A Companion to the Revised SSCS

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1 Introduction

You now have the revised SSCS in hand, in printed or digital version of one or other kind. Is it so vastly different from the original 2005 first edition of the framework for Salesian communication, produced under the auspices of the then Fr Tarcisio Scaramussa and the Social Communication Department?

This is a question that deserves an answer, and given that I was intimately involved in the drafting of the original edition, and perhaps even more so in the long process that led up to the second, I feel that I am certainly in a position to offer some insights which can suggest an answer.

The process which led to the second edition was exhaustive, but at no point did we believe that we had the definitive edition. You will sense this in much of the vocabulary: *dynamic, ecosystem* are just two words that suggest ongoing change and development. For this reason we have reduced the print run to ensure that we will not be left with many useless copies in a few years time; there were six years between the first and the second edition, and we envisage less time between this and the third. We have also ensured that the SSCS is available in easily adjustable digital editions. But the real point to make here is that if any confrere or lay partner around the Salesian world wanted or needed to say something about the framework, then given the process and the two year revision period, he or she had every opportunity to do so. We therefore felt that the quality and quantity of contributions, and a good degree of consensus warranted a pause, a print run and a declaration of the 'second edition'! So here it is.

2 So, is it new or is it not?

Maybe I should attempt to answer the question first off, then you can judge for yourself. Of course, it depends on which way you look at it. If you have the booklet in hand you will note that it is thicker than the previous edition. But if you do a 'numbers' count for Part One (SSCS), you will find that the first edition had 226 'paragraphs' or items, and the second has 216. We did make a determined effort to avoid repetition, simplify things where possible, and yet we have a larger booklet! A quick glance will tell you why - we have added in at least two features meant to aid the reader: a *glossary of terms* and an *alphabetical index*, this latter being of particular assistance in the case of the printed version, less so for the digital versions where search facilities will achieve the same result. But the other significant addition is Part Two, the 'Guidelines' produced jointly by the Formation and Communication Departments several years back. We were well aware that this important document had not received the prominence due to it, and that it was therefore largely unknown. We trust that including it in the SSCS will remedy that situation.

Another approach to the question will take the rest of this 'Companion' to explain. Fr Filiberto, in his preface, indicates that it is a *renewed ver-*

sion... not a revolution!, and while that is true, he quickly goes on to say that this renewed version *seeks to promote a new mindset in the Congregation*, then spells that out in terms of teamwork, formation, lay involvement, unified criteria leading to appropriate and flexible action. Maybe we are placing our bets on both possibilities - it is not so new, but then it is new! I think the weight of evidence, however, lies on the second. If SSCS were a horse, I'd be placing my bets carefully. But maybe another metaphor is more appropriate: let's call it, only for the purposes of this Companion though, SSCS 2.0. This offers us a handy shorthand for what follows.

3 Every new element has its own story

I shall move ahead systematically but discursively, since every new element in SSCS has its own story, a story I could not help but see from the inside because my role in the revision was that of a clearing-house initially - I collected the contributions, then sent them out again more widely to receive further reflections, then finally as redactor, as it required someone to put it all together at the end. There were also the crucial days together as an Advisory Council, with representation not only from key communication 'players' around the Salesian world from every continent, but with significant representation also from the Youth Ministry, Formation and Missions Departments. Just that story of this level of interactivity in the Congregation deserves telling - but at another time. Suffice it to say that this group considered everything before them, made their own comments and, in some cases, offered new insights and direction. That has brought us to where we are now.

3.1 Structure

SSCS 2.0 has three parts and some appendices (and a table of contents and index for the printed version at least). The first part is the SSCS as such, but we would want the reader/viewer to consider the work as a whole, as a unity. Nevertheless we have called Part One *SSCS*, while Part Two is the *Guidelines for Formation of Salesians to Social Communication*. Part Three contains the *Appendices*. You will note that much of Fr Tarcisio's original introductory part, at least half of it, has been moved to the first appendix. We felt this was valuable original material, a source document that should not be lost. Other elements have been absorbed into Part One. This move then gave due opportunity to the current General Councillor for

Social Communications, Fr Filiberto González Plasencia, to provide a preface in his own right.

The other notable structural feature is the significant re-ordering of existing items. This came about as a result of long reflection from the beginning. The valuable content of SSCS 1.0 was there, but not always easy to find. If you wanted a precise statement of the Congregation's communication policy, you had to read the whole document to find it. Now you go to 6.1 and you have it all there in front of you. Something similar occurred with policies; in fact one of the most consistent comments that had come through in the revision process was the lack of helpful organisation of material and a certain terminological confusion, especially around terms relating to policy, roles, functions and the like. This has now been clarified.

3.2 Introductory material

While there is no sub-heading which says 'introductory material', clearly this is the Preface, followed by a brief set of statements about Communication and a useful Glossary of terms.

3.2.1 Preface

Fr Filiberto has highlighted five main issues in his preface:

- teamwork,
- formation,
- lay involvement,
- principles and criteria which allow for appropriate and flexible application at local level,
- ecosystem.

A number of these will be taken up briefly in this *Companion*, but I want to deal with one of them here - *criteria and principles and their application.*

There are two matters that can concern us immediately. One of the reasons for this *Companion* is to assist the various regional meetings of SC Delegates. It is assumed you have read the revised edition, but it does not tell you precisely what to do in every instance. That is something which needs to come out of your local experience, and the unity of action around the Salesian world ought be guided rather by clear criteria, well-formed principles. You will note that Fr Filiberto uses this opportunity to stress the essential role

of the delegate. He presents this in both positive and negative terms: *It is essential to have a delegate who is the "soul", gives life and energy*, and it would be *unacceptable also that there be little or no importance given to communication in the OPP or EPP.*

The delegate's role, then, is crucial. So in the regional gatherings we need to note what are the opportunities, difficulties (the old 'strength and weaknesses' approach we are accustomed to) for the delegate today, but from an especially new perspective, that of a teamwork role along with other sectors such as Youth Ministry, Formation, Missions - and for that matter, Finance/Economy. This emphasis was the result of GC26; it is much more than a question of practical organisation. Instead, it is an insistence on the common mission, and that each sector is at the service of this mission; in some ways, while obvious, this needed to be said and could be regarded as a fresh insight. We will see where it leads us in GC27. It has already led to a realisation that we need some care with terminology. 'Sectors' and 'departments' are not the same thing. 'Sectors' and for that matter 'departments' cover a range of areas - the Youth Ministry Sector covers many areas when you consider it. GC26 did ask for something quite practical, and also quite limited - interdepartmental teams. Just that. No more! But behind it lay a growing conviction about the common mission. Sectors are charismatic expressions of that mission. Departments are organisational ways of handling that. They are not carved into stone. The communications sector has a clear charismatic role as enshrined in C. 6, C. 43. Departments can come and go. In the meantime we have work to do.

While on this point of terminology, while there was already a reference to the importance of terminological consistency in SSCS 1.0 (retained in version 2.0 as no. 117), it was felt that it has become a much more important issue over the past six years. It is interesting to note that other Sectors (e.g. Youth Ministry and Missions), also working on their overall framework document, have said the same thing - they need to clarify terminology. The approach we took in SSCS 2.0, only after everything else had been completed, was to add in a Glossary, but also to make a number of efforts throughout the document to define things more clearly, hence the statements on what communication is, or the reference to 'competencies' (no. 63) as being a term much in use in education today.

When Fr Filiberto speaks of *appropriate and flexible local implementation*, it raises the question of the *Handbook*, which was given a minor makeover a few years back under a new title: *Salesian, Communicator*. You will see a reference to this in the introduction to Vision and Mission, no. 2 of SSCS proper. But just a reference, nothing further. When we looked at

this *Handbook* in the light of SSCS 2.0 we began to realise two things:

a) its immediate lack of suitability as it currently stands,

b) the possibility that it may not have a place in the future. Circumstances are so different around the Salesian world.

We can work hard at fostering a unified approach based on principles and criteria, but it becomes difficult to specify how something must be done at local level. So another question that might be considered by the regional meetings is this one - do we need this handbook? And if so, what shape should it take?

TODO list

- The role of the SC Delegate in a new 'team' understanding.
- Our use of terminology constantly needs clarifying.
- Flexible and appropriate local application of principles and criteria.
- Handbook - yes or no, and of what kind if 'yes'?

3.2.2 Communication

At various points along the revision process, need was felt for a clear statement of belief about communication. The old no. 42 gave us a succinct statement, but we felt a real need to expand on that. This is what you now find in the second section of the introductory material (2). We had to resist the tendency to write a treatise, so the trick was to be succinct in the way that the old no. 42 was (which continues to exist, by the way, in slightly modified form as no. 17 in SSCS 2.0).

You will find a theological and Salesian underpinning for our belief about communication in this section. Some may wonder why we did not take the view that communication is the core activity of the Trinity, therefore. . . .., a view often expressed in courses on communication at theological level. We were a little hesitant about hijacking the Trinity yet again! Instead we felt that a Christocentric approach, a more down-to-earth, literally, approach, would be better. And we have been succinct! So we began from our human experience of communication, related that to the 'Perfect Communicator', Jesus, and this is then reinforced along the way in the body of the document, for example in nos. 19-21.

We have located our Salesian understanding of communication in the Oratory experience, as C. 40 would expect of us. We have also covered a gap in the earlier version by noting that St Francis of Sales is also a model for us. We know, or can be fairly sure, that Don Bosco did not look to Francis as a model of communication *per se*, at least not in practical ways of doing things, but at a much deeper level, yes. It is worth noting that this entire section on what 'communication' is for us was taken up seriously, in the context of the revision, by the Faculty at the UPS.

3.2.3 Glossary

The glossary was added afterwards, as I have said. Other than the need for terminological consistency, we came to this realisation after noting that we had some issues that we had dealt with clearly in the body of the document, and some that we had not - they are 'work in progress', so they at least deserve a mention in the Glossary. You can read the glossary for yourself; there is no need to comment here on each item, but I do wish to highlight one or two, especially one that does not receive explicit mention in the body of the document: **FOSS, Free and Open Source Software**.

We were aware that GC26 had said something about this issue, but that it did not mandate anything. In fact it asked for reflection on the issue by

the General Council. That reflection is ongoing, and we wish to continue to reflect with your help in fact. We know, for example, that several provinces have taken it up at policy level, either for the whole province or for an area of activity. But there was, perhaps, another factor which entered here: FOSS might seem, at one level, to be about this or that item of software; it is really about the use, change to, study of, improvement of software, all done with complete liberty. It has implications for just so many things in today's world because we are completely surrounded by software whether we know it or not. But here is where another factor enters: people are less and less aware of software because it is part of the scenery now, like the clothes we wear. We don't even buy it in shrinkwrap anymore - we simply download it. It is 'comfortable' like a pair of shoes, and you do not notice your shoes unless someone draws attention to them. This, of course, makes it a formation issue, amongst other things, since, like a fish in water does not know much about water since it is its natural environment, we too might not know very much about software and how it affects our lives. If software is everywhere, FOSS is everywhere! Anybody who uses the Internet is using FOSS or being affected by it since most of the Internet runs on this basis, not on proprietary software. Most handheld devices today run on this kind of software too. If anything, this issue must be taken up in Part Two, in the 'Guidelines', but these were were written before much consideration was given to the issue, and we were not in a position to be re-writing them just yet. But when and if they are re-written, that is where this discussion fits.

SSCS is not in a position to mandate things about software. What we would want to say is said in the Glossary - for now! For the rest, it is strongly implied in quite a number of elements of SSCS 2.0:

- in the use of the term Web 2.0 (no. 87),
- in the question of networking principles (participation, reciprocity, giving, taking) (no. 16),
- in the 'innovative potential' for the Salesian charism in terms of communication (No 23),
- in the 'quality of form and content' (no. 30), since FOSS insists on the importance of separating these two aspects and giving each its due.
- in content creation, now available to most human beings on the planet, and certainly to Salesians. Young digital natives have grown up with it. FOSS is intimately related to the many processes of content creation.

- in no. 78 on 'digital preservation', since the major approaches to this around the world are essentially FOSS approaches. It is of little value preserving digital material if it is 'locked into' some proprietary system that may not be accessible in the future.

These are some of the questions we could be taking up in our regional discussions, when the question of FOSS is being considered.

Another matter raised briefly in the Glossary but not dealt with in the body of SSCS is the so-called *digital divide*, precisely because it is 'so-called'. There are some levels at which a divide might be obvious, but this is an area much open for discussion, and much of it is anecdotal. There are other not so obvious but possibly realted areas which occupied the Advisory Council discussions: the question of a generation gap amongst Salesians and the implications of this. These were useful discussions, and we could see that they need to be taken up further, but we thought that SSCS was not, for now, the place to do this. What we are clear about for now is that we aim to be inclusive, not exclusive, and that this has implications for us as evangelisers and educators.

TODO list

- the question of FOSS might need to shift from discussion about this or that type of software, or operating system, to a much deeper reflection on what software is doing to our lives - as human beings, as religious, especially in the knowledge that much of this global software is FOSS, not proprietary.
- the question of the 'digital divide' is open for discussion! What are its implications for us as educators?
- the question of a potential generation gap might or might not be related to the above, but the Advisory Council felt that maybe we should be gathering data on this and perhaps presenting it as an issue for GC27.

3.3 Vision and Mission

Vision and mission bring us back to Don Bosco in SSCS 2.0. It is here that we decided to keep certain parts of Fr Tarcisio's original 'introduction', because of its historical overview, and remove the rest to an appendix, especially the parts which double up on Don Bosco's understanding of system, and a range of citations that we felt could be better placed in the appendix.

The 'vision' section concludes with the challenges from GC26, and these are still under discussion. We could not but include them here. The real issue is that we need to move on. We cannot simply keep restating GC26, relying on 'Salesian capital' until it is exhausted - if this is not already the case. This section is about 'vision', so it means moving forward or at least looking forward. What have we in mind for *more effective educational animation and evangelisation*? What are communities actually doing to provide greater visibility for their presence and to spread the charism'? More TODOs!

The section on mission (4.4) includes novelty and reorganisation with respect to the original text.

No. 14 is new. It highlights the common mission, the need to work with other sectors. No. 15 was previously a citation or sub-heading but has now been brought into the mainstream of the document since it is a succinct definition of what 'beliefs and values' are for us. No. 16 is an attempt to explain why the term 'social' is often added to 'communication'. This is the background (not further explained) to the Church's constant use of the double term, *social communication*. The Glossary contains the relevant citation from *Inter Mirifica*, but it would be good to understand that despite a certain awkwardness with the term in some languages (English finds it a bit pompous), the term does have a solid basis. You could read up about that elsewhere. We did not feel like turning SSCS into a course book on Communication. You will find that we have reduced the use of this term somewhat, preferring to refer simply to 'communication' often. We have retained the full term however, in any reference to the structures of the Congregation - councillor, departments, delegates and the like.

Nos. 19-25 are brief, but each one reinforces ideas expressed in the initial introductory statement on what communication is for the Salesian or Salesian lay partner. No. 19 is an extended version of the earlier no. 44, extending the implications of God's gift to us in Jesus, and it evokes Constitution no. 2.

Amongst the criteria mentioned you will note two new ones: *human rights*, and *networking*. The first reflects the important Convention on Human Rights held several years back, at which the Rector Major urged us to

rethink our Salesian language in terms of human rights. The second is more than a passing mention. It is already there in no. 16 and you will find it again in no. 34 and *passim* in a number of other places. This is a significant addition to SSCS 2.0 that was not so clearly expressed in the original version, so I would like to provide some of the story behind this choice.

3.3.1 Networking

As made clear from the glossary entry, our interest lies not so much in physical networks as in human beings working together. We gave some thought to this at the Advisory Council meeting. The term is in regular, common use in today's world, but it can at times be so vague as to be meaningless; it runs the risk of being as vague as 'love' unless we give it a very clear set of understandings. Here again, a 'framework' such as SSCS is not the place to run a course on social networking, so much is there by implication. But let me note several aspects of this, and maybe you can take this up for further discussion yourselves, either in regional meetings or within your team discussions at home.

Human networks are distinctive because they are 'human', so we cannot blithely apply mechanical understandings drawing on computer networks to this reality. One of the insights into human networks, be they organised or just implicit, is what has been called the 'Small World' hypothesis. This says, in simple terms, that through a very short chain of network ties (the hypothesis speaks of six degrees of separation), any two human beings on the planet are closely related (networked). Just how true this is is not something we can discuss right here and now, but there are a number of studies, including some rigorous scientific ones, to suggest a good degree of truth to the idea. For us there are several key implications:

- one is that if this is true or even to some extent true, whether we like it or not the 'network' will show up, so let's use it for good!
- another is that if it is true on a global scale, it is even more likely to be true in the more restricted but still very large field of the Salesian network.

If we were to study the kinds of cause-effect relationships that go on in this peculiar realm of human networking, we could enhance our opportunities for evangelisation, and indeed, problem solving. It is possible, in the context of some scientific studies, to determine the most likely triggers for certain effects, and other situations where triggers are less likely to occur. It is not

necessarily the case that a big cause has big effects or a small one small effects. It can often be the reverse. The Japanese earthquake and resulting Tsunami was a 'big cause' with incalculable effects. The North African uprisings sweeping through the region and beyond appear to have had a very small trigger humanly speaking - a single individual who immolated himself in front of a government building in Tunisia. But in all this discussion there is also room for religious language: it would be possible, here, to speak of *testimony* or *witness* as a trigger, especially in the light of a number of studies which point to the fact that human beings will sometimes make decisions based on the opinion or actions of others, even when other logic points in another direction. Clearly then there are new insights available here if we do the hard work of studying the phenomenon and applying it.

For ourselves as communicators the task is not so much about predicting network effects as trying to understand how our Salesian Family can be more effective for the mission. Maybe some of that understanding involves realising that short paths exist between members of this 'vast Salesian movement' (another word for network?), and maybe even more important is how we can help people to find these short paths! Once we do that we can possibly resolve a number of problems. It could be one of our contributions as communicators to a more effective education and evangelisation. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the Internet (therefore use of social networks, online Salesian Bulletins, whatever) is one of the key ways to find short paths.

I guess the point here is that when we decided to increase reference to networks and networking in SSCS 2.0, it was not by way of pious exhortation. We felt that there was something here that deserves more study so we can really understand the dynamics, and that these certainly deserve effective implementation. This study is something that can occur at many levels, but it is a study largely unaccomplished so far.

3.3.2 Ecosystem

You don't have to go far into SSCS before you meet the term *ecosystem*. Fr Filiberto has already referred to it more than once in his preface as a 'new' feature of SSCS, though to be honest it was already present in the original edition, and that reference has now been collected in the first appendix (where it refers to a 'communicative ecosystem'). When we discussed this in the wider circle of those who were contributing to the revision, there was an almost overwhelming opinion that *ecosystem*'s time had arrived and that we might even change the title SSCS to SSCE, or *Salesian Social Communication Ecosystem*. In other words, people generally felt that *ecosystem* is a term

that really does, today, give a sense of the diversity and inter-relatedness of communications and culture. The problem was that we have something of a distinct advantage with the initials SSCS: they work for at least the five main languages in official use in the Congregation, and if we begin to make reference instead to the *Salesian... Ecosystem*, then we cannot maintain the very useful shorthand term SSCS. So we allowed the communication strategy of SSCS to remain, and instead opted to make it very clear within the text that when we speak of 'system' we really mean 'ecosystem'.

The story behind it goes something like this:

In the original SSCS, n. 17 (now to be found in the appendices, though the numbering has changed; now no. 5) we read this comment: *to stimulate the creation of a "communications ecosystem" involving everyone.....* This was then further explained in a footnote as:

Communications ecosystem translates the range of involvement and personal attitudes of those who agree to create an environment which is a real community of sharing ideals, values, relationships at the level of daily living in a community and a neighbourhood, understood as real or virtual.

So the term *ecosystem* was already there. For many, it now seemed time we moved from the more static, linear, and potentially closed notion of *system* to the more open *ecosystem* implied and indeed described by the above note. But let's go on further.

There is evidence, currently, of major shifts in the Salesian world in terms of its self-organisation (a term which is integral to ecosystems). The 'old' Youth Ministry, Social Communications, Formation, Missions, Economy dichotomies are being superseded by a 'new' YM-SC-Missions' (and ultimately Formation?) model all as a function of THE mission. Provinces now have 'bio-diversity' in the way they organise these departments and teams. Other things too are shifting. There are lay, male and female SC Delegates in provinces, not just SDBs. And the future will see many more shifts of major proportions as we gain insight and experience into networking not just as rhetoric but real ways of working together as a 'vast movement'.

In other words, the current reality and the language and models we employ to meet that reality have gone well beyond 'system' as such. To those who argue that 'system' was dear to Don Bosco (as SSCS in fact does!) we should also say that 'ecosystem' was born contemporaneously (in 1866, coined by a German zoologist, Ernst Haeckel) but has only now come of age - there are ecologies and ecosystems applied not just as metaphor but as model to education, economy (*ecosystem* and *economy* come from the same Greek root, so no surprise there), industry, media. There is also a lesser-known fact. When Fr Scaramussa was writing the final draft of the original

version, he was already in lengthy debate with a number of confreres over the use of the term *ecosystem* and was very close to using it more completely at the time. In the end, for various reasons, he decided to stay with *system*.

There is another good reason for using this term, and here I borrow an insight from Marshall McLuhan. He encouraged a technique of analysis which relies on figure-ground perception. Most of us at one time or another have used either Rubin's faces-vase drawing or the old hag-pretty girl version of same to demonstrate a communications reality - that it all depends where the viewer assigns the boundaries or edges of the drawings. If one assigns them inwards one sees one thing; if one assigns them outwards, one sees another. McLuhan insisted that where communications are concerned, we are often tricked into spending our time with the 'figure' or foreground (be it a new device or some new version of something). Advertising does this - it draws our attention to all the new features. Instead, Mcluhan argued, the real effects come from the 'ground' or background. What are the real effects on human beings of this new device, this new combination of media? What will change in us as a result? He considered all media to be an extension of the human being anyway, and the Internet as an extension of our nervous system. Well then, *ecosystem* has the advantage for us of highlighting the 'ground' or background in communications and culture, and helps us focus on the real effects rather than just the regular novelty of this or that new tool.

TODO list

- what are we doing to move ahead on the basis of the GC26 discussion in nos. 102 ff?
- what kinds of understandings do we have of human networks, and how could we apply these to solving a range of problems or increasing the effectiveness of our outreach?
- consider the various references to *ecosystem* in SSCS 2.0 (for example the several references in the preface, then nos. 33 (system), 35 (strategic objectives). 40 (the Congregation's needs), 47 (Results for the Congregation), 51 (the parties involved), 102 (the development process). How do they help us focus a little more on the 'ground', on the important effects of what we do as communicators?

3.4 Strategic objectives

The original SSCS was divided into *Identity*, *Functioning* and *Organisation*. The section to do with *functioning* was a source of confusion at times; terminology was not always clear. It became obvious very early in the revision process that we would need to work on this. One clear result is the new section 5 termed *strategic objectives*. Beginning with no. 35 we now find another novelty of the new text: the reference to 'key players' (The Italian text will speak of *protagonisti*), in other words, the recognition that the beneficiaries are not mere recipients, but are active in their own right. You can expect, then, to find this added into the various descriptions of the parties involved in the SSCS, as indeed it is. In no. 36 for example, the primary beneficiaries, now seen also as active players in their own right, have a 'new' need as a consequence - a need for creativity, a need to play an active part in their own growth and development, in society, and moreover in the Salesian mission.

The text from nos. 35-50 draws largely on the original text (nos. 26-41) but always with these small but significant additions along the lines just suggested. It would be worth contrasting the two sets to discover them. There are other emphases added in as well: reference to GC26 (being with young people is where we find God), new ways of representing truth today (appropriate forms of non-linear logic as found on the web for example): both these references are in no. 39. GC24 is recalled in the reference to the Congregation's need for lay people (no. 40), and lay people themselves have 'new' needs, especially partnership with us and networking. You will note a new need in no. 43 in reference to the Church and society, recalling Don Bosco's constant appeal to all people of good will and in the same number another need, which is probably more correctly a Salesian need - our need to ensure that we provide spiritual offerings to people through new media. What might this mean? That is worth considering.

No. 47 is a good example of a collection of new terms for SSCS 2.0: here you find reference to *ecosystem, networking* and the adjective *stable*. SSCS is not making a comment on psychological stability (though of course if the cap fits, then we have to wear it!). No, the reference here is to the need to form people to a task and let them stay with that task. There are too many cases of personnel changes affecting our communications work. We felt the need to encourage *stability* of personnel, Salesian or otherwise, at various points.

The *strategic objectives* also include brief statements about the various areas, the four by now well-known areas of *animation, formation, informa-*

tion, production. If you look at the original text you will see that animation and formation were often mentioned in the same breath - to the detriment of both, really. Formation dominated, and animation had little mention. That has now been clarified. Each area is defined clearly and then subsequently taken up for its policies in the next section, section 6.

TODO list

- Given the new elements added in to each 'neeeds of...' paragraph and the hoped-for results, it could be worth spending some time on just these new elements to determine how we are implementing them. Just because they were not in there previously does not say we were not doing them!
- 'new spiritual offerings presented through new media': what examples can you indicate from your own province, either already in place or planned?

3.5 Policies

The original text included policies, but they were scattered throughout the text, frequently highlighted by a color device (shading). One of the questions we often had to confront in the Department was when someone asked us what our communications policy was. About the only response you could give was to hand them SSCS and ask them to read it - it was in there, somewhere. Well, now it is in there again but clearly marked: 6.1! And here I should draw your attention to no. 56 because it is quite central to the new text.

No. 56 (it was no 59 in the original) now reads: *Communication is developed within the framework of the Salesian mission to youth, a dimension that runs across all education and pastoral action, as an activity considered at the same level as other Salesian works, and as a field of activity of the mission.* This is a double-whammy! The original text placed communications under Youth Ministry, effectively. The new text asserts that 'the Salesian mission to youth' is what we are in function of. This is much more consistent with the Constitutions. But it also implies working more closely with other sectors, something taken up time and time again in the new text, but in this section in the last paragraph, no. 63, taken directly from a deliberation of GC26. Note, too the *activity considered at the same level as other Salesian works.* This has been Fr Filiberto's regular insistence as he moves around Provinces. A communication's 'work' is like any other 'work' in need of human and financial resources, amongst other things. We could give deeper consideration to this and ask ourselves how it applies in our own provinces.

The policies for each area are now located together in nos. 65 ff, and as mentioned previously, 'animation' now receives due measure, so nos. 65-67 on that topic are effectively new to the text.

The other areas have several small additions. Note that for the policy area for formation (nos. 68 ff) there is now explicit reference to the 'Guidelines', making it clear they are now part of the official document, and no. 69, which has its origins in Fr Vecchi's distinction between three levels of formation, has been updated to reflect such things as the 'digital continent' with its blogs, SMS, texting etc.

The information policies (nos 71-80) have not altered substantially from the original text except for one important addition in no. 78 (the old no. 103). The original text referred to our overall responsibility for preservation of historical and cultural documents. The new text is more explicit: we are to be *concerned with the storage of digital information, which includes the development of policies at different levels to ensure that digital material of value is prepared in such a way that facilitates its preservation.* This comment

contains considerable substance and it needs to be examined and explored, studied and applied! People are genuinely looking for some guidance in this area. Some Provinces have developed their provincial archives, for example, but without much consideration to 'born digital' material, and if they turn to proprietary firms to suggest how they might tackle the latter, these firms are quick to offer very expensive enterprise level solutions, where the reality is that effective solutions (e.g. those adopted by national libraries, museums) are almost always cost-free - to a certain extent, certainly for software - and modular, which also means they are flexible and adaptable.

Preservation begins by creating a mindset, and this is maybe the starting point for provinces. It might start with something as simple as preservation of email. Most people do not have a clue how to do this, other than entrusting it to 'the cloud' (aka Gmail). It is relatively simple to preserve email, but first one needs to extract it entirely from the email client (including Gmail!) into other folders, and then backup elsewhere for security. The tools for doing this are freely available. But they won't be effective until they are applied in a systematic way, which means personal decision enters the scene, a certain disciplined approach.

The *Production* section has been entirely reworked. The meeting of Salesian Publishers in Barcelona last year ago looked closely at the 'production' section of the original SSCS and decided it needed to be completely revamped. They undertook to do this for publishing (books, multimedia), and suggested that other enterprises do similarly. A number of Salesian webmasters met in Córdoba (Spain) subsequently and drew up something for their area, since they recognised that this is now an element of Salesian production to be found in every province and at most local levels. It has enormous and as yet unrealised evangelisation and educational potential. Salesian Radio in Latin America met in that region and undertook to write up a section on that area as well.

If there is any 'unfinished business' in SSCS it is in this section. Salesian production has to face a very different and competitive world now. It therefore needs some clear approaches and solid support at every level, but especially from Provinces that have business enterprises. We wanted to include something on Salesian TV enterprises - they are not many but they can have enormous impact, and they are also very difficult (costly, for one thing) to run. It just was not possible to include them in this edition, as they are working through many of the issues still.

Surely there are other areas here that deserve a mention, other than throwaway references to music, theatre and the like. So, all in all, this entire section needs to be read through carefully and reflectively at regional and

province level. The SC Department is there to help where it can and sees that it too has important responsibilities in these areas.

Do note an important distinction in no. 55 between 'production' as a general issue and particular 'production'.

Finally, *processes*. This too was part of the effort to tidy up terminology. The term hardly appeared in the original edition, but we felt that many of the things that were being referred to as 'functioning' were in fact processes. Now you find them identified as *Planning, Development, Advancement* and *Support*, this latter being sub-divided into *management* and *services*. The content was already to be found in the original edition and has been left largely as it was, with just some minor alterations; it was felt that the development process could 'foster' or 'facilitate' (no. 103,, 105 respectively) but not 'guarantee' certain things, as the original text had stated.

TODO list

- consider no. 56 carefully, especially the part which speaks of the equality of a communication 'work' with other works. this might be an ideal yet to be achieved in many parts of the world. How do you see it applying in your Province?
- consider no. 58 carefully too. What can be done to advance our approach to preservation of digital material at all levels in the province and for that matter in the Congregation, starting from the individuals who 'create' digital material?
- if we have any of the 'enterprises' mentioned in the production section (and we will all have at least one of them - websites), what are we able to do about applying these newly-written parts of SSCS? If we have other enterprises not yet covered in SSCS, what could we do to ensure a suitable text for a future renewal?

3.6 Organisation

From nos. 121 through to 143, there is very little alteration from the original text. The organisational chart has been updated of course. By the time we get to the section on the Provincial (nos. 142-147) we begin to notice some small additions. The Provincial now appoints not only the Delegate but also sees that there is a team or commission in place. No. 148 on the delegate makes it clear that this person may be Salesian or lay, male or female.

Delegates were amongst the most active respondents during the revision process, and one thing that became obvious was the unreal depiction of the delegate in the text. Delegates would constantly remind us that this just was not happening this way on the ground. So the task was to determine what should remain there by way of encouragement towards an ideal, and what was truly 'unreal'. Every paragraph in this section was examined closely - the devil is now in the details, so consider them closely. You need to take the section as a whole, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, because the delegate does not act alone. You need to consider the delegate, the team and for that matter the local coordinator as well. The old no. 164, now no. 153, was a main target of complaint from delegates, who felt it simply asked for too much. This article has been redrafted, more in tone than in substance, though. It merits close attention. To begin with it now has a premise: it encourages the delegate to have an overall perspective that allows him or her to make well-targeted interventions, to ensure some kind of balance in the 'centre'-province relationship. This is already less prescriptive than the former text, at least mildly so! There is a list of areas to consider; the removal of the verbs from the earlier text subtly reduces the burden (it is hoped!). They are areas to deal with as best as one can. They are each expressed more simply. Much the same goes for nos. 154 and 155: they are put in simpler terms. The overall effect is to reduce the sense of burden.

We noted that there are many different kinds of structures in the Provinces, so we cannot mandate a single structure. No. 149 talks about collaborating with various teams *depending on the structure that exists on behalf of the Salesian mission to the young*. Note that; we have already met this idea in no. 56. You will note the insistence on collaboration, working in with other teams. But also note the final sentence in no. 149 which asks that the delegate find appropriate representation, in agreement with the Provincial Economer, within the managerial structure of the Province's enterprises. This is an idea which matured over time, especially in discussion with Provincials and their councils, and looking at the example of some provinces which have tried to imnplement this idea - to good effect. It makes no. 149 an

important paragraph to consider for many delegates.

No. 151 uses the phrase *to the extent that it is possible.* This was one way we felt we could alleviate a sense of burden in the original text. Having said that, we promptly added a task for the poor delegate - keep an eye on ongoing formation! No. 152 brings us back to networking again, but otherwise repeats the original text (which was no. 163).

There are few other important alterations in this section. Elements have been re-ordered in no. 167 and one or two parts have been re-worded for other numbers.

We should note here that there was much discussion during the review about press offices, official spokespersons and public relations. Everyone accepts that public relations are crucial today, even more than before, but not only for moments of crisis. The question of official spokesperson for the Congregation is under direct discussion by the Rector Major with his Council (as I write this) and we felt we could not say very much about it in SSCS at this point. In fact 'spokesperson' gets a bare mention, but it does get a mention. You will find the role referred to in no. 80 and again in no. 190.

TODO list

- SSCS 2.0 encourages some kind of team around the delegate. It may be a commissiom, it may have another name, but the delegate needs support from others. What exists in your province?
- note the reference to ongoing formation. Somehow the focus seems to go to initial formation, and the 'ongoing' aspects gets forgotten. Is ongoing formation (to communication) included in the Province planning? The 'Guidelines' offer some direction here.
- the question of representation on some appropriate managerial body for enterprises is important in any case where there is a communication's enterprise in place. This may be quite a challenge where there has been a history of no representation previously. It would be good to share experiences in this area.
- given that web sites are now regarded as 'enterprises', though obviously of a very different kind to highly structured, high output entities like publishers, what is being done in the province to give some guidance and structure to them?

4 Parts Two and Three

There is no point in elaborating here on the *Guidelines* for formation. In due course and in the not too distant future they too need to be updated, but for now they need to be read! Some care has been taken to adjust them to changes in the SSCS document where there are references. It is possible that one or two of these have been missed, so it would be helpful if you notice any discrepancies.

As for the Third Part, the Appendices, the original version had but two appendices: a list of documentation and an outline of the Province Plan. This latter is no longer included here; instead it has been moved to the Congregation's website. This is in view of a larger plan for the collection of data Congregation-wide. It makes little sense any more to be collecting data on paper, with huge time gaps and much inefficient exchange of paper to arrive at statistics that can be updated in a few moments online.

We have been surprised in two ways by the experience of online data collection begun recently; surprised that we already have half the data collected with little angst or effort, and surprised because the other half have not yet woken up to how it works! They keep attaching a copy of the web-page form which they have filled out by hand, or typed, or scanned and then attached to an email! So there is some way to go yet in encouraging people to provide online data.

The documentation appendix remains, updated.

The final document in the collection is Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 World Communications Day Letter. It needs no additional comment. Fr Filiberto was particularly keen, in the light of GC26 comments already part of SSCS 2.0, that it be included. It merits close reading and some creative application.