

# Study of the current state of the congregation

## Questions to the rector major

ANIMATION AND GOVERNMENT
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1. The auspicious comment on p. 351 on handing over to your successor a Congregation that has greater apostolic and charismatic vitality - is it not perhaps too optimistic an assessment given the statistics that were presented? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *it is precisely by looking at the statistics that I am optimistic, given the trend in other Congregation and the positive letter that came from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic life. Besides, there are no signs of divisions, and if it is true that there is a decrease in vocations in one geographical area, there is a flourishing of vocations in another. I identify problematic aspects but also signs of hope.*

2. What is your assessment of what was put in place of what GC26 requested regarding greater interaction between the Departments of the Salesian mission? According to you, what did not work? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *I am much more satisfied than for the previous six year period. The three sectors met every six months and succeeded in presenting themselves together. There are still things to do with regards to coordination.*

**Fr Fabio Attard:** *we tried to take the steps we could within the parameters we had. One difficulty in the final assessment was that at the beginning of the six year period we did not do our planning together. We had a meeting with the eight regions, and each tried to take those reflections on board seriously. In two of the regions we succeeded in presenting ourselves together at meetings with the provincials. One goal we proposed for ourselves for the next six year period was that the three councillors would do their planning together to make better use of animation interventions which support choices of governance. It is clear that we can do more.*

**Fr Filiberto Gonzalez:** *we came together every six months to share a common way forward. Each Department has its own methodology; we encouraged working together on small projects, and we did a half-yearly and end of year evaluation. Some provinces began working together in these three sectors and this was a winner. I feel satisfied with what we did together, but we did miss out at the beginning by not doing our planning together.*

**Fr Václav Klement:** *the three Departments need each other. At the meetings where we were together this created a common mindset (especially on formation of delegates).*

3. When he speaks of “pastoral conversion” what does the Rector Major mean? (Commission 4)

**Rector Major:** *The term was coined by the 5th Latin American Episcopal Conference at Aparecida (May 2007) to describe a new pastoral approach to things where a mission mindset prevails over administrative management of works and structures. Pope Francis took it up in his magisterium in an official form in Evangelii Gaudium.*

4. What courageous gesture should the Congregation make at this particular moment in history? (Commission 3)

**Rector Major:** *The Gospel's radical approach involves the whole person. If we want to change the Church we begin with ourselves (Mother Teresa). Return to the centrality of the Word of Christ. Pope Francis told religious: "you have to be the living Gospel", through a more austere, poor, simple lifestyle, working with very poor young people. There should be a hermeneutical criterion in all our works: poverty as the key to interpreting our educative and pastoral proposal and the description of the young people who come out of them. This is true even for works that are not involved with the poor. The UCA (University of Salvador) had six martyrs - if you ask yourself what is the description of the students who come out of there you will find it in their commitment to justice and social transformation. Our works are not only to maintain the status quo, but need a courageous gesture, that of being better qualified in their work for the poor and with the poor.*

## FORMATION

5. What do you think about the fact that initial and ongoing formation are not giving the hoped for results? What, according to you, are the cause and remedies? (Juridical Commission)
6. Formation of young SDBs is decisive for the future of the Congregation just as education is for the future of humankind. There is no doubt that it continues to be a challenge of the first magnitude. When we seek causes of the difficulties we have today in the formation area we tend to look for them in the psychological makeup of today's young person or in the cultural, sociological, ecclesial area etc... However, do you not believe that there are causes internal to us in the way we have structured initial formation today in the Congregation? Do you not believe that in this there is 'something' that is not quite right for forming educators and pastors of the young? Is not formation too intellectual, such that it does not lead to a real and enthusiastic experience of Christ, does not succeed in creating a mature fraternal setting, does not build up the Salesian pastor with 'the odour of the sheep'? Do you not believe that there is a 'formation emergency' from when the Congregation adopted formation processes that don't seem to achieve the hope for vocational objectives? (DAL BEN Santo)

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** *I will reply to questions 5 and 6 together. I would make a distinction in my reply; not all geographical areas are equal in fact. I would not say that we are not gaining the hoped for results always and everywhere. Each of you can see where the results are being achieved or not.*

*In ongoing formation we have a considerable deficit as a Congregation. In particular, the Salesian community is not able to achieve this aim for lack of Rectors/Directors who are capable of accompaniment and being spiritual guides.*

Poor consistency in number and quality does not allow us to put ongoing formation processes into place. Confreres lack a mentality of self-formation. We have set up the first ongoing formation process for the quinquennium and qualification of confreres; this latter aspect has been barely achieved because we are always managing urgent needs.

For initial formation we have begun with structural processes. In the previous six year period there were a huge number of formation communities, but with few formators and but a few in formation we sought to bring a number of provinces together and that way strengthen the teams. Charismatic formation in Salesianity was rare and we made efforts to put that in place. The aim we set out to achieve was to set up consistent and adequate formation communities. In my second six year period we focused on forming the formators, but they are not yet prepared for personalising their processes. We have a model for helping to fit into community life, but interiorisation and personalisation processes are much less underway. Without spiritual accompaniment a core element is missing; we haven't achieved formation of our formators in this area. Communities have formative projects but they lack the processes and these need to be developed. It is a varied panorama, depending on provinces. We are on the way but still have a way to go.

7. With regard to the study of vocational fragility in formation, what further steps do you foresee us adopting? (Commission 4)

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** this issue has been tackled by experts since 2003. There have been developments over these six years. We have taken up the questions of: a) psychological fragility which refers to emotional aspects, past experiences, family background, difficulties in relating: if these are not overcome they have to be considered as making it impossible to move on; to overcome them we need to guarantee psychological help especially in the aspirantate and in the early formation stages; b) formative fragility which depends on the formators when the teams are not consistent or prepared and there are no suitable ways to move ahead; c) vocational fragility very often tied to weak motivation which if not strengthened will hinder candidates from moving on; the best resource in this case is discernment throughout the entire process and personal accompaniment in its various forms.

8. The challenge of formation: how do we qualify formators? How do we see that formation processes are really transforming ones? (Commission 4)

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** we have begun to build up stable teams, but we have not begun a serious formation process for formators; within the Regions there is ongoing formation of formators but not basic formation. At the UPS there are two licentiate courses for formation of formators, combining pedagogical method, psychology, spirituality, moral; but we are lacking in formation as spiritual guides.

9. How is formation thinking of responding to the challenge of multiculturalism? (Commission 3)

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** Since Don Rua's time the Congregation has gradually become a worldwide one; it has become multicultural. Globalisation especially in communication and attention to the problem of migration requires international communities and hence intercultural formation and not just inculturation. The same

*is required by the missionary efforts of the Congregation, especially for Project Europe. Interprovincial and world formation communities (Gerini, Jerusalem, UPS) help with the intercultural experience. Salesian Brothers too have a global (intercultural) experience of specific formation in Valdocco in Turin..*

10. Faced with many who leave the Congregation to join the Diocese, how do we clarify the Salesian identity of the priest in our formation process? (Commission 3)

## SALESIAN BROTHER

11. In this Chapter there is 1 Brother Ex-Officio, 6 Brothers Elected and 4 Brothers who are invited. The 7 brothers who have voting rights make up about 3% of the total Chapter members. In the congregation about 12% of members are Brothers. Is not this representation of 3% very low? There should have been about 25 Brothers in this Chapter. During a Pre-Chapter meeting in India, I was asked how I felt being invited to the Chapter. I accepted to come very unwillingly. I came to know that other Brothers have refused to accept the invitation. We are not happy to have a special concession to be invited to the Chapter. We may be few in a Province to be elected by the province. This chapter could make some provision to have Brothers invited according to the number of Brothers from different regions. We are about 160 Brothers in South Asia. During the Brother's Congress, about 3 Brothers could have been elected by the Brothers to the Chapter. Please give a serious thought to this view. It was talked about during the Pre-Chapter meeting in India and during the Brothers Congress in India. I had asked Our Regional Superior Rev. Fr. Maria. A.K. to present this matter to the Superior Council. Thanking you (Bro.Cyriac Kurias)

***Rector Major:** more than a question, this is a request. It begins from an analysis of the numerical lack of representation of Brothers which has resulted in fact in a certain unease amongst our Brother confreres. The proposal is to have representation of Brothers at a General Chapter according to the number of Brother in the provinces. Nevertheless I have to say that the problem of the fall in Brother vocations is a huge challenge. The de la Salle Brothers have lost 75% of their number. At our meeting with Pope Francis he says on this that he has no answers, including from his experience with the Jesuits. It is an issue to reflect on carefully and to find solutions for, because it is not that God does not want Brothers. It is true that many who do not feel called to be priests find a way of being involved in the Church in new movements. The Pope has given the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life the task of reviewing the document that has been prepared on lay brothers. More specifically in our case what is lacking is a presentation of Salesian identity that can be expressed in clerical and lay terms. We have much more to do to recover the vocation of the Salesian Brother.*

12. What can be done to create sensitivity to and recover the Salesian Brother vocation? (Commission 3)

## COMMUNITY – FRATERNITY

13. The Regulations say that (regular) communities should be made up of 6 confreres, but the statistics show that this is not the case for 53% of communities. What does consistency in number and quality mean, then? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *in his letter of convocation of GC25 Fr Vecchi wrote on the matter, concerned about guaranteeing the visibility of a charism and not just managing a work. In fact he distinguished between a presence and a work. Let us not forget that Don Bosco expressed the identity of the Salesian community as living in unum locum, in unum spiritum, in unum agendi finem. This lets us see that numerical consistency of a community is not unimportant. It is one thing to begin a community with three confreres with a view to ensuring at least 6 and another thing to begin then continue a community with just 3. It happens that amongst community models there is one where we join communities together: where that happens it is true that we save on appointment of rectors, but it does not resolve things if the other community is 500 Km away! We don't do things out of mere formality. I ask myself how long will we continue to sacrifice confreres to manage works? I add that quantity is not enough; there can be communities consistent in number but without communion of life (deep sharing). We are faced with statistics that we have to change (convert); we have to try to recover this value of community life.*

14. Is it possible to set up a canonical community in frontier areas which is both international and interprovincial? (Commission 3)

**Rector Major:** *we should certainly encourage this where it is possible. When I was provincial in Mexico I asked to set up a single community between Laredo Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. There is a great intercommunication of people in these situations. Nevertheless the community must be juridically assigned to a Province, the one it is geographically located in. It is clear that there should be a curatorium for such presences as is the case for interprovincial houses of formation.*

## RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE

15. We want more precise data from the Vicar on situations of lack of religious discipline. What are the deep causes? Has a study been carried out? (Juridical Commission)
16. How do we proceed canonically and civilly when a confrere is implicated in the incorrect administration of goods? (Commission 4)
17. How can the central administration offer an effective empathy, closeness in cases of religious discipline and paedophilia? (Commission 3)

**Rector Major:** *cases of paedophilia are to be resolved locally and not to be sent to the General House for resolution. This would encourage the tendency of those who accuse us of cover-ups and hiding the guilty persons. All cases are to be tackled and resolved at the provincial level. We have the 2002 protocol, reviewed in 2004 and updated in 2010, where the steps to be taken are clearly outlined, in addition to an update from the Holy See on the issue. After setting things in place according to the procedure indicated, documentation then needs to be sent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The General House is a bridge between the Province*

and the Holy See. It is up to us to be vigilant and try to diligently do what our protocol says.

## THOSE WHO LEAVE

18. Has there been a reflection on those who leave the Congregation as perpetually professed, so we can learn something for the future? What is the thinking on this phenomenon of leaving the Congregation, and its causes? What steps does the Congregation intend to take to prevent such situations and help confreres? (Juridical Commission)
19. The statistics speak of those who leave and also tell us that there are many who ask for secularisation. If this is true what are the reasons for this trend after so many years of religious formation and living in a religious community? From your knowledge from around the world, is there something that is not working in our way of living in community? (PUYKUNNEL Shaji)

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** *there has been no study on those who leave after perpetual profession. We have an empirical understanding from the requests that arrive at the General Council, which point out the factors and motivations that lead to leaving the Congregation. But the issue deserves further study. Not all departures are negative: the process that leads to dismissing confreres or reducing him to the lay state has resolved irregular situations that have dragged on for years. They have been a positive process of purification. Those who go on to join the diocese are about 20/25 priests a year. For many there was never a vocation to consecrated life but to priesthood, while on other occasions a falling out with the current superior has resulted in this choice, and other cases are due to poor attention to vocational discernment regarding community relationships. In some cases there has been poor accompaniment in ongoing formation where spiritual accompaniment has been missing in most cases.*

20. Looking at the past, what lessons can we draw from the loss of so many confreres? (Commission 2)

## YOUTH MINISTRY

21. While recognising that many positive things have been done in the schools, it seems to me that our pupils go out, for the most part, with a consumer, individualist mentality, looking for success and appearances, without personal views on social commitment and without a true sense of ecclesial belonging. If we consider that some of those who occupy important positions in society (at least in some parts of the world) are past pupils of religious schools, we get the feeling that there is still much to do in Catholic education. What is missing in youth ministry for us to succeed in transforming the minds and hearts of our pupils so they can be missionary disciples in society, politics, the economy, etc...? (DAL BEN Santo)

**Fr Fabio Attard:** *pupils who leave with a consumer mentality - what is lacking to transform their minds? Three points: a) our mission begins with the awareness that*

*it is the Lord who calls and sends us and that we live in community (our identity); b) awareness of our charism: not a society that hands on know-how as content but as models of value. Up to what point do we love Don Bosco to be able to respond to the challenges the world is presenting us with? Not only knowledge but following the paths of wisdom. The Preventive System as an existential paradigm; c) an EPC.*

22. The updated Youth Ministry Handbook: according to what we find in the Rector Major's Report, as communicated in the Assembly, the updated Youth Ministry Handbook has been completed. Is some calm opportunity envisaged in the agenda for presenting and studying this in the Assembly? Unless I am mistaken the general calendar does not seem to offer such an opportunity. If it has not been envisaged, could it be added in? (Commission 2)

**Fr Fabio Attard:** *we have chosen to print it in Spain for Italian, English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Polish. It has also been printed in Brazil (Portuguese) and in India (English).. We have prepared a power point to present it with. In the presentation that will be given in the coming days we will offer further information on the processes that have been considered for passing it on.*

23. What importance should be attributed to the general Frame of reference for YM that will be given out and how should it be taken up so that it is effective? (Commission 3)

**Fr Fabio Attard:** *the frame of reference is the third edition, in continuity with the ones that came before it. It does not start from zero but seeks to fit in with reflection on Youth Ministry over the last 40 years (from GC20 onwards). We have a broad and profound reflection in our literature and we risk not valuing the wealth that we have there. The updated frame of reference recovers the work done by Fr Domenech who had already taken up earlier reflections. It is the duty of each Provincial and his council to get to know the abundance of material produced. If this framework is not taken up we will lose a unique opportunity to recover the wealth of reflection and practices developed over recent years. Systematic processes for taking up the frame of reference should be put in place, through accompaniment offered to local communities.*

## SALESIANS - LAITY

24. Beginning from your knowledge of the Congregation, what is your assessment of the relationship between Salesians and lay people today and what do you envisage for the future? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *without the laity consecrated life has no future. This is not a concession we are talking about but their vocation and mission. When Fr Viganò called GC24 he gave it the greatest opening: SDBs and laity sharing spirit and mission. So they are not collaborators but share in responsibility. Not just because we are few. Not to understand this is to be living before Vatican II. I see that GC24 still has a way to go. Many provinces have got moving, others no. Obviously introducing lay people into things presupposes their formation through a Lay Project that Provinces should draw up. It should be a formation project that ensures that their formation is professional, human, charismatic; that will keep our presences*

*alive. Unfortunately, not a few confreres see and feel the presence of the laity as a threat, while lay people oblige us to do what is typically ours to do: not administration and running things but an educative and pastoral presence.*

25. We ask that the statistics on lay people bound to us by work contracts, both lay and those in voluntary capacity, be added to our statistics (Juridical commission).

**Rector Major:** *already in the presentation of the statistics the hope was expressed that our statistics can be updated every year. This will also allow us to know our annual budget which is very high precisely because of the great number of lay people employed in our works. What is asked for will be taken up and done .*

26. Where the rector of the community is not the director of the work, what is the relationship between the work and the community? (Commission 3)

**Rector Major:** *GC26 to ensure a greater presence of Salesians amongst the young, spoke of finding various models for running works. It depends on the kind of work: there are works run entirely by Salesians, other works entrusted to the laity and part of the OPP, works entrusted to them and followed up charismatically but not with direct responsibility of SDBs. What do we do when the director of the work does not coincide with the rector of the community? The Youth Ministry Framework points to some elements and collects the practices in place at the moment. We need to clarify autonomy on the one hand and the relationship with the SDB Rector on the other.*

## ECONOMY - MANAGEMENT

27. Looking at the past, what lessons can we draw from incorrect management of the goods of the Congregation? (Commission 2)

**Jean Paul Muller:** *we have sent out various appeals with a view to clarifying that Provinces and works must avoid debt and putting too much on young confreres' shoulders. We still have much to learn - and suffer - from the past, and feeling the consequences, so we can be more motivated to ensure correct and transparent administration. It is not acceptable that some bursars hide patrimony from their provincials. We need to focus on the essential side of our mission respecting our strengths and capacities (confreres – employees – financial resources). We have tried to set up formation for new bursars with a view to spreading awareness of our rules (the red book on administration, and others). A future project is to have an audit of each province and analysis by outside experts. We often receive requests which lack the necessary documentation to correctly and fully carry out the business. Every one of us: a) can communicate much more regarding our problems and concerns and also speak of best practice so our neighbour can follow our example; b) see that our behaviour and decisions are more transparent.*

28. What can be done to form confreres to be competent in financial management and who can combine religious life and professionalism? (Commission 3)

**Rector Major:** *the Ratio has a valuable principle which states “the purpose of*



*formation is an apostolic one". Any kind of qualification of confreres must have in mind the mission; without this it is only for personal pleasure. I can have qualified professionals but this will not form the SDB for the task given him. There is no magic formula, but there must be reference to the profile of the Salesian I want to form.*

29. What is needed for new models for managing works that will guarantee the centrality of the mission, spirituality and community? (Commission 3)

## RESHAPING - GIVING NEW SIGNIFICANCE

30. In reference to what you state on p. 347 of the Report on "re-signification, reshaping, relocating", what, according to you has to "die" for something new to be born and what is your expectation of this something 'new'? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *Here we are speaking of giving new significance, redimensioning (already since the time of Fr Ricceri we have been using this word, balancing the number of presence against the number of confreres, not making our works too complex); and after we began speaking about significance and Fr Vecchi told us when a work is significant from a pastoral, vocational and spiritual point of view. Relocation instead means being present with the kind of work where we are more relevant ecclesially and socially and more fruitful in vocational terms. When we speak of letting things die to give birth to something new, this is not something regarding the future. we are already doing this at the level of the provinces: just look at how many provinces we have brought together. Structures are relative. But this is a pastoral, not an administrative act. Provinces are letting works go, uniting communities, leaving works to lay people. One of the issues for the Chapter is how central government should be set up (Vicar, councillors for the mission, economy). We do not need to hang on to structures for the simple fact that they have always been that way. However we need to be more aware and decisive, especially when confreres are the first to put up opposition.*

31. Looking at the future: what would be the courageous choices to make in provinces for a true and proper "re-signification, re-dimensioning and relocation" of our Salesian provinces? (Commission 2)
32. Which criteria, according to you, do we need to bear in mind in deciding where to remain and where to leave, in reference to the available personnel? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *Already GC23 and GC24 have provided criteria for re-signification. Some elements: a) it is not an administrative practice but a pastoral choice (a careful choice of presence); b) which works can't be maintained in terms of their purpose, personnel requirements and do not respond to the criteria of consecrated life?; c) we have to cast our nets where growth is more evident (Fr Vecchi) and grater relevance from a pastoral and vocational point of view; d) I should not distribute personnel on the basis of the works, but strengthening some weakening others inasmuch as not all presences have the same value. So instead of spreading our forces (maintenance criterion), I need to direct them; e) which of our*

beneficiaries do I want to give preference to? f) what kind of management do we need to value for this kind of presence?

## EXPECTATIONS OF THIS CHAPTER

33. For GC27 there are topics and priorities which have been part of previous Chapters: mystics in the Spirit has to do with the primacy of God (GC25), prophets of fraternity has to do with the prophecy of fraternal life (GC25), servants of the young has to do with “Da mihi animas” (GC 26): what according to you has hindered us from living and activating this plan? and what is specific and different about this Chapter? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *I reiterate especially what I have already said: every Chapter sets in motion processes for transforming mentality and activities that do not cease at the end of the six years, from one Chapter to the other, but remain in force because they require time. Even though it seems that speaking of the profile of the Salesian today we are only repeating what has been said in other Chapters before this is not so, because there is an historical element which determines them. For example, mystics of the Spirit is not only the primacy of God, fraternal life is not only GC25, but in this historical moment where individualism is spreading, our fraternal life makes prophets of us. In particular, the title of our Chapter “witnesses to the radical approach of the Gospel” demands that there be a radical and fruitful return to Christ and the Gospel. The objectives: helping each confrere to make radical choices of evangelical life and live the apostolic project as traced out in the Salesian Constitutions and adapted to today.*

34. I would like point two to be discussed by the whole group with some input by the Rector Major since it is one of the basic issues concerning the Mystics in the spirit. The point two could be taken up in *Varia* for further elaboration since it does not fit into our chapter scheme (SWAMIKANNU Stanislaus)
35. Does it not limit things that a GC be focused on just one theme? Do we need to draw up a thematic document or a six year plan? (Commission 3)

**Rector Major:** *more than a single theme it is a specific approach to the whole of the life and mission of the Congregation. The Congregation's life is seen in the multiplicity of its dimensions and contexts. There is an overview from a particular point of view, in this case a radical gospel one.. So we don't tackle a single theme, because a Chapter this is not a congress or symposium, but the identity, energy and fruitfulness of the Congregation is what is at stake. Other choices have to be made, ones we consider to be more important and able to give rise to the dynamics of change, without pretending to resolve all the challenges we have today. Good government says where the Congregation wants to go and as a consequence, where to channel its energies.*

## PROJECT EUROPE

36. In the third part on project Europe regarding the sending and acceptance of

missionaries, what problems emerged and what resistance showed up in communities and what difficulties have the missionaries themselves spoken of? (Juridical Commission)

**Rector Major:** *Project Europe develops around three points.*

*a) Revitalisation of the Salesian vocation of confreres (revitalisation from within), the first aim of which is to recover belief in the beauty of Salesian life. Without this prior personal and institutional commitment it is useless sending missionaries.*

*b) The necessary restructuring so as not just to be maintaining all the works we have, but asking ourselves what kind of work and with what kind of service.*

*c) Sending missionaries: it is a project of the whole Congregation and I take this opportunity to thank confreres and provincials have shown availability and provided personnel. Europe has been very generous in the past (600 European missionaries left for Project Africa), but in this historical moment it needs missionaries.*

**Fr Václav Klement:** *abundant documentation can be found in my personal folder for consultation. In Europe there are 90,000 missionaries (all Christian denominations), other religious congregations started before us (SVD in 1987), of the 6,000 European SDBs, 60 are non-European missionaries. 97 were sent for Project Europe (2002-2013), most from Asia, some from Africa and only two from the Americas. In our visits we have noted: a) sending works best for young confreres; b) the description of the missionary is openness to culture, working with lay people, being humbly open and patient, knowledge of languages. We already have formation processes for the first two years they are there and for fitting in to their new provinces. Project Europe is a process to be continued, six years are not enough.*

**Rector Major:** *I had to inform the Chapter on the success of the Project, and I thank the provinces that have provided personnel.*

**Fr Filiberto Gonzalez:** *in ANS we offered a programme of news on different countries in Europe concerning the youth situation and on meetings of the Project Europe Commission (PE). All documentation regarding PE can be found on [sdb.org](http://sdb.org), those coming from the Rector Major, the Commission and the Departments. In ANS there are more than a hundred news items and many more photos on PE. At the international meeting of Salesian Bulletin Editors the commitment was given to share articles and photos to promote PE and make it known in Europe and in the Congregation. The first coverage that went out on Project Europe was on Great Britain. Regarding the statistics on the Congregation presented yesterday we found a problem of mentality: Salesians use new technologies and we have smart-phones and computers but the mentality hasn't changed; it continues to be a "paper" one. We don't see the institutional importance of communicating and having updated statistics. It is important for SC delegates and provincial secretaries to learn how to insert data and share it in an updated way at local, provincial and world level. I thank those who cooperate in this service.*

SALESIAN PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY
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37. In the report there is a chapter given to the UPS and here we have spoken of the

financial difficulties the UPS has and finding suitable Salesian personnel. What is the future for the UPS? Are they working in with other universities while maintaining what is specific in terms of Salesian intellectual reflection? (GARCÍA Manuel Fernando)

**Rector Major:** *for 5 years now the superior generals who have Pontifical Roman Universities have been saying that they can't go on as before for reasons to do with personnel, finance, students. Jesuits, Benedictines, Redemptorists, Claretians and ourselves have met and we did some work saying that we could not maintain all the faculties. We have to invite Rectors of universities and work together. We have informed the Congregation for Catholic Education asking for an opinion - with favourable results.*

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** *On Saturday afternoon 22 March we will visit the UPS. As for cooperation with other Pontifical Roman Universities there is a dialogue going on to reach an agreement on faculties of Canon Law (UPS, Gregorian, Angelicum, Antonianum), with the likelihood of one place and common lectures, shared lecturers and also proposed are courses characterised by charismatic identity. We have not considered closing our Faculty because we need canonists. We are reviewing courses and seeking to focus on what is specific to us: education, youth ministry, catechetics. On finding personnel it seems to me that in the last six years many new teachers have arrived (23 and others to come), there is a great generational replacement at the UPS. When we come to know of candidates we get in touch with the provincial to see if there are obstacles, then we go ahead with the individual. We have excellent young confreres there, and there is a need for fewer Salesian personnel as Faculties are looking at which Chairs to entrust to lay people or other religious. Africa has already made valuable and well-prepared confreres available. The Rector Major tried to restore the Classics Faculty but the Holy See has requested this service.*

38. What should be the role of the UPS in the Congregation today if there are so many other universities in every region? (Commission 3)

**Fr Francesco Cereda:** *I don't think I know of universities doing research in pedagogy. The UPS has this role, studying pedagogy and linking with the efforts in other regions. The UPS is the place for preparing pastoral workers of a specifically Salesian nature. Another field is psychology with a motivational model: the UPS is the place for offering the Church this specific approach. Catechetics, Spirituality, Formation of formators are other specific fields for the UPS. Where there are other Salesian universities working in these areas it would be good to create a network under the coordination of the UPS. There is something specific about the Roman Universities which needs to be studied more deeply. The UPS with its international, ecclesial and Salesian experience also has the task of preparing Salesian leadership for the Congregation.*

39. Someone asked me: how come there is no question about the UPS, which is also part of the Rector Major's Report? Are we waiting for the meeting on the 21st (as Fr Cereda advised me some time ago) or can you tell us something in connection with the topic/question on the formation of Salesian management teams (cf. your answer to the request I made to confreres) and how I once again took up the Special GC (21st) =forming Salesian personnel) and my broader opinion =forming ecclesial

personnel (clerical and lay) and studying, researching, writing on/for/ evangelisation of the young and the youth situation in a globalised world? (NANNI Carlo)

**Rector Major:** *when Fr Ricaldone opened the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum he wanted to form these teams. Where do we want to be? The question is to do with formation of those who are leaders.*

40. Section 1.4. Coordination and cooperation at different levels (p.28): As regards the approach adopted for selecting confreres to offer their service to the UPS and the General House, *how can all provinces be more involved and cooperative in this?* (Commission 2)

## SOCIAL JUSTICE – HUMAN RIGHTS

41. As you state in your report on p. 316, following GC26 it is said that "greater commitment to social justice" was lacking. The choice of solidarity with the poor saw a great moment at the Congress on Human Rights and the Preventive System (which continues today through IUS /UPS seminars on inclusive education). But has it entered the religious and pastoral thinking of the Salesians (as *Evangelii Gaudium* part four also wants: the social justice dimension of evangelisation and talks to religious)? would there not be a need for this to be part of the foundational formation of the Salesian (and the Salesian Family) to a true and proper political education (chap. 2,3,4 of the 4th part of *Evangelii Gaudium*?). even though Don Bosco made the "Our Father" his politics and this motivated his political and cultural choices. What do you think? (NANNI Carlo)

**Rector Major:** *if we do not enter into this dynamic our social works will not be works that transform the world. That has to do with empowerment and without attention to this, our work is maintaining the status quo. Whoever is a believer cannot but transform the world. Our commitment has to be more decisive. The Congress on the "Preventive system and human rights" was an opportunity that gave rise to a new mentality: education from rights and to rights has become ordinary practice. I'd be happy for our presence to be more attentive to this. Evangelii Gaudium in its 4th part points to a socio-economic model which cannot continue and commits us to, involves us in social change.*

**Fabio Attard:** *in his report the RM indicated the shift from pastoral choice to a pastoral attitude. Human rights is not a sector but runs across everything. Regarding formation, important choices enter (what are the first pastoral experiences we offer candidates, do they create a frontier or ghetto mentality?). There is strong reflection on this in Spain, Italy, India, Germany, Belgium, in the Americas and other parts of the world. in Italy, India, Germany, Belgium, in America and other parts of the world.*