



# Don Bosco's University

by Fr Renato Butera, sdb

There is one place in the Salesian Congregation with a very special meaning, characterised by its international nature and what has always been called 'family spirit' in the Salesian tradition. Those who live and study there know this. They do not need to belong to the Salesian Family. The students, as they themselves tell us, experience and share it with others who have made the same choice, a choice which means being formed as individuals and as professionals for the future in one of six faculties at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS), Rome: (Theology, Educational pedagogy and psychology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Christian and Classical Literature, Communication Studies, to which we can add the Youth Ministry and Catechetics Schools). The UPS was founded as an institute in 1940. On May 24, 1973,

Pope Paul VI elevated it to the status of University with his *Motu Proprio*, 'Vitae Magisterium'.

Now over these 70 or so years of its existence, the UPS has delivered to society, the Church, the Congregation, the Salesian Family, not only well-developed human beings, but also a host of pastors and leaders, professionals and experts, in short, the 'good Christians and upright citizens' whom Don Bosco dreamt of, who contribute to building up a 'civilization of love' (Paul VI). The popes, Benedict XVI in particular, have highlighted the mission and the specific role that the UPS plays in the Church and society: the special attention given to the study and resolution of issues concerning educational and pastoral activity, especially among the young and ordinary people, according

to the spirit of Don Bosco.

Many vocations, priestly, religious and lay, have been formed in it. They come from all corners of the earth and from every continent. Students at the UPS come from at least 90 different countries: a range of cultural expressions united by a single creed which makes the educational mission of the University even more universal in nature. This feature makes it special when it is compared with many like institutions.

The UPS is therefore Don Bosco's University in the fullest sense, not only because it deals with approximately 2000 students each year (not counting the thousands enrolled in the 28 centres connected with it), but because it forms teachers, youth leaders, experts who in turn devote the wisdom and competence they have gained to the service of the multitudes of young people they discover when they return to the place from which they came and for which they have now been prepared.

Academic life at the UPS applies Article

