
- of members’ rooms 55

Degrees and qualification
- obtaining of – during initial formation 83

Delegates
v. Elections

Delegation
- of R.M.: scope, nature and constitution of 154 138
- provincial: constitution and government of 159 165

Deliberations
- of general chapter 148 191
- of provincial chapter 170

Departure
v. Separation from the Society
Detachment
- of heart in Don Bosco and salesians 73 75

Development, total
- in the salesian mission 31
- of young workers 27
- in working-class areas 29
- in the preventive system 38
- inspirational criterion for our works 41-43
- in salesian parishes 26
- in salesian schools 13

Development, personal
- of the young 32

Development, social and collective
- of the young 26 27 33
- collaboration with civil organizations for – 48

Devotion
- to Mary 92

Dialogue
- in salesian family 5
- superiors animators of 44 123
- and shared responsibility in obedience 66 103
- colloquy a privileged moment for 70
- ability or capacity for 104 112 102
- with God and personal freedom 105
- with culture 114
- with cultures not evangelized 18
- with the R.M. 103
- opening of the young to 32
- in the educative community 38
- with God v. Prayer
Difficulties
- of the salesian and trust in God 17
- of the salesian and community 52

Diocese
v. Church, particular

Direction, spiritual
v. Spiritual direction

Director
- of community (USA) v. Rector

Director of novices
- duties of 110
- qualities in and appointment of 112 165,3
- member of provincial chapter 173,6

Directory, provincial 191
- provincial chapter and 171
- for the practices of piety 74
- for formation 87 88 106

Discernment
- community (pastoral) 66 44
- efforts at 119
- responsibility for 69
- of personal gifts 69
- of God’s will 66 87 91 107 146
- of the values of cultures 100
- Don Bosco’s oratory the criterion for pastoral – 40

Discipline
- concern of the vicar general 134

Dismissal
- of a novice 90
- of a member 132,3 194 157, 6
Dispensation
- from the obligations of profession 132, 2º 194

Dominic Savio, St.
- protector of the Society 9

Donations 188,3

Don Bosco
v. Bosco, Don

Don Bosco Volunteers (DBV)
- spiritual assistance of salesians for 40
v. also Salesian Family

Dress
- manner of 62 55

Duration in office
- of Rector Major 128
- of members of general council 142
- of provincial 163
- of provincial councillors 167
- of rector 177
- of director of novices 112
- of elected local councillors 179,3
- of parish priests 28

Duty, duties
- to promote and guide shared responsibility 123
- moral - in use of means of communication 44
- of rector to be available to members 49
- of capitulars to be present at meetings of general chapter 123
- of assembly of the confreres 184

Dwellings
- conditions of 77 55
- parts reserved to confreres 56
v. also Decoration; Furniture
Economer General
- duties of 139 190 192
- election of 141
- period of office 142

Economer, local
- appointment of 183
- functions of 184
- member of local council 179
- general norms concerning 187-191
- norms for local administration 198-202
- training courses for 186
- annual meeting of 194,3

Economer, provincial
- duties of 164 169 193-196
- eligibility requirements 176
- appointment of 166
- training courses for 186
- administrative norms left to the provinces 190

Economic administration
v. Administration

Ecumenism 8 22

Education
- our educative and pastoral service 31-39
- and integral development 31
- and personal development 32
- and social and collective development 33
- to the faith 6 29 34 35 38 45 7 13
- to the faith in non-christian countries 22
- and educational works 41 42
- and social communication 43
and salesian formation 99 102 82 86
- to love 81 6
- to commitment and hope 63
- to vocational choice 37
- collaboration with civil organizations for 48

Educative project
v. Project

Election(s)
- of R.M. and members of general council 128 129 141 143 147 153 126-133
- of delegates and substitutes to general chapter 151 171,5 114 161-166 169
- of delegates and substitutes to provincial chapter 174 186 161-166 169
- of members of local council 180 186
- of chairmen in general chapter 120
- of central commission of general chapter 121

Energy
- in work 65

Entrustment
- to Mary most holy 8

Environment
v. Neighbourhood; Setting

Estate, real
v. Goods, immovable

Episcopal conferences
v. Conferences, episcopal

Eucharist
- unifying strength of community 88
- and chastity 84
- and obedience 66
- in youth pastoral work 36
- daily celebration of 88 70
- presence of – in our houses 88

Evaluations
v. Scrutiny, scrutinies

Evangelical counsels
v. Vows

Evangelization
- and catechesis in our mission 6 34
- and joy 17
- and preventive system 20
- and social communication 43
- and salesian works 41 11-13
- in working-class areas 29
- and missionary activity 30 22
- and integral advancement 31 13 26
- and complementarity of vocations 45
- and practice of the counsels 62 63
- and salesian vocation 96
- central nucleus of educative and pastoral plan 6
- care of lay people responsible for – 29
v. also Education to the faith

Examination of conscience
- daily 90

Exercise for happy death
v. Retreats

Exercises, spiritual
v. Retreats

Experience
- of ecclesial life for the young 35
- of life for educators and youngsters in preventive system 38
- formation experience v. Formation experience
Experimentation 181, 2 142, 4

Faith
- in origin of our Society from God 1
- in the presence of Mary 8
- of Mary and ours 92
- and mutual relationships in the community 16 37 66 94 103
- of Don Bosco our model 21
- and witness of life 62
- and obedience 67 69
- and chastity 80
- and the Word of God 87 91
- deepening of the life of 92 114
- and old age and sickness 53
- education to 6 29 34 35 38 45 7 13 22
- of the people and social communication 43
- in human resources 17
- formation personnel, men of – 104
- and Constitutions 196
- and elections 127
- and communion with dead conferees 94

Family
- spirit: component of salesian spirit 16 51 65
- atmosphere in communities and works 37-38 49 53 56 61 83 103 136
- atmosphere in educative and pastoral community 47
- rector and – of conferees 173
- relationship of conferees with their own – 47 176
- pastoral action in respect of the – 49

Family, Salesian
Mary, guide of – 92
Don Bosco at origin of – 5
our Society in the – 5
vocational service and – 28
Rector Major centre of unity of – 126
provincial and – 147
sharing of mission in – 47 48
and particular Church 48
service to –
  • sensitizing and service of the community 36
  • service and collaboration with the FMA 37
  • duties of each community to cooperators 38
  • relationship with past pupils 39
  • spiritual assistance to DBV and other institutes who are members
    of 40
function of the Salesian Bulletin in – 41
recognition of membership of – 40

Fatherhood, fatherliness
  – of God v. God
  – of Don Bosco 1 21
  – of R.M. 126
  – of rector 55
  – of salesian 15

Feast(s)
  – sense of 17
  – Eucharist as a daily – 88
  – Marian – 92

Fidelity
  – God the source of our – 1 24 195
  – as response to God 22 195
  – to the Gospel 146
  – to our mission 6 44 94
  – to charism of founder 118 126 146
  – to the Constitutions 103
  – daily pledge of 84
  – comfort and easy life a threat to 75

Financial administrator
v. Economer, local
Financial report
- of Economer General 106
- of provinces 192, 196
- of Houses 181, 3 194 202

Flexibility
- component of salesian spirit 19 41
- v. also Creativity

F.M.A.
v. Daughters of Mary Help of Christians

Following of Christ
v. Jesus Christ

Food 55 61

Forgiveness
- daily 16 90

Form of our Society 4

Formation community 103 109 110

Formation experience
- nature and manner of salesian – 98 102 104 109 110 114 119

Formation guides
v. Formation personnel

Formation, initial
- complexity and unity 102
- formation communities 103 78
- formation personnel: role of 104
- the salesian in – 105
- similarity of curricula 106
- periods of – 107 88-102
- colloquy during 79
- flexible timetable during 80
- scrutinies or assessments during 81
- intellectual formation in – 82-85
- pastoral experiences in – 86

Formation, intellectual
- of the salesian:
  • at all levels 82
  • in initial formation 102 104 105 83-85
  • in novitiate 91
  • in immediate postnovitiate 114 95
  • in specific formation period 116 97 98
  • ongoing 118 98 100
- of the young 6
  v. also Culture

Formation personnel
- preparation of 101 78
- role of in formation communities 103 78
- role of 100
- and pastoral experience 86

Formation, salesian
- vocation and 96
- specific direction of 97
- formative experience 98
- personal and community commitment to 99
- unity and diversity in 100
- provincial community and 101 161
- ‘Ratio’ and provincial directories 87
- councillor general for 135

Formation, specific
- of the salesian priest and salesian brother 116
  v. also Salesian priest; Salesian brother

Francis de Sales, St.
- salesian society and 4 9
- the salesian and 17
- in profession formula 24
Fraternal correction 52 90 121

Freedom
v. Liberty

Free time 11 13

Friday
- community penance 73

Friendship
- and salesian loving-kindness 15
- relationships of fraternal – in the community 51 110
- with past pupils 39
- consecrated chastity and 83 68

Frugality
- of life 77

Furnishing
v. Decoration

General chapter
v. Chapter, general

General council
v. Council, general

Generosity
- of young salesians 46

God
- action of, in our Society and its foundation 1 20 31 38 50 60 67 85 105
- union with, an element of salesian spirit 12
- fidelity of –, foundation of our perseverance 195
- meeting with – in fellow men 95
- need of 38 95
- service of – in pastoral charity 10
- relationship of salesian with 11 12 17 20 55 67 72 80 86
  89-90 92-93
v. also Jesus Christ; Holy Spirit; Trinity

Good-night 48 76

Goods, immovable
- acquiring and keeping of 187
- operations concerning 188

Goods, temporal
- the salesian and 74
- administration of – for whose society 139
- relationship with the society 187
- ownership and preservation of 187
- general norms concerning 186-192
- administrative duties of economer general 192
- operations requiring authorization of R.M. 188
- limits of provincial competence concerning 189
- administrative duties of local level 198-202
- administrative duties at provincial level 190 193-197
- administrators of 190
v. also Poverty

Gospel
- salesian reading of 11 98
- and profession of counsels 25 60 72
- preventive system and 20 34
- and integral advancement 31 41 42
- and vocational guidance 37
- and formation experience 97
- general chapter and fidelity to 146
- Jesus Christ in –, our supreme rule 196
v. also Evangelization; Word of God

Government
- fundamental structure of 120 117
- of communities 121
- unity in 122
- shared responsibility in 123
- subsidiarity in 124
- of vice-province 158
- of provincial delegation 159
- power of – of R.M. 127 105
- power of – of vicar general 134 153
- power of – of provincial 162 149
- power of – of vice-provincial 168
- power of – of rector 176
- power of – of vice-rector 183
- ‘ad interim’ of the Society 143
- contributory function of councils in: v. Council

Grace
- our life a – of the Father 3
- and nature in Don Bosco 21
- and nature in the salesian 52 67
- assistance of – in life of salesian 24 96
- the Holy Spirit, source of 25
- celibacy a gift of 80
- recognition of action of 86
- retreats, moments of 91
- development of gifts of 99

Gratitude
- to God the Father 1 11 52 80 93
- to the Lord 195
- to the Holy Spirit 95
- to benefactors 79 76
- to dead confreres 94 76
- celebrated on annual community day 42
- to family of each confrere 47 76

Guests
- welcoming of 56 45
Guidance
- vocational, of the young 37 9
- centres and vocational services 16 17

Guides
- of those in formation v. Formation personnel

Habit
v. Dress

Happiness
v. Joy

Health
- care of 84 43 176
- colloquy and 49
- required for admission to the Society 90

Heart
- of Don Bosco 1 21
- of Church 6
- of Christ 11
- of salesian 15 21
- promptings of – regulate relationships 16
- custody of 18
- sacraments and conversion of 36
- appeal to – in preventive system 38
- aspirations of 49
- salesians one – and soul 50
- open – of community 52
- purification of 61 91 93
- formation of 63
- detachment of 73
- undivided – 80
- pondering in 87
- of Don Bosco’s community 97
- service to be kept at – 18
Help of Christians
- presence in our Society 8
- in formula of profession 24
- recourse to – for growth in chastity 84
- our devotion to 92
v. also Mary

Holidays
- of confreres 50 55 58

Holiness
v. Sanctification; Sanctity

Holy See
v. Apostolic See

Holy Spirit
v. Spirit, Holy

Hope
- sustained by Holy Spirit 1
- given us by Mary 34
- death of salesian and 54
- the salesian, an educator who awakens 63
- liturgical year, time of 89

Hospitality
v. Reception

Hostel
- characteristics and services of 15

Houses
- opening or closing of 132 165
- maintenance of and hygiene in 194
v. also educative community; formation community; neighbourhood; dwellings; atmosphere; setting(s); works; community, local
Identity 2 4

Illness
  - v. Sick

Information
  - promotion of – for shared responsibility 123
  - inside and outside salesian family 33 41
  - internal:
    • at world level 59 103
    • at provincial level 179 196
    • at local level 175 180 182 184
    • on local financial situation 184,5
    • on work of general chapter 124
    • for elections in general chapter 127

Initiation of young
  - to ecclesial life 35
  - to liturgical life 56

Institutes, other religious
  - collaboration with 13 48 84

Insurance 76 190 200

Interpretation
  - of Constitutions 192

Jesus Christ
  - our living rule 196
  - of the Gospel, source of salesian spirit 11
  - personal call by 96
  - radical following of 3 30 60 71 72 80
  - and mission of salesian 31 33 34 36
  - presence of in the community 52 61
  - enthusiasm for 103
  - participation in paschal mystery of:
    • in life according to the counsels 60 63 71
• in prayer and the liturgy 85 88 89
  • in death 54 94
  • community a sign of 57
  • and the formative experience 98 104
  • and the significance of obedience 64 71
  • and the significance of poverty 72
  • witnesses to predilection of – for the young 81
v. also Eucharist

Joseph, St
  • patron of our Society 9
  • in profession formula 24

Joy
  • our – like that of Mary 92
  • in revealing the mystery of Christ 34
  • component of salesian spirit 17 40
  • in the community 37 51 110
  • in obedience 65
  • in poverty 75
  • in chastity 83
  • in prayer 86
  • of pardon 90
  • Sunday, day of 89

Juridical circumscriptions
  • constitution and variety of forms of 156
  • insertion of members in, and transfer between 160

Justice
  • witness to and commitment for 7 27 33 73 79
  • rejection of justice 33

Kindness
  • St Francis de Sales the model 4
  • in fraternal friendships 51
  • with the young 15
v. also Charity; Loving kindness
Kingdom of God
- we work for building of 3 11 18 28 31
- promotion a sign of presence of 33
- evangelical counsels and 63 80

Law, particular
- of the Society and universal law 191
- Society is of pontifical right 4

Lay people
- collaboration with – in Church 13
- associated with our work 29 47 55
- interest of provincial in 148
- opening of our study centres to 84
- care of – in salesian houses 55 199
- and cooperators 38

Legacies 188,3

Lent
- community practice during 73

Letters, obituary 177

Liberty
- and religious profession 63 67
- and initiative of God 105
- atmosphere of – in community 173
- education for 32 36 38 39
- and economic help 79

Library
- maintenance of 62

Life in community
- importance of 49

Liturgal year 89
Liturgy
- initiation of young to 36
- of the Hours and liturgical year in salesian community 85
- of life 95
v. also Eucharist, Reconciliation

Living standard 55 61

Loans 188,2 188 192

Local Church
v. Church, particular

Local community
v. Community, local

Local council
v. Council, local

Local economer
v. Economer, local

Local Ordinary
- collaboration with 13 48 2 25 27 28 35 144 156
v. also Church, particular; Parishes

Love
- undivided for God and confreres 80 81
- for the Church 13
- for the young 14 15 20 195
- for the poor 79
- "make yourself loved" 20
- religious profession a sign of 23 24 62
- growth in 25
- liberating – of Christ realized in work of development 33
- community a sign of 49 50
- brotherly – and practise of vows 61
- and consecrated chastity 63 84
Constitutions, a way that leads to 196
v. also Charity

Loving kindness
- source of salesian – 2 25 49 61 81
- component of salesian spirit 14 15 20
- recipient of 26 61 195
- in preventive system 38 39

Manual of prayer 77

Mary
- in foundation of Society 1
- presence of, in our Society 8 20
- principal patroness of our Society 9
- in evangelization 34
- in salesian life and prayer 84 87 92 74
- in salesian formative experience 98
- model of pastoral work 20 92 98
- FMA and Marian dimensions of salesian charism 37

Mass
v. Eucharist

Mass media
v. Social communication

Master of novices
v. Director of novices

Maturing
- of the young for whom we work 28 32 38
- of confreres 46 52 67 82 98 102 109 113 114 117 118
  81 86 90

Meaning
- pastoral, of religious life 119
- and interpretation of Constitutions 192
Means
- of social communication v. Social communication
- of transport 63
- of work 77
- of formation 119
- of growing in chastity 84

Meditation, daily 93 71 99

Meetings
- and family spirit 51

Mission, those to whom addressed
- primarily and principally poor youth 26
- young workers 27 2
- the young with a call to service in the Church 28
- in working-class area 29
- those not yet evangelized 30
- periodic verification concerning 1
- male and female youth 3
- meeting God in 95

Mission Offices 24 156

Mission, salesian
- of salesian Society 2 3 26
- element of consecration 3
- salesian family continues – of Don Bosco 5
- those to whom – is directed 26-30
- criteria of action for 40-43
- shared responsibility for 44-48 99 175
- and initial formation 82
- and brotherly communion 50
- and old or sick confreres 53
- and obedience 64
- and poverty 73
- and chastity 82
- and prayer 85
- and service of authority 121 126 130
- educative v. Education

Missionaries
- specific preparation and updating of 138 19
- communities of 20
- home leave for 21

Missions
- one of our standard works 6 30 42
- councillor general for 138
- activity for in every province 18
- various forms of missionary activity 22
- contracts with ecclesiastical authorities 23
- mission offices and twinning arrangements 24

Mixed schools
v. Coeducation

Moderator
- of general chapter 112 113 115 117 118 120-122 134
- of provincial chapter 173 156 168

Monthly commemorations
v. Commemorations

Mortification
v. Ascesis; Penance

Movements
- promotion of 35 8
v. also Youth groups

Music 32
Nature
- and grace in Don Bosco 21
- and grace in the salesian 52 67
- of salesian Society 2

Necrology, daily reading of 47

Neighbour, love of 80

Neighbourhood
- attention to cultural context of 41 57 77
- promotion 33

Novitiate
- nature and objectives 110
- erection of 111 132,1°
- place 89
- duration and absences 111
- admissions and dismissals 90 93
- studies during 91
- spiritual exercise 92
v. also Director of novices

Obedience
- gospel meaning of 64
- salesian style of 65
- shared responsibility and 66
- and freedom 67
- requirements of the vow 68
- and personal gifts 69
- and mystery of the cross 71
- norms for absence and work outside community 49 50

Obituary letters 177

Offices, technical and consultant boards
- at service of general council 197
- at interprovincial level 142
- at provincial level 157 160
- for administration of temporal goods 185
Old age
v. Aged

Ongoing formation
v. Formation, ongoing

Opinion
  – of councils v. Vote, consultative

Optimism
v. Joy

Oratory
  – of Don Bosco, permanent criterion for salesian activity 40
  – among the activities of our mission 42
  – characteristics of 11
  – and salesian parish 26

Orientation
  – of salesian formation 97

Pardon
v. Forgiveness: Reconciliation

Parents
  – of the young in educative community 47 5
  – relationship of confrere with his – 46
  – suffrages for 76

Parishes
  – one of works in which our mission is realized 42
  – acceptance of 25
  – characteristics of salesian – 26

Parish Priest
  – appointment and responsibilities of 27
  – stability and rotation of 28
- relationship between rector and - 29
- administrative relationships 30

**Participation**
- in action of God 18
- in paschal mystery of Christ 54 60
- in life and mission of Church 24 31 33 73 80
- in salesian world communion 59
- of superiors in a single authority 122
- in preparation of general chapter 112
- in choice of those responsible for government and in decisions 123
- of conferees in initial formation 78
- in the beatitude of the poor 75
- in life and action of local community 123
- superiors animators of – in community 44 66
- community – and prayer 86 95
- in salesian mission 5 45 47 53 7
- in educative and pastoral plan for the young 5
- in educative and pastoral plan for the conferees 184
- characteristic aspect of our pedagogy 6
- initiation of young to ecclesial – 35 36
- in the life of the young 32 39 95

**Particular Church**
v. Church, Particular

**Paschal mystery**
v. Jesus Christ

**Pastoral activity**
- in initial formation period 115
v. also Pastoral work

**Pastoral animation, charity, service, work etc.**
- motives for 7
- charity at centre of salesian spirit 10 14
- for the young and working classes 26 29
- our educative and – service 31
- preventive system in our – 38
- educative and – project v. Project
- educative and – community 47 5
- discernment 44 161
- and evangelical counsels 61 62 82 49 60 66
- and prayer 95
- and formation 102 115 116 118 82 84 86
- and service of authority 121 161 176 103 142 146 184
- interprovincial coordination of – 142
- collaboration in – of particular Church 42 48 57 2 25 35
- Mary, model of 92 98
- councillor general for youth – 133 136
- preparation and updating for 115 119 10 19 82 100 101 142,3
- in non-christian countries 22
- in social communication sector 31

Past pupils
- in the salesian family 5
  - relationship of community with – 39

Patrimony
v. Property

Patrons
- and protectors of our Society 9

Patterns of life 43

Peace
- commitment for 33 73
- in the salesian 61

Penance
- daily 18 90
- community – 73
- and obedience 71
- and chastity 84
Pensions 76

Permanent deacons
- formation of 106

Perseverance 93 195
v. also Fidelity

Personnel, female
- employment of 67

Personnel, formation
v. Formation personnel

Piety
v. Prayer

Plan
v. Project

Pluralism; Plurality
- of forms in our apostolic action 41
- of context in which we live 118

Poor
- recipients of our mission 29 33 41 118 25
- salesian parish and 26
- salesian school and 14
- social and collective development of 33 43
- solicitude of Mary and ourselves for 92
- solidarity with 73 77-79 196 73
- youth, a sector for whom we work 2 6 11 24 26 33 41 1

Pope
- supreme superior of our Society 125
- ecclesial sense and love for 13
- acceptance of teaching of 125
Postnovitiate, immediate
- nature and objectives of 98 109

Postulancy
v. Prenovitiate

Postulator general
- choice and duties of 132,1 145

Poverty
- gospel significance of 72
- and salesian mission 72 139
- requirements of the vow 74 51-54
- and personal commitment 75 55
- communion of goods 76 56
- witness of 77
- and work 78
- and solidarity with poor 79
- possession of immovable goods 59
- and administration of goods 51
- and service to neighbourhood 60
- food and furnishings 61
- maintenance and services 62 64
- means of transport 63
- copyrights and royalties 57
- will 52
- definitive renunciation of personal goods 53
- competence of provincial chapters in matters of 58
- periodic review of 65

Power
v. Government

Practical training
- nature and objectives of 115
- duration and requisites 96
Prayer
- gift of – and salesian community 85
- demands of 12
- characteristics of salesian – 86
- liturgical of 88-90 70
- personal 93
- and Word of God 87
- meditation in common 71
- community programme of 69 73 74
- rhythm and community practices 72-76
- manual of 77
- periodic assessment of 176
- life as 95
- to sustain vocation of confreres 54 101
- support for vocational guidance 37

Prayer, mental
v. Meditation

Predilection
- for the poor and little ones 11
- for the young 14 81

Preference
- for the young and the poor 2 6 24 26

Prenovitiate
- nature and objectives 109
- duration and method 88

Preparation, immediate
- for novitiate v. Prenovitiate
- for perpetual profession 117

Presence
- of God 12 20 33 84 95
- of Holy Spirit 1 12
- of Mary 8
of Christ in Don Bosco 196
- of Christ in community 45
- complementarity of – in community 45
- among the young 14 20 38 39 119
- in social communication 31
- in non-salesian structures 35
- of externs in community 45
- required for validity of acts of general chapter 152

Preventive system
- component of salesian spirit 20
- in our mission 38
- salesian assistance as attitude and method in 39
- and lay people associated with our work 47
- fidelity to 136
- in practical training 115

Priest
v. Salesian priest

Priority
- social communication an apostolic 43

Procurator general
- appointment and duties of 132,1° 145

Procures
v. Mission Offices

Profession, salesian religious
- its significance 3 23 195
- formula of 24
- temporary 113 117
- perpetual 117
- source of sanctification 25
v. also Admissions
Professional competence
- care of 118 119

Programming, community
- responsibility 123
- and absences of confreres 50
- of rhythm of prayer 69
- periodic, in formation communities 78
- annual, of life activities 181 184 202
- provincial, of personnel 10 102

Project
- apostolic, of Don Bosco 2
- of God, for salesian Society 1 2
- of life:
  - of Don Bosco 21
  - of the salesian 99
- educative and pastoral:
  - at provincial level 44 4-10
  - at local level 44 4-6 184

Promotion
v. Advancement

Promulgation
- of deliberations of general chapter 148

Property
- personal: material goods 74

Province(s)
- nature and purpose of 157
- change of 151
- erection or suppression of 132,1° 156
- groups of 148 149
v. also Conferences, provincial
Provinces, groups of
- scope, nature, constitution of 154 138

Provincial
- duties and responsibilities of 108 161 144 153 160
- consultation for appointment of 143
- appointment, eligibility, powers of 132,1° 162
- period of office, transfer of 163
- relationship of, with R.M. 161 163 167 24 25 144
- relationship of, with salesian parish priests 27 28
- relationship of, with rectors 145 179
- relationship of, with local ordinary 25 28
- cases needing deliberative vote of provincial council 156
- cases needing consultative vote of provincial council 157, 158
- administrative duties 190 193 194 196 197 201 202
- change of location of provincial house 153
  - and mission offices or twinning arrangements 24
  - and promotion of social communication 31

Provincial chapter
v. Chapter, provincial

Provincial community
v. Community, provincial

Provincial council
v. Council, provincial

Provincial councillors
v. Councillors, provincial

Provincial delegation
v. Delegation

Provincial directory
v. Directory, provincial
Provincial secretary
v. Secretary, provincial

Publications
- censorship of 34

Qualification and requalification
- of confreres 119 100
- of lay collaborators 148

Qualifications, study
v. Degrees and qualifications

“Ratio fundamentalis institutionis et studiorum” 87

Real estate
v. Goods, immovable

Reception
- of young people 15 16 37 40
- of confreres 16 23 52 56 66 101 21 45 49
- of lay people associated with our work 47
- of teaching authority 125 101 103
- of the values inherent in different cultures 7 17 30 57
- of the gifts of God 80 87

Recipient (of mission) 26-30

Reconciliation, sacrament of
- sacrament of conversion 85 90
- permission of provincial for ministry of 152

Rector
- functions and duties of 176 172-179
- consultation for appointment of 170
- eligibility and duration in office 177 171
- relationship with local council 173 180 181
relationship with parish priest 29
relationship with provincial 179 181
and administration of local goods 198 200-202
meeting of rectors of province 145
transfer of 165,2

Rector Major
function and powers of 126 127
eligibility requirements 128 129
election of 128 153
resignation of 128
relationship with Congregation and confreres 103
relationship with UPS 105
relationship with general council 131
ordinary and extraordinary visits 104
interpreter of the Constitutions 192
cases in which R.M. needs vote of general council v. Vote

Redimensioning 1

Reflection
communal in general chapter 146

Regional Councillors
v. Councillors, Regional

Regulations, general
and competence of provincial chapters 170 171 173 161
and competence of rector 176
and administration of temporal goods 190
and particular law of the Society 191

Relaxation 43

Renewal
continual personal effort for 99 101
times for – of confreres 91 102
criteria for – of activities and works 40 41
of dedication to divine will 66
of religious sense of life 119

Renunciation
- definitive, of personal goods 74 53

Report, administrative
- of the Congregation, 192
- of the province 196
- of the houses 202

Report, financial
v. Financial report

Resignation
- of Rector Major 128

Responsibility
- of salesians in salesian family 5
- in the community 99
- and obedience 66 67
- and poverty 75 59
- of formation personnel 104
- progressive personal – in initial formation 99 105
- education of young to 33 35 38 15
- shared v. Shared responsibility

Retreats
- monthly, quarterly and yearly 91 72
- in novitiate 92
- houses for 42

Revelation
- of God’s will 47

Revision, ecclesiastical
- of publications 34
Rosary, daily 92 74

Royalties and copyrights 57

Sacraments
- meeting with Christ in 36
v. also Baptism; Eucharist; Reconciliation

Sacrifice
- in obedience 69 71
- in poverty 75
- in work 78

Salesian Brother (Coadjutor)
- his specific contribution to salesian mission 45
- equivalent curriculum of formation 106
- specific formation of 116 98
- in chapters and councils 169

Salesian Bulletin
v. Bulletin, Salesian

Salesian Cooperators
v. Cooperators, Salesian

Salesian deacon (permanent)
- formation of 106

Salesian Family
v. Family, Salesian

Salesian formation
v. Formation, salesian

Salesian priest
- his specific contribution to salesian mission 45
- specific formation of 116 97
- and service of authority 121
Salesian Society
v. Society, salesian

Salesians, young
- specific contribution of 46
- aspirants of 103
- care of 161

Salvation
- of youth 1 12 20 21
- our work in the Church as sacrament of 6
- our mission in God’s design for 31
- salesian community as sign of – of Christ 57
- Mary in the history of 92

Sanctification, Sanctity
- typical – of Don Bosco 1 21
- the mission a way to 2
- profession a source of 25
- in service of obedience and authority 65
- initial formation a time of 105

School, salesian
- characteristics 13
- caters for working classes 14
- provides service to neighbourhood 14

Scripture, sacred
v. Word of God

Scrutiny, Scrutinies
- of realization of delibrations of general chapter 171,3
- of directives of provincial chapter 167
- of annual local programme 184
- during initial formation 81
- of pastoral experiences during initial formation 86
- of insertion of lay people in our works 148
- periodic of province re apostolic work 58
- periodic of province re those for whom we work 1
- periodic re poverty 65
- periodic re prayer 174
- periodic of own personal activity 19
- periodic of formation communities 78
- periodic of validity of salesian schools 13
- periodic of validity of the different works 41

Secretaries
- central, depending on R.M. 108

Secretary general
- appointment, duties, duration in office of 132,114
- responsible for Acts of General Council 110

Secretary, provincial 159

Separation from the Society 194 54
v. also Dismissal; Dispensation

Service
- of God 10
- of Gospel 72
- of brethren 73
- to mission of Church 6
- permanent – to youth 21 23
- educative and pastoral – to youth 38 41
- opening of young to 32 36
- our works at – of others 77
- of authority v. Authority

Setting(s)
- working-class context of our mission 6 7 27 33 119 4
- service in particular youth – 41
- our works as educative – 11 12 14 15 22
Shared responsibility
  - for the mission 44-48 175 123 35
  - in obedience 66
  - and participation 123
  - in community commitment 99 101 123 172 175
  - in formation communities 103 104 78 79 81
  - of those for whom we work 5 6 15
v. also Responsibility

Sharing
v. Participation

Shepherd
  - Christ, the Good – 45
  - salesian draws on love of Good – 95
v. also pastoral animation etc.

Sick
  - community and 52 53
  - rector and 176

Signs of times
  - attention to 19
  - in evaluation of works 41
  - discernment of 119 146

Silence
  - periods for 43

Simplicity
  - in dress 55

Smoking 55

Social communication
  - a salesian apostolic priority 6 43
  - promotion of personnel and services in 31
- education of youth to use of 6 32
- information and collaboration concerning 33
- revision of publications 34
- vigilance concerning use of 44 66
- one of tasks of provincial conferences 142
- discreet and prudent use of 83
- councillor general for 137

**Society, civil**
- education of youth for 26 27
- social import of salesian work 33
- cooperation for a – more worthy of man's dignity 33
- animation of groups for social action 35
v. also *Development*

**Society, Salesian**
- origin of 1
- nature and mission of 2 44
- form of 4
- on pontifical right 4
- in salesian family 5
- in Church 4 6
- in contemporary world 7
- presence of Mary in 8
- patrons and protectors of 9
- and personal vocation of salesian 22 23
- and missionary work 30
- solidarity of provinces with 58
- significance and style of obedience in 64 65
- communion of goods in 76
- chastity a distinctive sign of 81
- fundamental structures of 120
- authority in 121 122
- Pope, supreme superior of 125
- R.M. Superior of 126
- and temporal goods 139 187
- particular law of 191 192
- and parishes 25 ff.
- incorporation in 23 107 93 94
Indices

- separation from 194 57
  v. also Government; Information; Unity

Solidarity

- with the world and its history 7 39
- between provinces and in the salesian family 58
- economic – in province 76 58 197
- and communion of goods 76
- in apostolic initiatives 59
- with mankind, and especially the young 95
- with the poor 79

Spirit, family

v. Family

Spirit, Holy

- Action of, in Don Bosco and in our Society 1 2 3 21 146
- attention to 12 64 95 99 146
- and formation 96 99
- action of, a permanent source for professed 25
- profession of counsels and 60

Spirit, salesian

- constituent elements of:
  • pastoral charity 10
  • Christ of the Gospel 11
  • union with God 12
  • sense of Church 13
  • predilection for the young 14
  • salesian loving-kindness 15
  • family spirit 16
  • optimism and joy 17
  • work and temperance 18
  • creativity and flexibility 19
  • preventive system 20
  • Don Bosco the model 21
- lay people and deepening of 47
- in formation communities 103
Spiritual direction
- of the young 37
- in formation communities 78 79
- openness of conferees to 84 99
- community – 175
- rector, spiritual guide of community 55 70 104 174
- in preparation for novitiate 109
- director of novices, spiritual guide 112
- during period of temporary profession 113

Spiritual reading 71

Statute
- for mission offices 24

Structures
- fundamental – of our Society 120
- at world level:
  - R.M. 126-128 103-106
  - general council 130-145 107-110
  - general chapter 146-152 111-134
- at regional level: 154-155 135-142
- at provincial level:
  - juridical circumscriptions 156-159
  - provincial 161-163 143-153
  - provincial council 164-169 154-160
  - provincial chapter 170-174 161-169
- at local level:
  - rector 176-177 170-179
  - local council 178-185 180-183
  - assembly of conferees 186 184

Studentates
- preferred settings for formation 95 97

Studies
v. Formation, intellectual
Subsidiarity
  - and decentralization 124
Subsidies 76
Suffrages 76
Sunday
  - day of paschal joy 89
Superior
  - and salesian style of authority 65
  - and exercise of shared obedience 66
  - manifestation of God's will 67
  - and requirement of vow of obedience 68
  - and responsibility for discernment 69
  - and colloquy 70
  - at various levels 120
  - supreme, the Sovereign Pontiff 125
  - the R.M. 126
v. also Government
System, preventive
v. Preventive system
Temperance 18
Temporal goods
v. Goods, temporal
Testament
v. Will
Testimony
v. Witness
Theatre 32
Tradition(s), salesian
- obedience and authority in 65
- chastity in 81
- that rector be a priest 121
- and juridical circumscriptions 156
- spiritual riches of 192
- of “good night” 48
- and smoking 55
- to be studied in novitiate 91

Training, practical
v. Practical training

Transfer
- of provincial 163
- of rector 165
- of a member to another circumscription 160

Trinity, Holy
- and community life 49

Truth
- education of young to 32

Trust
- in family spirit 16 38 65
- of salesian in Father 17 72
- of salesian in Mary 84
- of Don Bosco in prayer 86
- of confrere in community 99
- atmosphere of – in novitiate 110
- mutual – between confrere and rector 49

Twinning
- competence with regard to 24
Union with God
- in Don Bosco 21
- in salesian spirit 12 95

Unity
- of spirit in Salesian Family 5
- of Congregation and formation 97 100
- of Congregation in diversity of cultures 100
- and government of Society 65 120 122 124 130
- R.M. centre of 126
- general chapter sign of 146
- of fraternal communion 11
- in local community 53 55 85 88 99 103 175
- bonds of 50 88
- with dead confreres 94
- and decentralization 124
v. also Unity, vital

Unity, vital
- in Don Bosco 21
- in every confrere 3 12 21 91 102
- in the young 37
- in initial formation 102 114 115

University, Salesian Pontifical (UPS)
- relationship with R.M. 105

Updating
- theological, pastoral, educational of confreres 118 119 10 100
  142 173 184, 3
- of missionaries 138 19
- of works 40 41 13
- in field of social communication 142

Vocations
v. Holidays
Values
- opening to – of different cultures 7
- opening to – of world 17
- of Gospel, basis of our life 60
- missionary assumes – of people not yet evangelized 30
- opening of young to authentic – 32
- witness to – of work 78

Vicar
- of R.M. (Vice General)
  • duties in general council 134
  • governs ‘ad interim’ 143 150 112-115 120
- of provincial (vice-provincial):
  • appointment 167
  • eligibility requirements 166
  • consultation before appointment 154
  • functions of 164 168
- of rector (vice-rector):
  • appointment 183
  • functions and specific duties of 179 183 182

Vice-province
- nature of and method of government 132,1° 158

Visits, Visitations
- ordinary and extraordinary of R.M. 104
- provincial 146

Vocation(s)
- Jesus at origin of our 96
- salesian – and Church 5
- salesian – and contemporary world 6
- one salesian – lived in different ways 100
- common – and shared responsibility 122
- salesian – and predilection for young 14
- and Word of God 87
- and community life 49
- development of personal – of salesian 22 25 98 99 101 113 119
- and salesian formation 96-98
- development of – of the young 37
- care of 6 28 58
- guidance of young to vocational choice 37 9 16
- care of adult – 28
- community, promoter of 16 57

Vocational
- guidance 37 9 16 17
- community setting for – growth 99
- choice before novitiate 110
- development in parishes 26

Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB)
v. Don Bosco Volunteers (DBV)

Vote
- deliberative (consent required):
  • of general council 132,1° 188 106
  • of general council in number not less than five 132,2°
  • of provincial council 165 156 193
  • of local council 181 200
- deliberative (collegial) of general council 132,3°
- consultative (opinion required):
  • of provincial council 188 157
  • of local council 188 181

Vows
- and following of Christ 60
- and fraternal communion 50
- and brotherly and apostolic love 61
- and witness 62 63
v. Obedience, poverty, chastity for individual vows

Welcome
v. Reception

Will (Testament) 52
Will of God
- at origin of salesian Society 1
- and obedience 64 66 67
- attention to 89
- discernment of 66 87 91 107 121 146

Witness
- of family spirit 16
- for justice and peace 33
- of salesian community for vocational guidance 37
- to presence of God in our way of life 62
- to world to come 63
- of our poverty 73 77
- to the value of work 78
- prayer and 86
- to the charity of God 95
- to sustain and renew the vocation of brethren 101

Women, employment of 67

Word of God
- community listening to 36 66 85 87 88
- a call to continual conversion 90
- special moments for hearing 91
- during the novitiate 91

Work
- and temperance: elements of salesian spirit 18 24
- organized 18 43
- as expression of poverty 78 64
- and prayer 95
- personal instruments of 58
- care of young people in world of 27 2

Working class
- a sector for whom we work 6 7 119 25
v. also Poor
Works of the Congregation
- permanent criterion of discernment 40
- inspirational criteria 41 77
- kinds of activity and work 42 11-35
- and provincial community 58
- modifications to scope of 132 165,5 181,2

World
- salesian mission in 5 6 7 37 62 76 95 130 69
- opening to values of 17 39 45 57 196

Young salesians
v. Salesians, young

Youth; Young
- Don Bosco for 1 2 14 19 20 21
- sent by God to 3 15 24
- predilection for, an element of salesian spirit 14 17 39
- service to, our life project 14 21 23 96
- our mission directed to poor – 2 6 8 15 23-26 61 118
- knowledge of 39 86 119 2
- love of, and chastity 81
- apostles of 20 35
- discovery of fruits of Spirit in 95
- in world of work 27 2
- care of – called to service in the Church 28
- in educative community 47
- in difficulty 42
- educative and pastoral service to 31 32 39 98 142,3
- initiation of, to ecclesial life 35
- initiation of, to liturgical life 36
- presence among 14 20 39 119
- the vows and our service to 61
- and perseverance of salesian 195
v. also Development
Youth Centre
v. Centre

Youth groups
- promotion of 35 42 8
- in oratories and youth centres 11 12
- in hostels and boarding establishments 15
- for vocational guidance 16

Youth movements
v. Movements; Youth groups

Youth pastoral work
v. Pastoral; Youth

Zeal
- inspired by St Francis de Sales 4
- for people not yet evangelized 30
- of Don Bosco and salesian to obtain help for needy 79
GENERAL INDEX

Presentation ............................................................................................................. 5
Presentation of the third edition ................................................................. 8
Signs and abbreviations .................................................................................. 10

CONSTITUTIONS
of the Society of St Francis de Sales

FOREWORD ........................................................................................................... 13

First Part:
THE SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO IN THE CHURCH
   I. The Society of St Francis de Sales ............................................. 17
   II. The Salesian spirit ............................................................. 23
   III. The profession of the Salesian ........................................... 30

Second Part:
SENT TO THE YOUNG – IN COMMUNITIES –
FOLLOWING CHRIST
   IV. Sent to the young .............................................................................. 37
       Those to whom our mission is directed ...................................... 37
       Our pastoral educational service .............................................. 40
       Criteria for Salesian activity ..................................................... 45
       Those who share responsibility for the mission .................. 48
   V. In fraternal and apostolic communities ........................................ 52
   VI. Following Christ, obedient, poor and chaste ............................ 59
       Our obedience ........................................................................... 61
       Our poverty ............................................................................... 66
       Our chastity .............................................................................. 71
   VII. In dialogue with the Lord ............................................................... 75
Third Part:
FORMED FOR THE MISSION
OF PASTORS AND EDUCATORS

VIII. General aspects of our formation ......................................... 85
    Salesian formation .............................................................. 85
    Initial formation .................................................................. 88

IX. The formative process ............................................................ 92

Fourth Part:
THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY
IN OUR SOCIETY

X. General principles and criteria ............................................... 101
XI. Service of authority in the world community ....................... 104
XII. Service of authority in the provincial community ............... 117
XIII. Service of authority in the local community ....................... 126
XIV. Administration of temporal goods ...................................... 131

CONCLUSION ........................................................................... 134

GENERAL REGULATIONS

First Part:
SENT TO THE YOUNG – IN COMMUNITIES –
FOLLOWING CHRIST

I. Those to whom our mission is addressed ................................. 141
II. Our pastoral educational service ........................................... 143
III. Activities and works ............................................................ 146
    The oratory and the Youth centre ....................................... 146
    The school, vocational training centres and
    institutions of higher education ....................................... 147
    Hostels and boarding schools .......................................... 148
   Initiatives at the service of vocations .................................. 148
    The missions .................................................................... 149
Indices

Parishes ................................................................. 151
Social communication ............................................. 153
Service in non-salesian structures ......................... 155

IV. Service to the Salesian Family .............................. 156

V. Fraternal and apostolic communities ...................... 159

VI. Following Christ, obedient, poor, chaste ............... 161
   Our obedience ...................................................... 161
   Our poverty ....................................................... 162
   Our chastity ..................................................... 167

VII. In dialogue with the Lord .................................... 168

Second Part:
FORMED FOR THE MISSION
OF PASTORS AND EDUCATORS

VIII. General aspects of formation ............................... 175
   Formation communities ........................................ 175
   Intellectual formation ......................................... 176
   Pastoral experience ........................................... 177
   Practical guide for formation ................................. 178

IX. The formation process ........................................... 179
   Immediate preparation for the novitiate .................... 179
   The novitiate .................................................. 179
   Formation after the novitiate ................................. 181
   Ongoing formation ............................................. 182

Third Part :
THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY
IN OUR SOCIETY

X. The service of authority in the world community .......... 187
   The Rector Major and his council ........................... 187
   The general chapter .......................................... 191
   Regional structures ............................................. 198

XI. The service of authority in the provincial community ... 202
   The provincial and his council ............................... 202
   The provincial chapter ....................................... 208
XII. The service of authority in the local community ........ 214  
   The rector and his council ...................................... 214  
   The assembly of the confreeres ................................. 218  

XIII. The administration of temporal goods ...................... 220  
   General norms ....................................................... 220  
   At world level ...................................................... 223  
   The provinces ...................................................... 223  
   The houses .................................................................. 225  

WRITINGS OF DON BOSCO  

   I. To the salesian confreeres ..................................... 231  
   II. The Preventive System in the education of the young .. 250  
   III. Letter from Rome ................................................ 258  
   IV. Souvenir of St John Bosco to the first missionaries ..... 269  
   V. From the spiritual testament of St John Bosco .......... 271  

INDICES  

   Analytical index ...................................................... 277  
   General index .......................................................... 344