

GENERAL CHAPTER 27

"WITNESSES TO GOSPEL RADICALISM"



*Called to live in fidelity to
the apostolic project of Don Bosco
"Work and temperance"
(ACG 413)*



PREAMBLE

Ecclesial Context
Congregational context
What do we mean by radical
Objectives of GC27



THE DOCUMENT

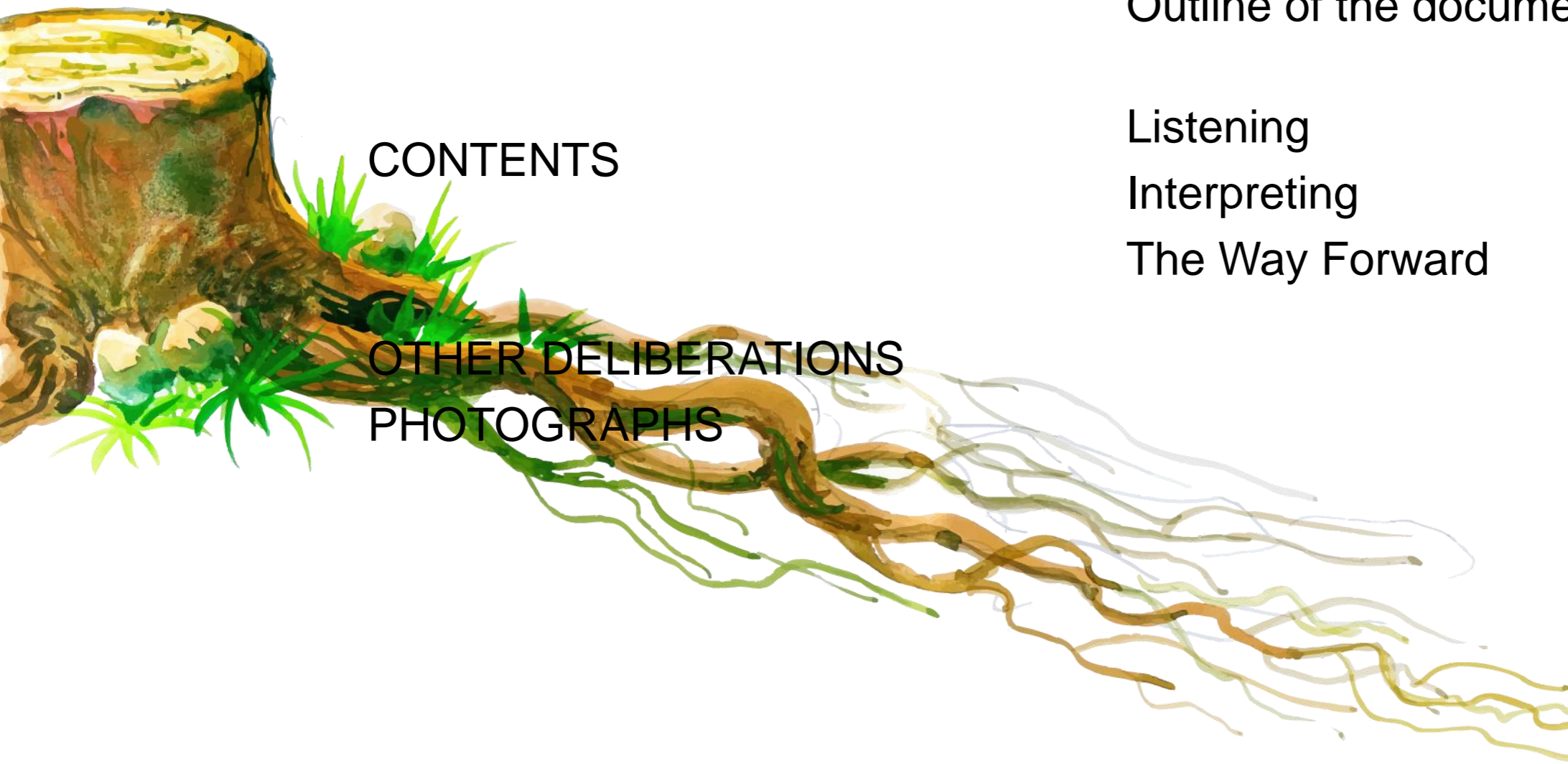
Its value
How to read the document
Outline of the document

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Listening
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The Way Forward

OTHER DELIBERATIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS



PREAMBLE

Ecclesial Context



Evangelii Gaudium (24.11.2013) speaks with images

"The joy of the Gospel fills our hearts and our lives."

"There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter." (6)

"A Church that goes forth ..." (20)

"Evangelizers take on the 'smell of the sheep'" (24)

"The bishop will sometimes go before his people ... At other times, he will simply be in their midst ... At yet other times, he will have to walk after them..." (31)

"... we speak more about law than about grace, more about the Church than about Christ, more about the Pope than about God's word." (38)

"I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy " (44)

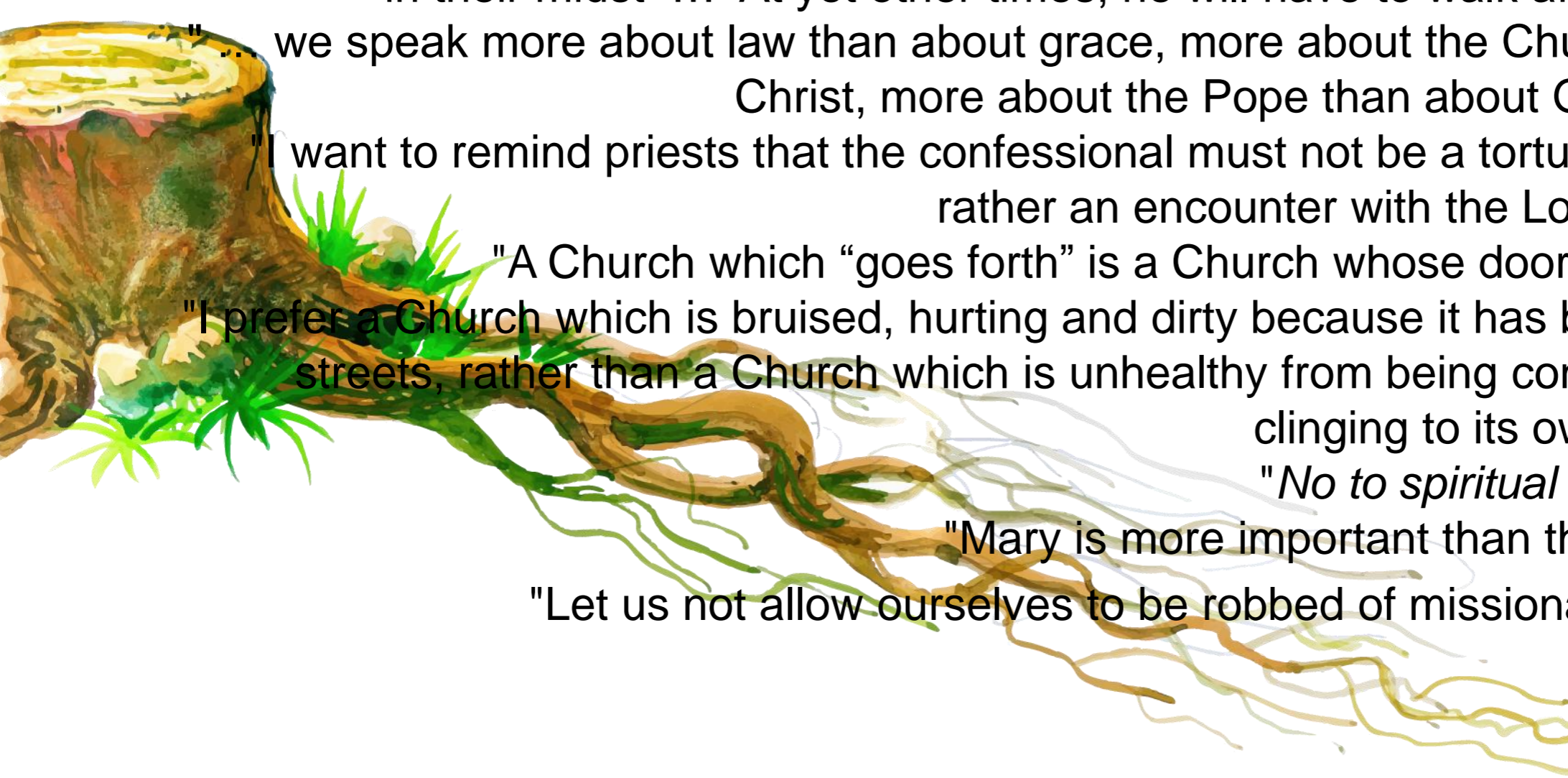
"A Church which "goes forth" is a Church whose doors are open " (46)

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security." (49)

"No to spiritual worldliness" (92)

"Mary is more important than the bishops" (104)

"Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!" (109)

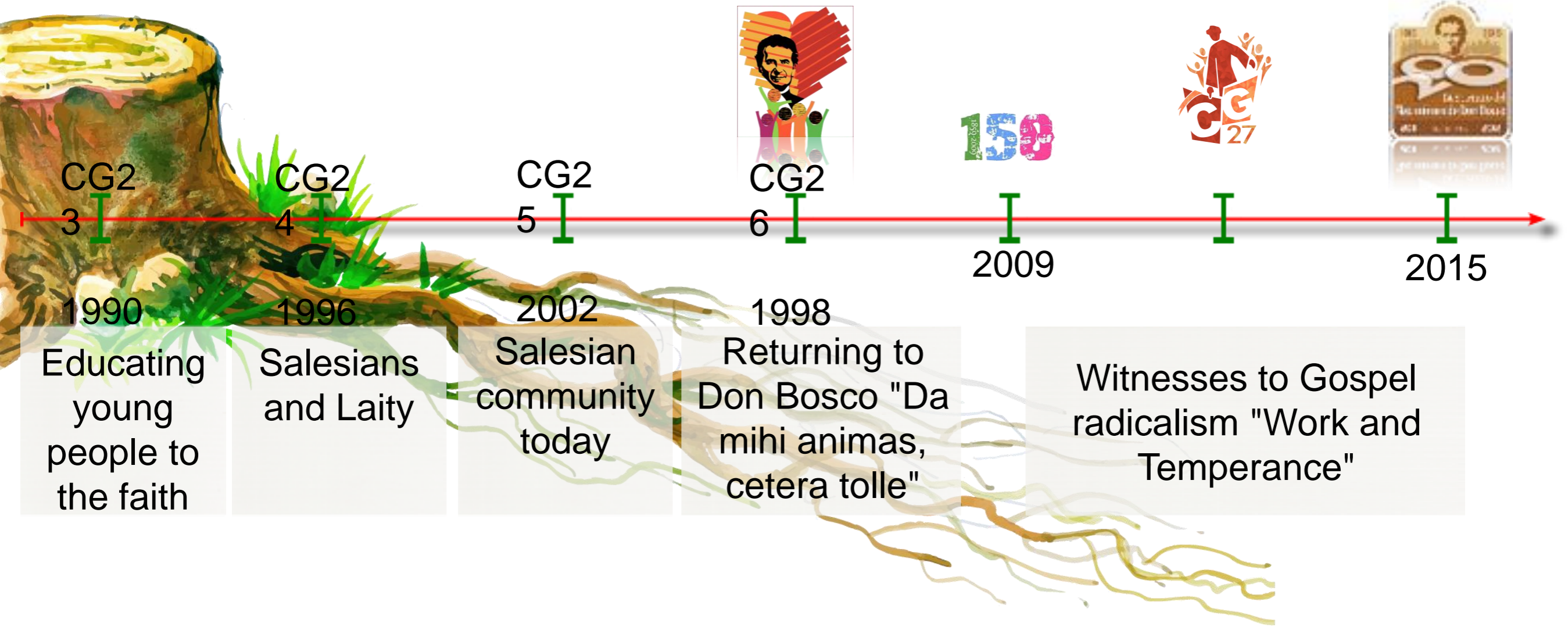


PREAMBLE

CONGREGATIONAL CONTEXT



Each General Chapter is part of a mosaic of the Salesian charism



INTRODUCTION

What do we mean by
radicalism?



A set of absolute demands, almost always paradoxical, that govern the life of the believer. It was R. Bultmann (1884-1976) who introduced the term "radical" in biblical studies, almost a century ago (1921): "The Jesus of the Gospels as a model of radical obedience to God."

The radicalism of the Gospel is a fundamental and indispensable demand for all Christians, which arises from the call of Christ to follow and imitate him. Its application to the consecrated life is relatively recent, and its exact content is still waiting for an explanation.

"[Consecrated Life is] a radical response in the following of Christ through acceptance of the evangelical counsels." (VC 14, 1996)

"The consecrated life may experience further changes in its historical forms, but there will be no change in the substance of a choice which finds expression in a radical gift of self for love of the Lord Jesus and, in him, of every member of the human family." (VC 3)

BACKGROUND

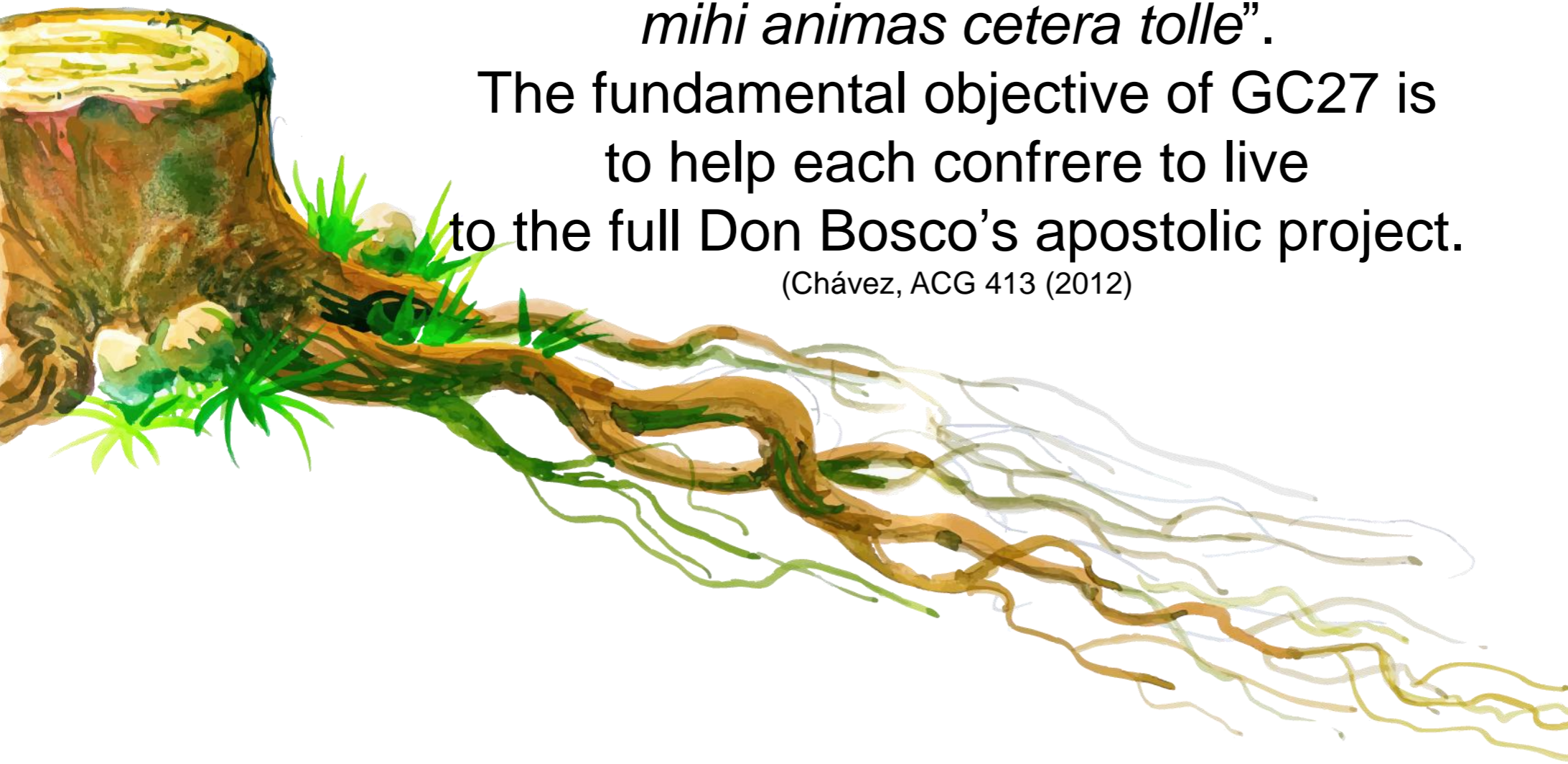
The objective of GC27



The theme chosen concerns the witness of the radical approach of the gospel, which finds in the motto “*work and temperance*” (cf. C 18) a practical application in life and activity of what Don Bosco expressed in “*da mihi animas cetera tolle*”.

The fundamental objective of GC27 is to help each confrere to live to the full Don Bosco’s apostolic project.

(Chávez, ACG 413 (2012))



DOCUMENT



The General Chapter is much more than a document. It is an experience of grace in which every chapter member must be a witness when he returns to the Salesian community he comes from.

We started our journey in the Salesian Holy Land, a place of the Gospel and of daily miracles. We were there as people who go up a river in search of the source. Rediscovering Don Bosco helped us to deepen the roots of our evangelical vocation and to discover new reasons to live radically, as he did, the handing on of the Kingdom to the poorest young people.

Returning to Rome, we started our work with challenging reflections and resolutions. The fraternal spirit and the search in communion enabled us to build a network of sincere and cordial relations, which helped us to experience the richness of our multicultural society and the prophecy of fraternity lived at firsthand.

God has given us a father. At the time when we were expressing our thanks for the enlightened and fruitful ministry of Fr Pascual Chávez Villanueva, we realized that the election of Fr Angel Fernandez Artime as the Rector Major and the 10th successor of Don Bosco was a gift of providence for us all, for the whole Salesian Family and for young people.

DOCUMENT



His open and sincere smile, his simplicity, his great humanity and his spontaneous relationship with every confrere let us see in him the face of the father promised by Don Bosco: "Another will be elected, who will take care of you and of your eternal salvation. Listen to him, love him, obey him, pray for him ... " (Don Bosco).

The meeting with **Pope Francis** was a very special moment. His sincere and affectionate words touched our hearts.

He asked us to be, like Don Bosco, men of the Gospel, who live daily life with simplicity and self-giving, in an austere and free style.

He told us to go to the margins where the young people live, and not to be sparing in our efforts to devote our best energies to those who have no home and live with no prospects and no future.

Yes, Pope Francis made our Salesian hearts burn. His embrace was an expression of sincere affection for the children of Don Bosco and our emotion as we shook his hand renewed our filial loyalty to the Successor of Peter, as Don Bosco always wanted from his Salesians.

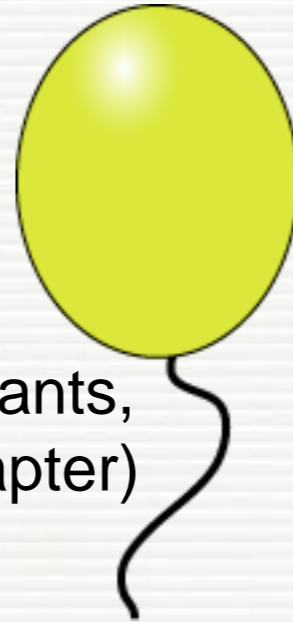
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CG27 was

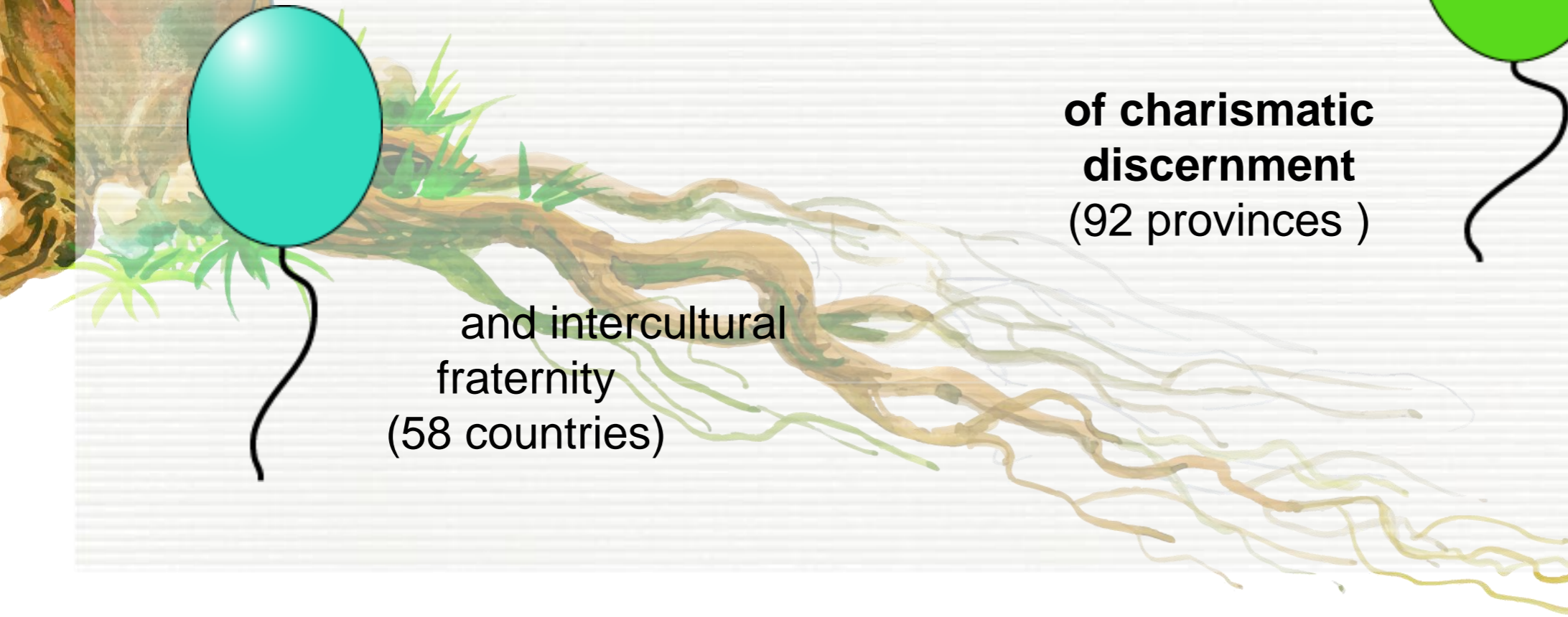
An ecclesial experience

(207 members and 13 invited participants,
128 for the first time at a General Chapter)



**of charismatic
discernment**
(92 provinces)

and intercultural
fraternity
(58 countries)



DOCUMENTO

How to read the Chapter Document

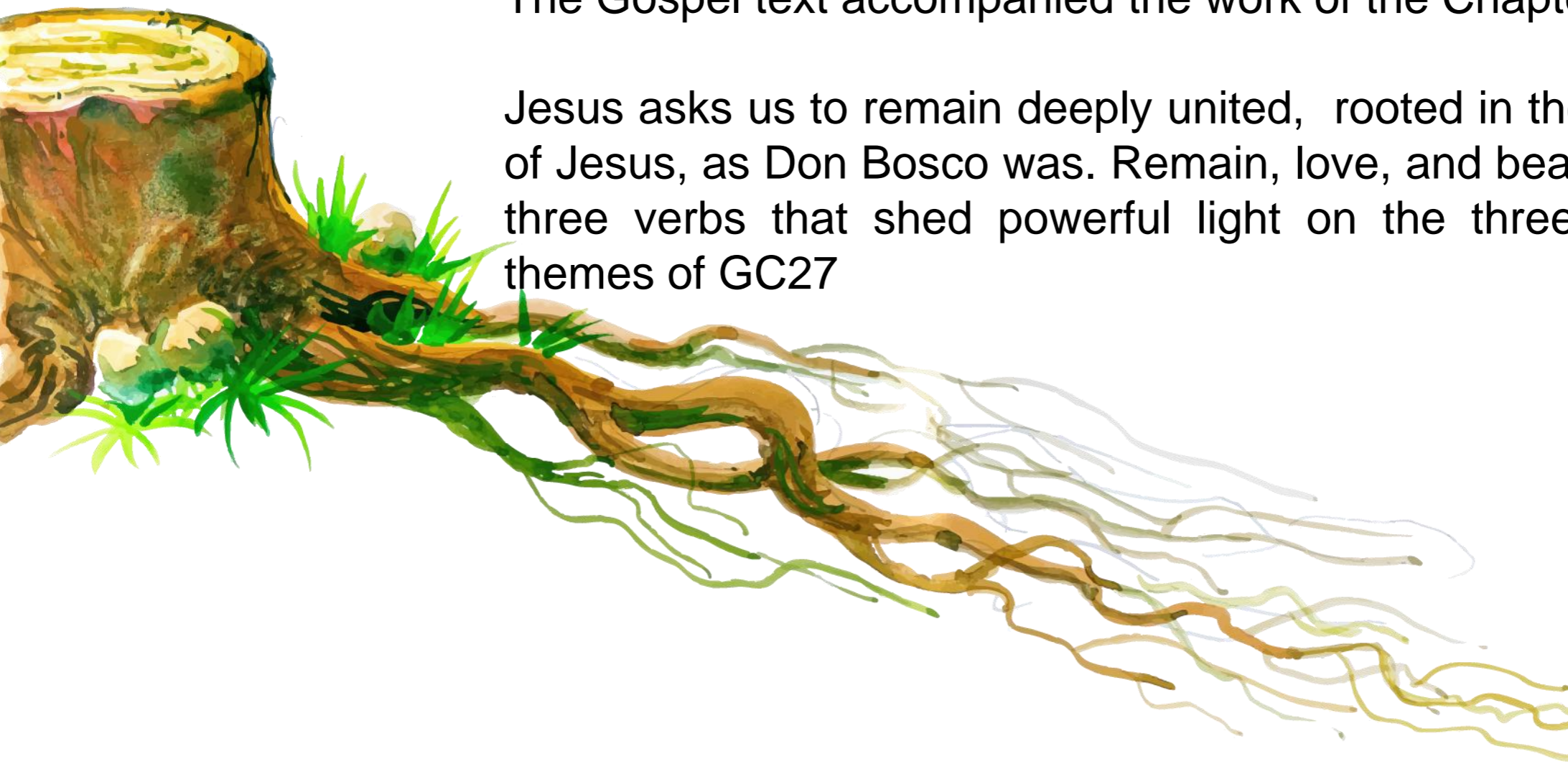
Some keys to reading the document:



A **the Gospel:** The vine and the branches (John 15:1-11).

The Gospel text accompanied the work of the Chapter.

Jesus asks us to remain deeply united, rooted in the love of Jesus, as Don Bosco was. Remain, love, and bear fruit: three verbs that shed powerful light on the three core themes of GC27



DOCUMENTO

How to read the Chapter Document

Some keys to reading the document:

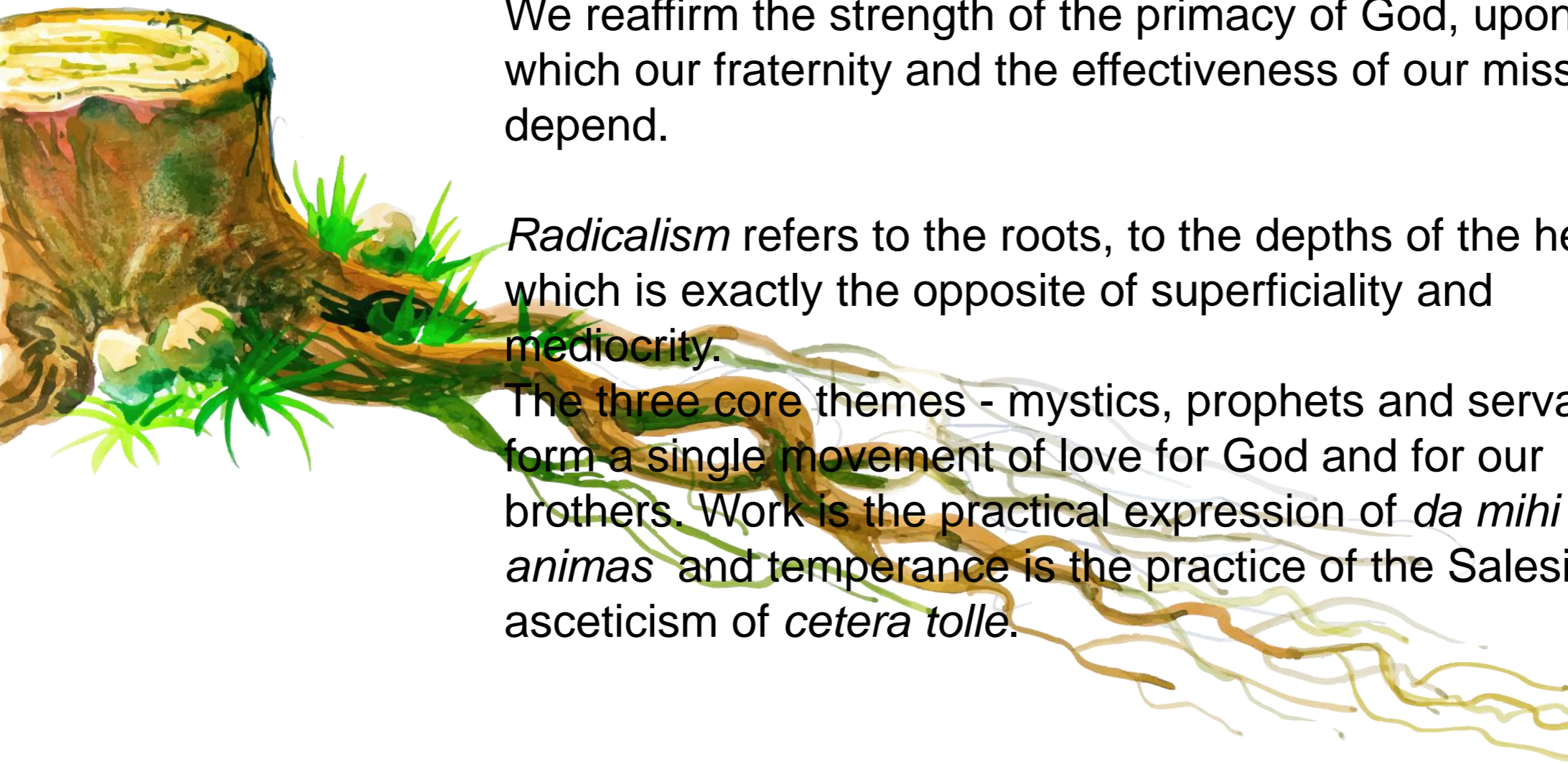


B **The grace of unity:** the three core themes are not watertight compartments, but a single dynamism of love.

We reaffirm the strength of the primacy of God, upon which our fraternity and the effectiveness of our mission depend.

Radicalism refers to the roots, to the depths of the heart, which is exactly the opposite of superficiality and mediocrity.



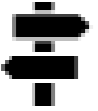
The three core themes - mystics, prophets and servants - form a single movement of love for God and for our brothers. Work is the practical expression of *da mihi animas* and temperance is the practice of the Salesian asceticism of *cetera tolle*.



DOCUMENT

OUTLINE OF THE DOCUMENT



-  **Listening:** to the appeal of the world, the Church, the Congregation and the young people (SEE)
-  **Interpreting:** the appeals, the roots and the causes (JUDGE)
-  **Way Forward:** Where are we going? What processes do we need? (ACT)

"Listening - Interpreting - Way Forward"
are divided into the following points:

A

Like Don Bosco, in dialogue with the Lord, we walk together, moved by the Spirit ... **(MYSTICS)**

B

... in an experience of fraternal life, like that of Valdocco, ready to work in projects and in collaboration ... **(PROPHETS)**

C

... going out to the margins, offering prophetic gestures for the welfare of the young ... **(SERVANTS)**

CONTENTS



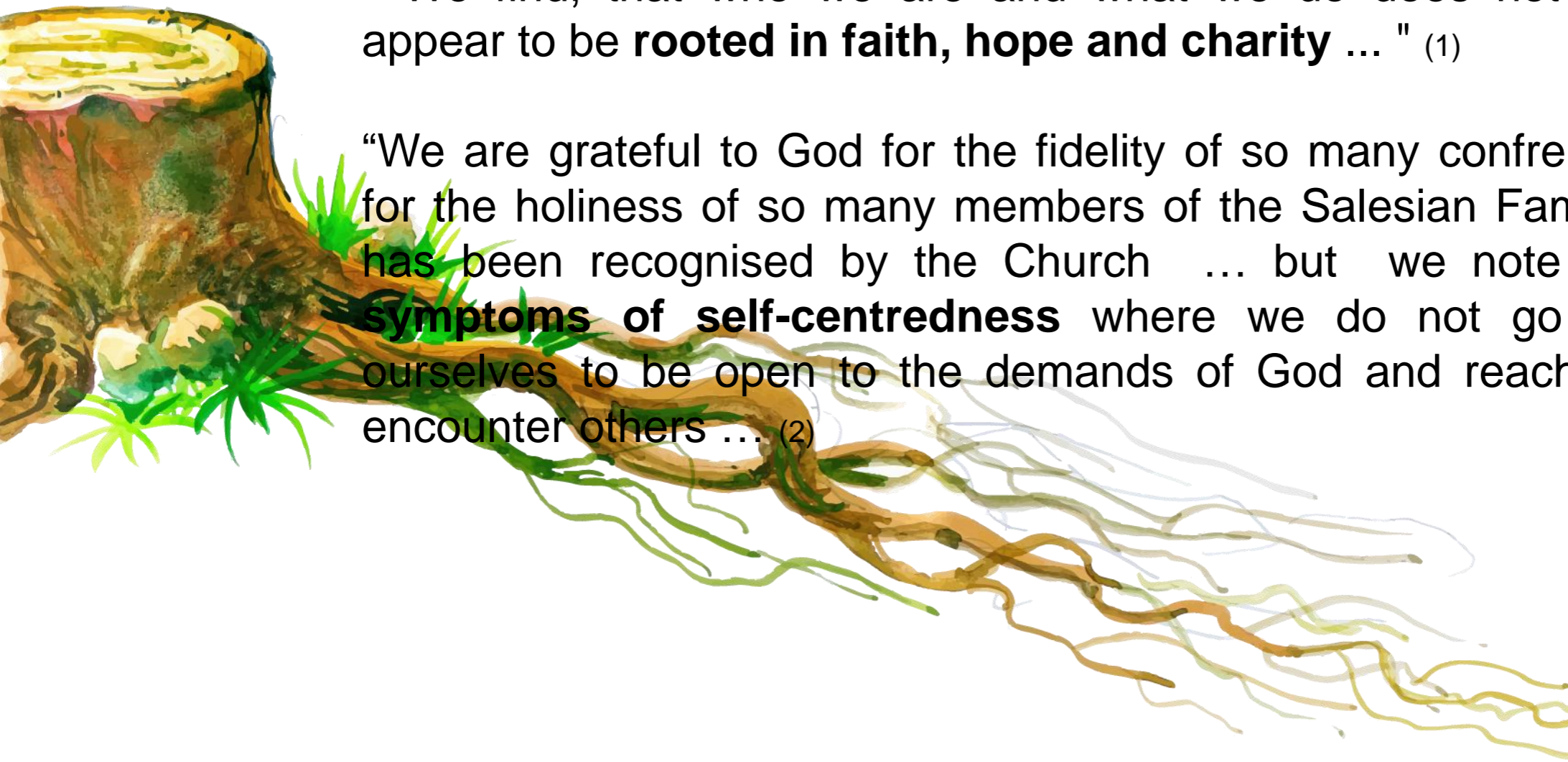
Listening – Interpreting – The Way Forward



"We recognize that the historical moment in which we find ourselves is a place of encounter with the Lord. We wish, as individuals and communities, to give primacy to God in our lives ... the desire of God, that we feel in us, is alive in the young and the laity ... " (1)

" We find, that who we are and what we do does not always appear to be **rooted in faith, hope and charity** ... " (1)

"We are grateful to God for the fidelity of so many confreres and for the holiness of so many members of the Salesian Family that has been recognised by the Church ... but we note certain **symptoms of self-centredness** where we do not go out of ourselves to be open to the demands of God and reach out to encounter others ... " (2)



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Listening – Interpreting – The Way Forward

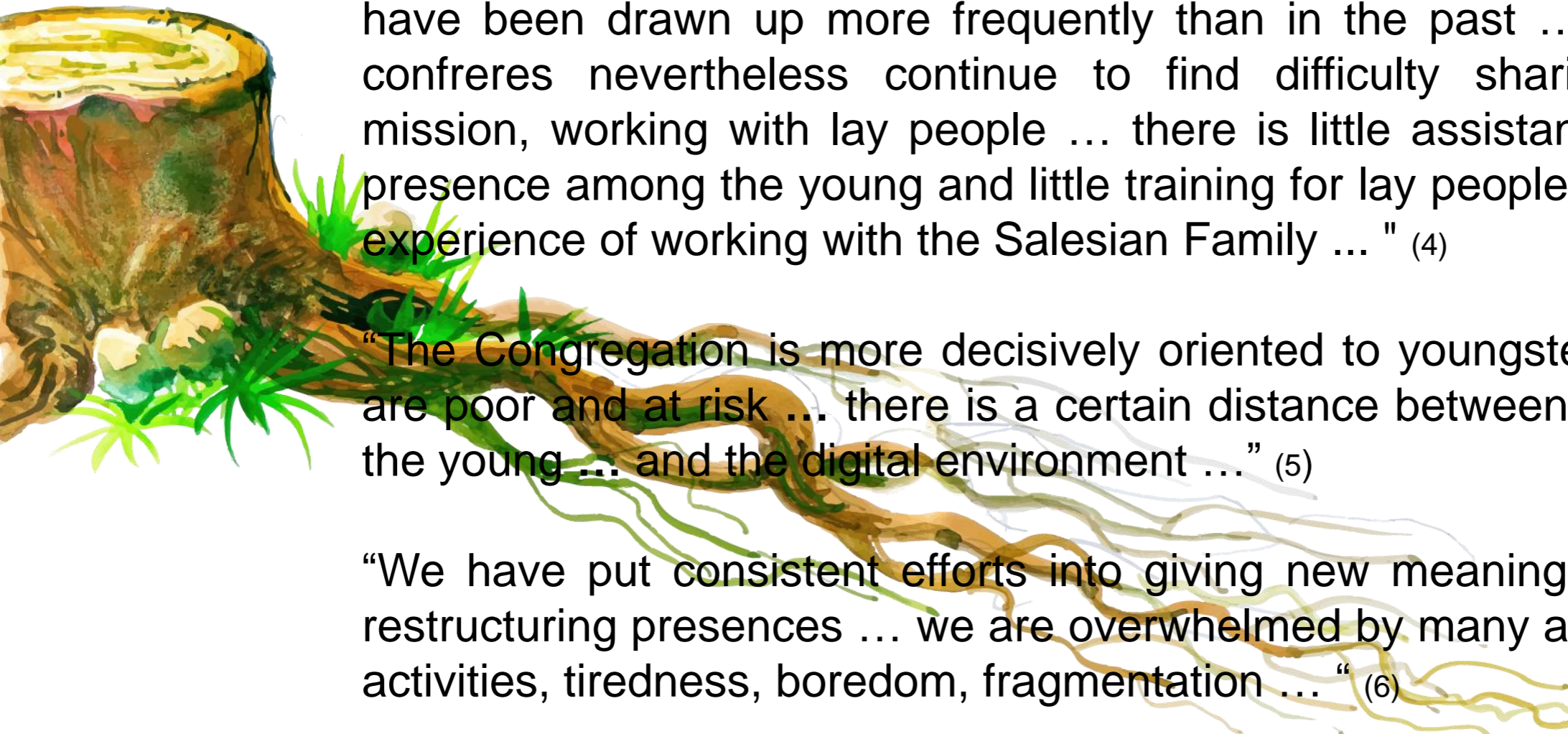


"There has been a growing commitment to living our community life more authentically ... Some negative influences from society are also noted in our communities... we perceive **community time as time 'stolen'** from the mission or the private sphere ... " (3)

"The Community Plan and the Educative and Pastoral Project have been drawn up more frequently than in the past ... Some confreres nevertheless continue to find difficulty sharing the mission, working with lay people ... there is little assistance and presence among the young and little training for lay people ... little experience of working with the Salesian Family ... " (4)

"The Congregation is more decisively oriented to youngsters who are poor and at risk ... there is a certain distance between us and the young ... and the digital environment ... " (5)

"We have put consistent efforts into giving new meaning to and restructuring presences ... we are overwhelmed by many apostolic activities, tiredness, boredom, fragmentation ... " (6)



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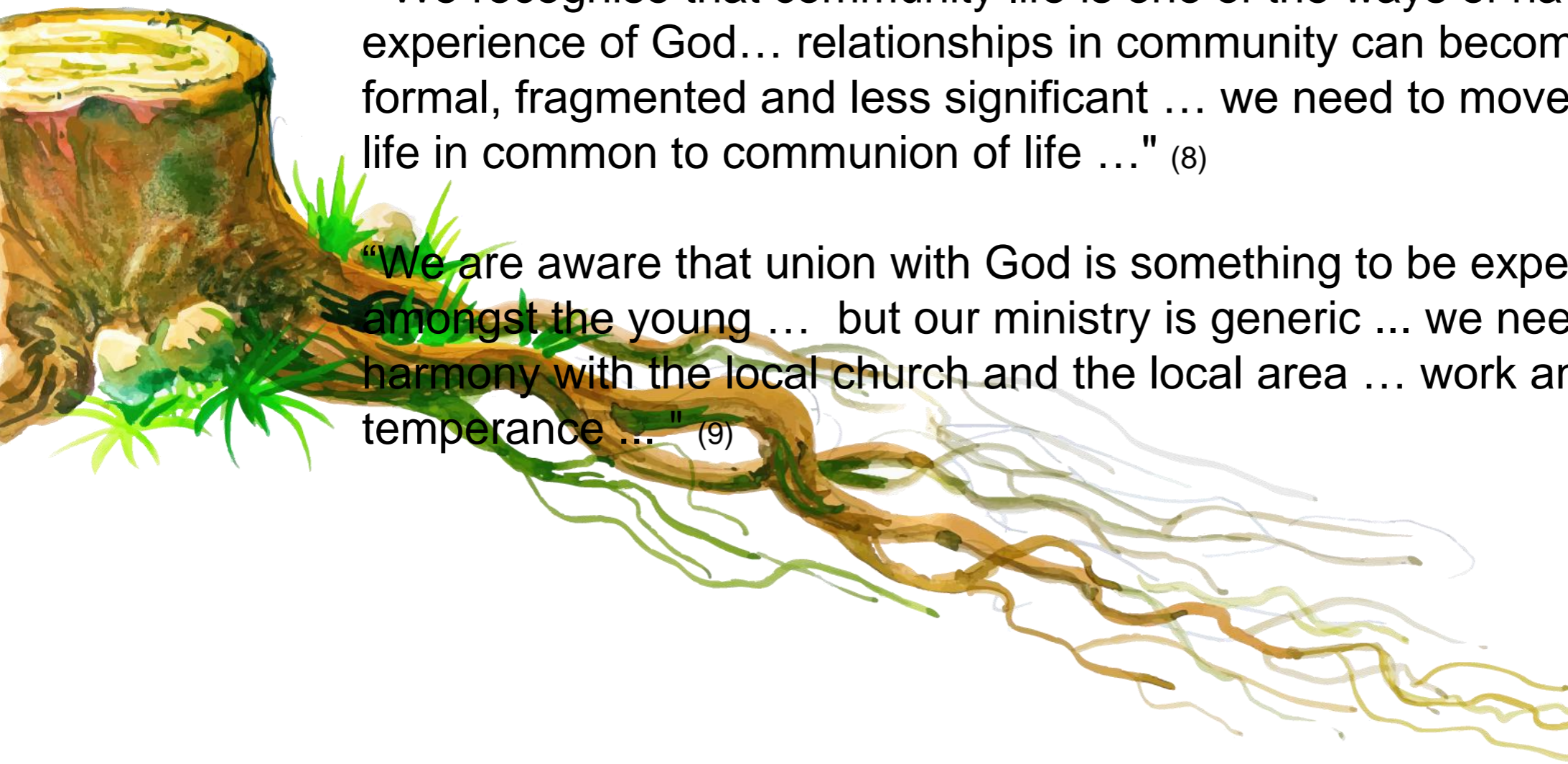
Listening – **Interpreting** – The Way
Forward



"The difficulties we experience in responding to God's call to follow Christ in a radical way, are due to our weak faith in the fruits of the evangelical counsels and ... there is a risk of being considered mere social workers ..." (7)

" We recognise that community life is one of the ways of having an experience of God... relationships in community can become formal, fragmented and less significant ... we need to move from life in common to communion of life ..." (8)

"We are aware that union with God is something to be experienced amongst the young ... but our ministry is generic ... we need more harmony with the local church and the local area ... work and temperance ..." (9)



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Goal



Listening – Interpreting – The Way
Forward



***To witness to “a radical Gospel approach”
by means of continual spiritual, fraternal
and pastoral conversion:***

A

living the PRIMACY OF GOD by contemplating what happens each day and by following Christ

B

building up authentic communities through relationships and work in accordance with the FAMILY SPIRIT

C

putting ourselves more decisively and significantly at the SERVICE OF the poorest of the YOUNG (10)



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Processes and steps

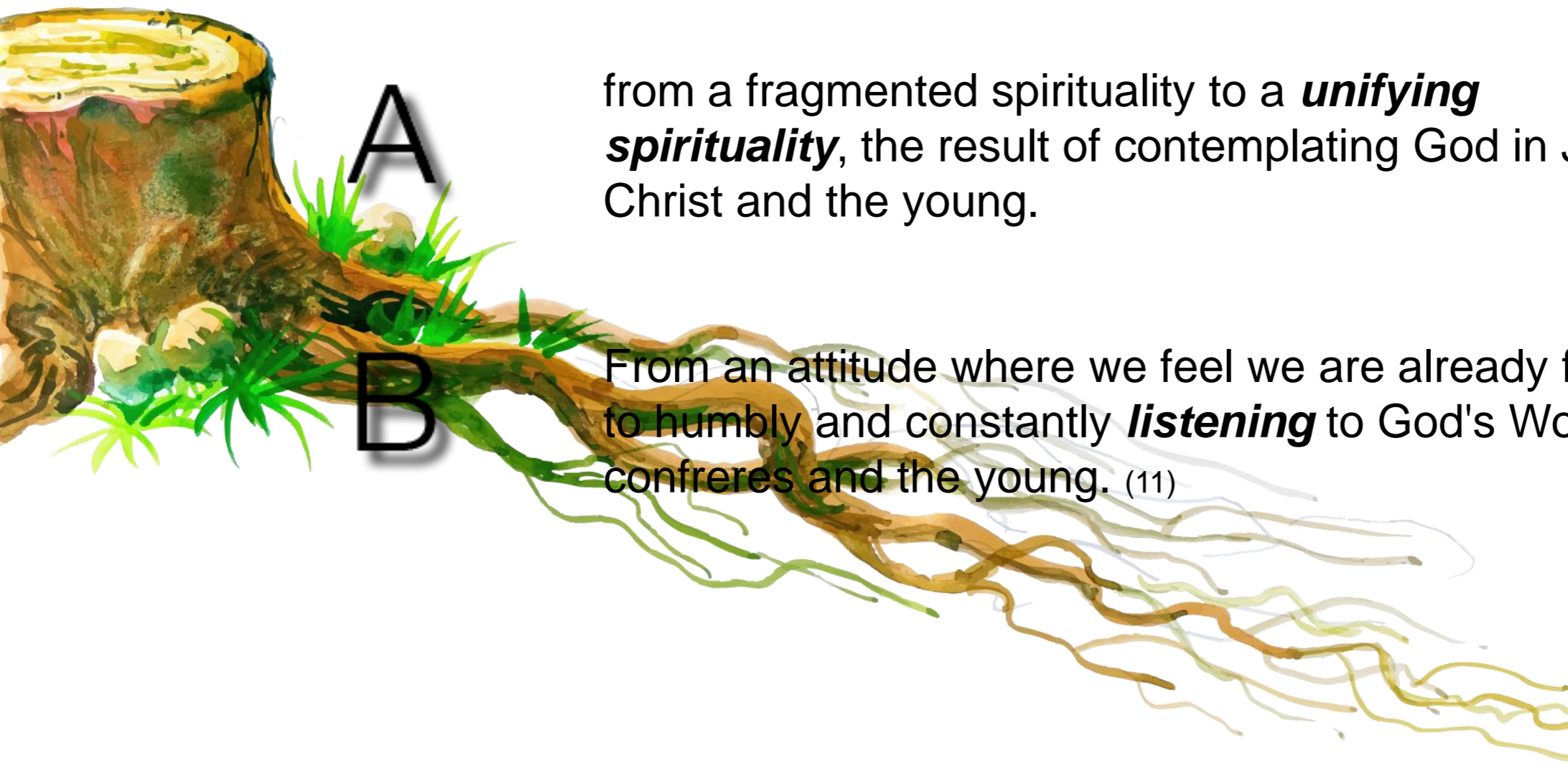


Listening – Interpreting – The Way
Forward



Like Don Bosco, in dialogue with the Lord ...

To be MYSTICS in the Spirit we need to move:



from a fragmented spirituality to a ***unifying spirituality***, the result of contemplating God in Jesus Christ and the young.

From an attitude where we feel we are already formed, to humbly and constantly ***listening*** to God's Word, our confreres and the young. (11)

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To bring about these processes we resolve

A

Experience our daily **Eucharist** as the source of our apostolic fruitfulness and celebrate the **Sacrament of reconciliation** as a way of frequently setting out once more on the path to conversion

B

Cultivate **personal prayer** in daily contact with the Word of God, engaging in meditation and seeing to the quality of **community prayer**, sharing it with the young and members of the EPC.

C

Give a special character to the project of animation and government at all levels for the next six years, by putting **God's Word at the heart of it.** (12)

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – The Way
Forward



... we walk together ... moved by the Spirit ...

To be MYSTICS in the Spirit we need to pass:



A

From a fragile witness of the evangelical counsels to a life full of passion in following Jesus, capable of **reawakening the world**, referring to the essential values of life.

B

From a pessimistic look at the world to a **vision of faith** that discovers the God of joy in the vicissitudes of life and in the history of mankind (13)

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:



A

Live with joy and authenticity the grace of consecration, drawing up anew and redefining our **personal life project and the community project.**

B

Have a **stable spiritual guide** to whom we make regular reference.

C

Deepen our spirituality through **frequent reading of the Constitutions and study of the Salesian sources.**

D

Provide opportunities for **community sharing**, starting from the word of God, with particular emphasis on *lectio divina*.

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:



E

As communities and as individual confreres, cultivate **harmony between prayer and work**, between reflection and apostolate, with appropriate evaluation.

F

See to the **translation of the Salesian sources into different languages.**

G

Update the manual **In dialogue with the Lord** and other aids to prayer.

H

To promote formation initiatives for Salesians and lay people at regional level and set up a centre for ongoing formation or make use of those of other regions (14)

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – The Way
Forward



Experiencing fraternal life like that of Valdocco ...

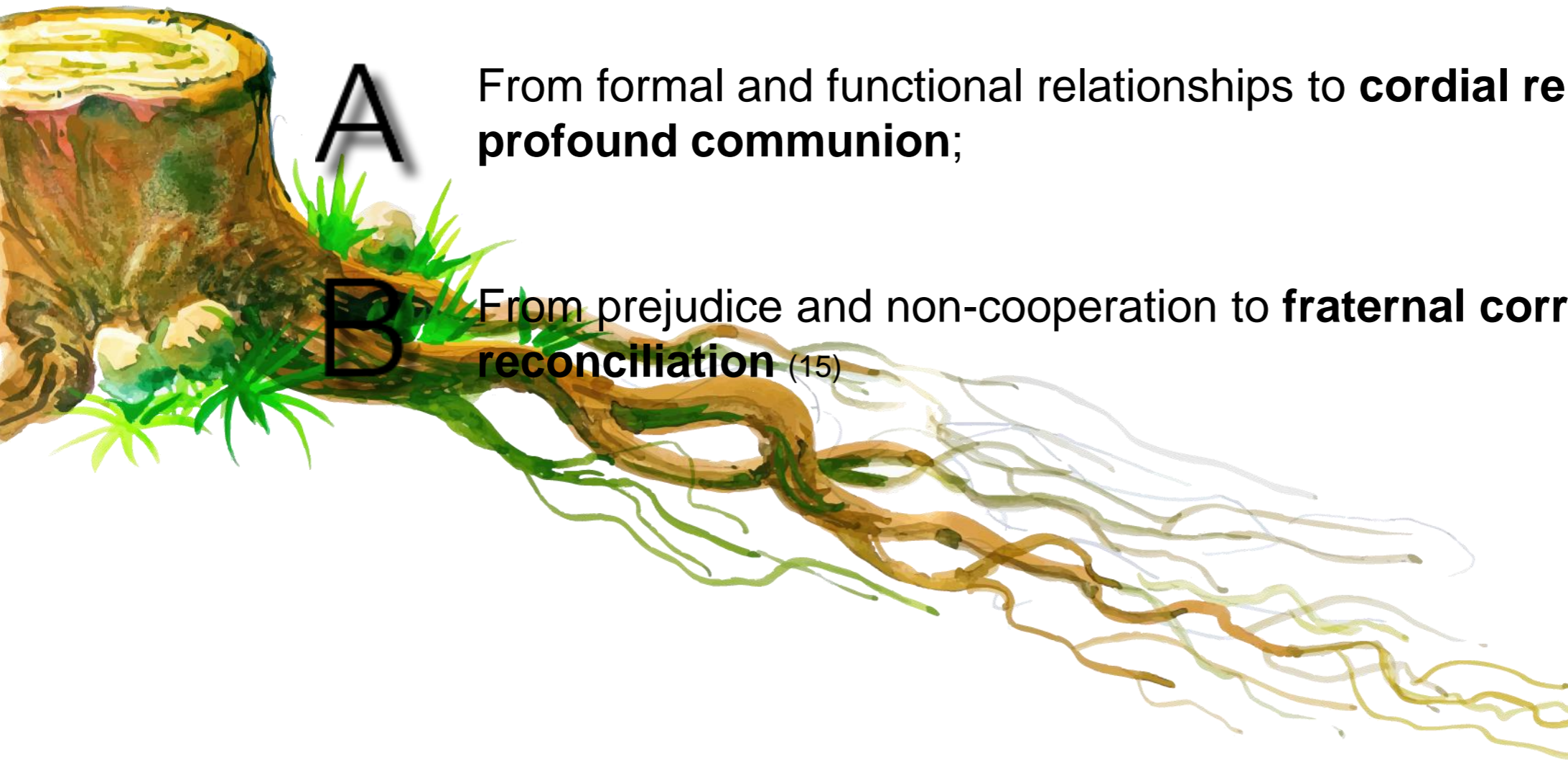
*To be **PROPHETS** of fraternity we must pass:*

A

From formal and functional relationships to **cordial relations and profound communion**;

B

From prejudice and non-cooperation to **fraternal correction and reconciliation** (15)



CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:

A

Give space to the practice of dialogue with each other (cf. EG 88), cultivating positive dynamics of interpersonal communication between the confreres, the young people, lay people and members of the Salesian Family, making use also of the contribution of the human sciences.

B

Live fraternal relationships, being close to and listening to our employees and collaborators, avoiding authoritarian attitudes and counter-witness.

C

Encourage each confrere to assume responsibility for the community, along with the Rector and his Council,

D

Meet the needs of sick and elderly confreres and involve them in the life and mission of the community, depending on their capabilities.

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Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:

E

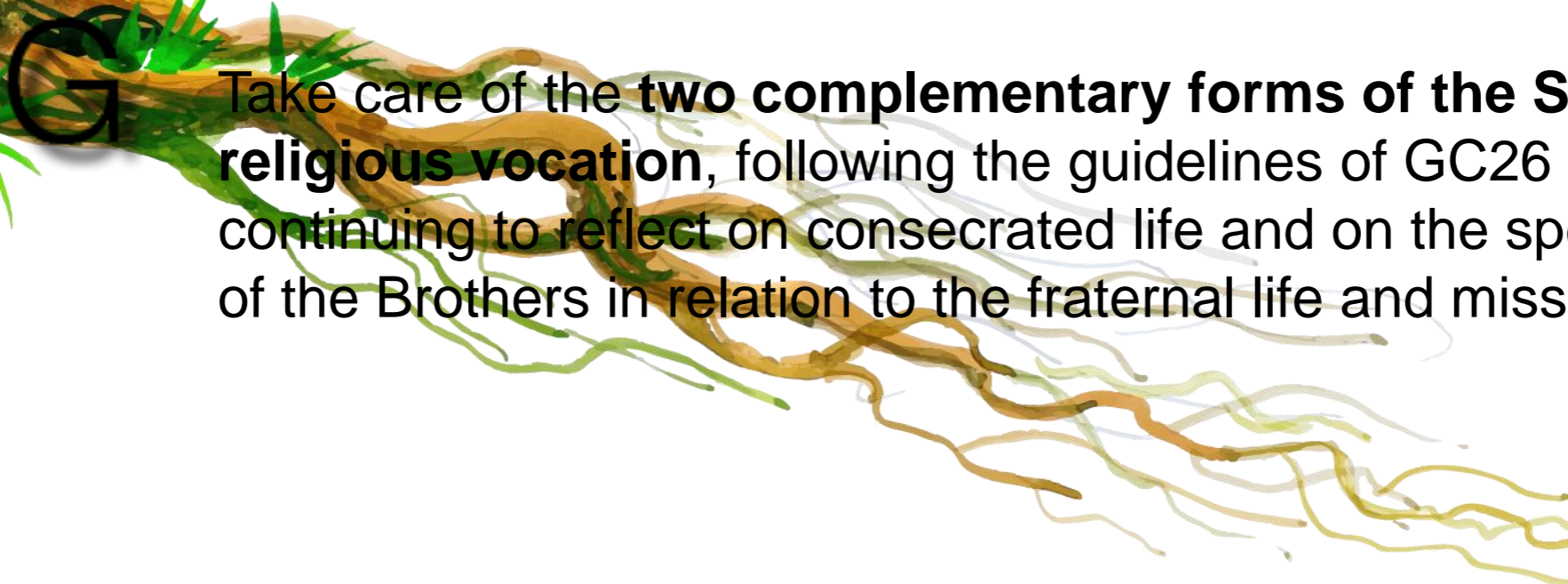
Support in a special way **the communities that work on the "frontiers"**.

F

Ensure **the consistency of communities in quality and quantity** through a wise and courageous reorganization of our presences.

G

Take care of the **two complementary forms of the Salesian religious vocation**, following the guidelines of GC26 (cf. 74-78) and continuing to reflect on consecrated life and on the specific vocation of the Brothers in relation to the fraternal life and mission.



CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – *The Way Forward*



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:



H Strengthen the programmes of human and spiritual growth and provide adequate **support to confreres** in difficulty.

I Review and re-launch in the programme of the next six years the proposal for the **formation of Rectors** (cf GC21,46-57; GC25, 63-65).

J Update the **Manuals for Rectors and Provincials**, with the Rector Major and the General Council. (16)

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



Willingness to work in projects and in collaboration ...

To be PROPHETS of fraternity we must pass:

A

From an individualistic pastoral approach to unconditional **availability** for the mission and projects of the community and province.

B

From looking on young people as mere recipients and lay people as collaborators to seeing young people as key agents and lay people as co-responsible for the mission (17).



CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:

A

Grow in communion and co-responsibility, through the acceptance of the community project and the SEPP, developing a Salesian culture and making it visible. (cf. AGC 413, p.53).

B

Collaborate with other groups of the Salesian Family who work for and with young people and promote their rights (cf. *Charter of Identity of the Salesian Family*, 21, 41).

C

Work effectively with the local Church, and with other religious families, educational, social and governmental agencies, as part of a network.

D

Draw up more appropriate programmes for **initial formation**, with involvement in youth ministry, inserted in the context of the social problems and cultural dynamics of the region.



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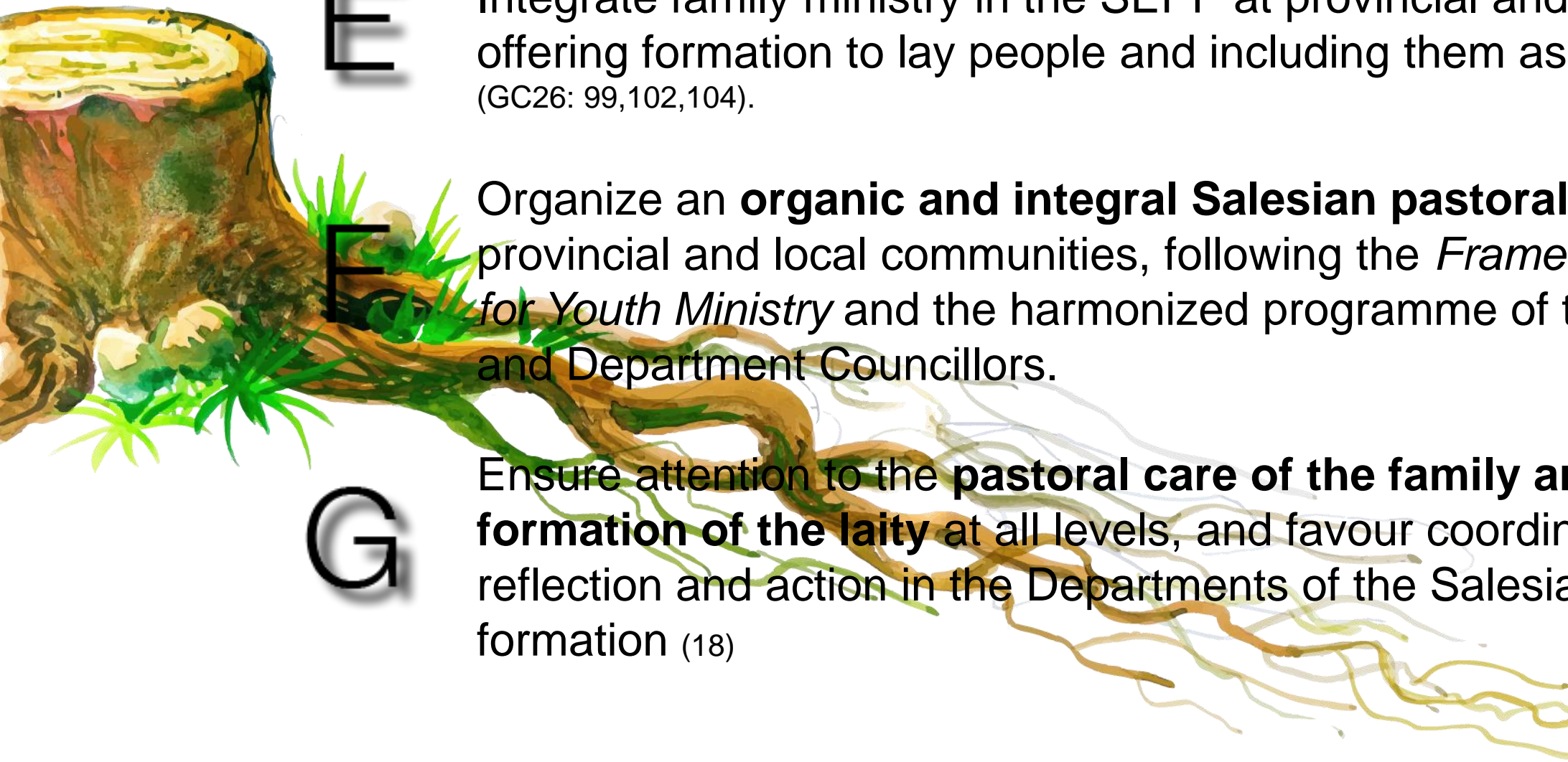
Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:



E Integrate family ministry in the SEPP at provincial and local levels, offering formation to lay people and including them as animators. (GC26: 99,102,104).

F Organize an **organic and integral Salesian pastoral ministry** in provincial and local communities, following the *Frame of Reference for Youth Ministry* and the harmonized programme of the Regional and Department Councillors.

G Ensure attention to the **pastoral care of the family and the formation of the laity** at all levels, and favour coordination of reflection and action in the Departments of the Salesian mission and formation (18)

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Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – The Way
Forward



Going out to the margins ...

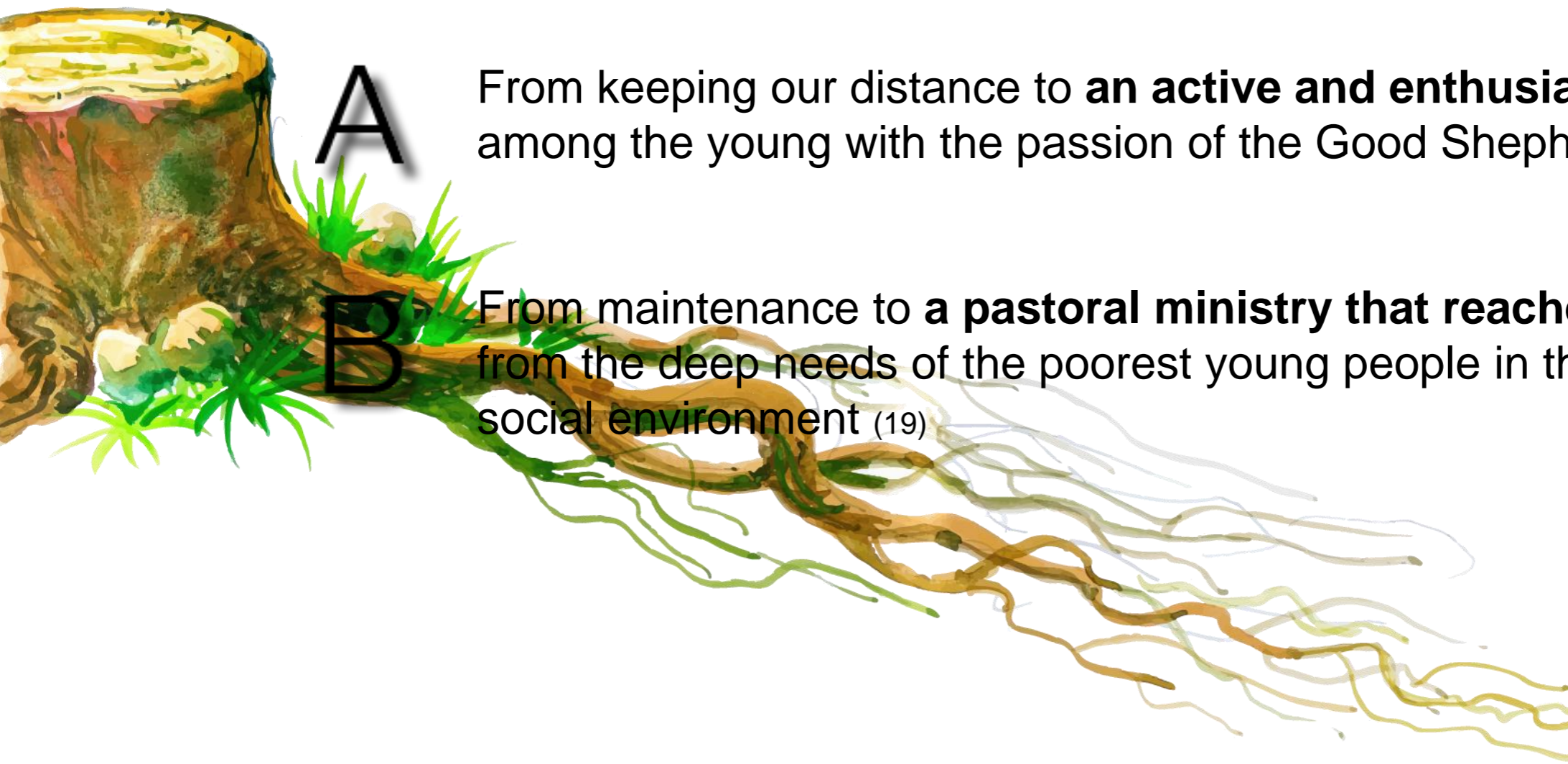
*To be **SERVANTS** of the young we need to pass:*

A

From keeping our distance to **an active and enthusiastic presence** among the young with the passion of the Good Shepherd.

B

From maintenance to **a pastoral ministry that reaches out**, starting from the deep needs of the poorest young people in their family and social environment (19)



CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:

A

Promote in the Provinces a thorough review of the significance and presence of our works among the poorest, following the criteria provided by the General Chapters and the Rector Majors, with a view to a "*structural pastoral conversion*" and a greater focus on new forms of poverty (cf. Reg 1).

B

Adopt, together with the laity, the *Frame of Reference for Youth Ministry*, starting processes of renewal, making use of the contribution of existing voluntary services and bearing in mind the new existential and geographical frontiers of the poorest young people.

C

Promote and defend human rights and the rights of minors through the innovative approach of the Preventive System, giving special attention to child labour and the sex trade, drug addiction and any form of abuse, unemployment and youth migration and the trafficking in persons.

CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To carry out these processes, we resolve to:

D

Foster in our environments a climate of respect for the dignity of children, striving to create conditions that prevent any form of **abuse and violence**, with every Province following the guidelines and directives of the Rector Major and the General Council.

E

Educate young people in **justice and legality**, and the **socio-political dimension of evangelization and charity**, helping them to become agents of social transformation in service of the common good.

F

Educate communities and young people to respect for Creation and responsibility for ecology through programmes of environmental protection and sustainable development (20)



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Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



Being prophetic signs in the service of youth!

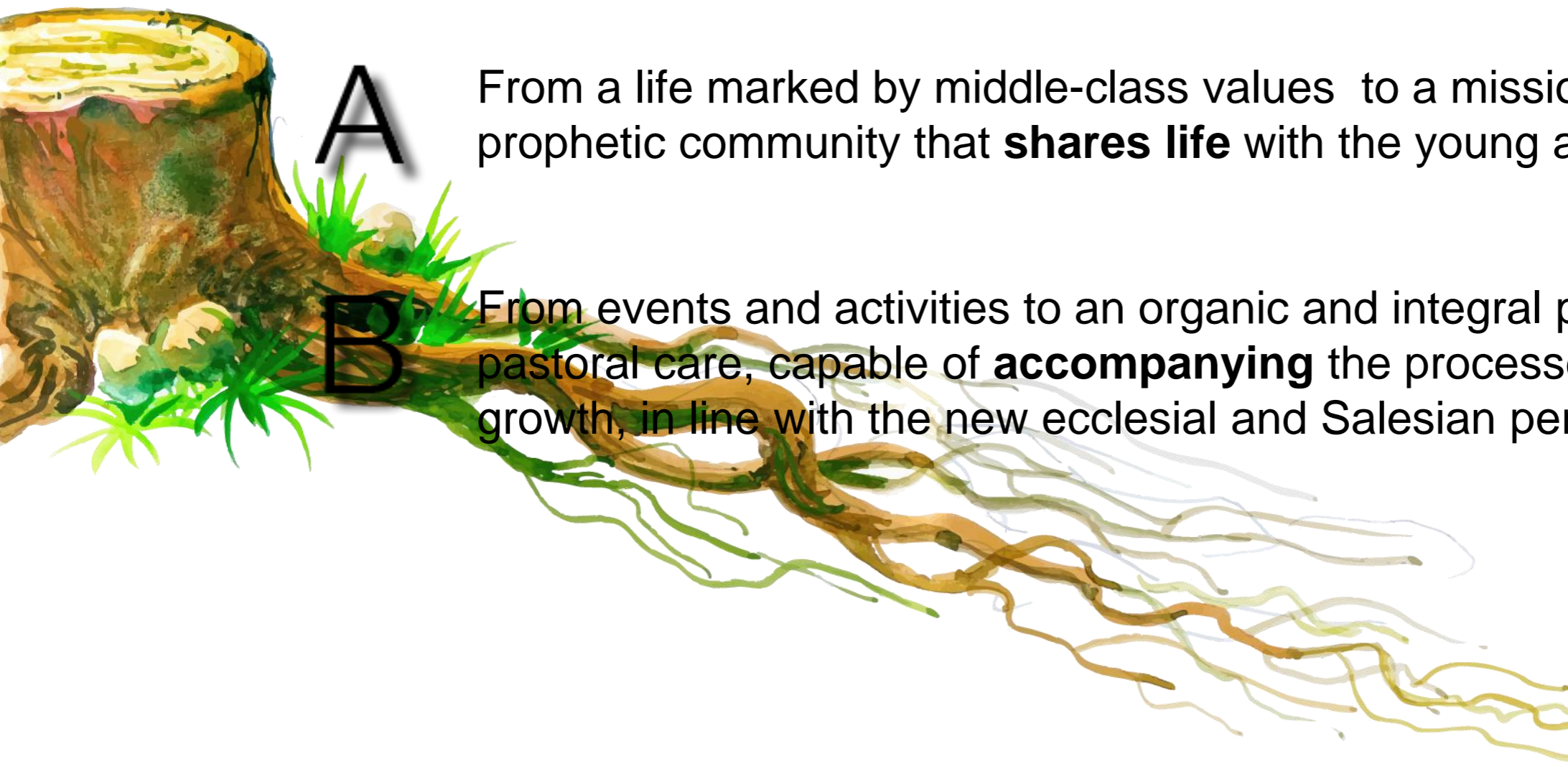
To be SERVANTS of the young people we need to pass:

A

From a life marked by middle-class values to a missionary and prophetic community that **shares life** with the young and the poor.

B

From events and activities to an organic and integral programme of pastoral care, capable of **accompanying** the processes of vocational growth, in line with the new ecclesial and Salesian perspectives (21)



CONTENTS

Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**



To achieve these processes we resolve to:

A

Develop a culture of vocation and care of vocations to Salesian life, cultivating the art of accompaniment and empowering Salesians and lay people to be spiritual leaders of the young.

B

Live the twin values of *work and temperance*, seeking **a lifestyle that is visibly poor**, eliminating waste and being available for domestic and community services.

C

Practise effective solidarity with the poor and those who live in need, and with Salesian houses.

D

Enter in a significant educational way into the digital world inhabited particularly by young people, ensuring adequate professional and ethical formation of the confreres and collaborators, applying the Salesian Preventive System of Communication Studies (sscs)



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Processes and steps



Listening – Interpreting – **The Way Forward**

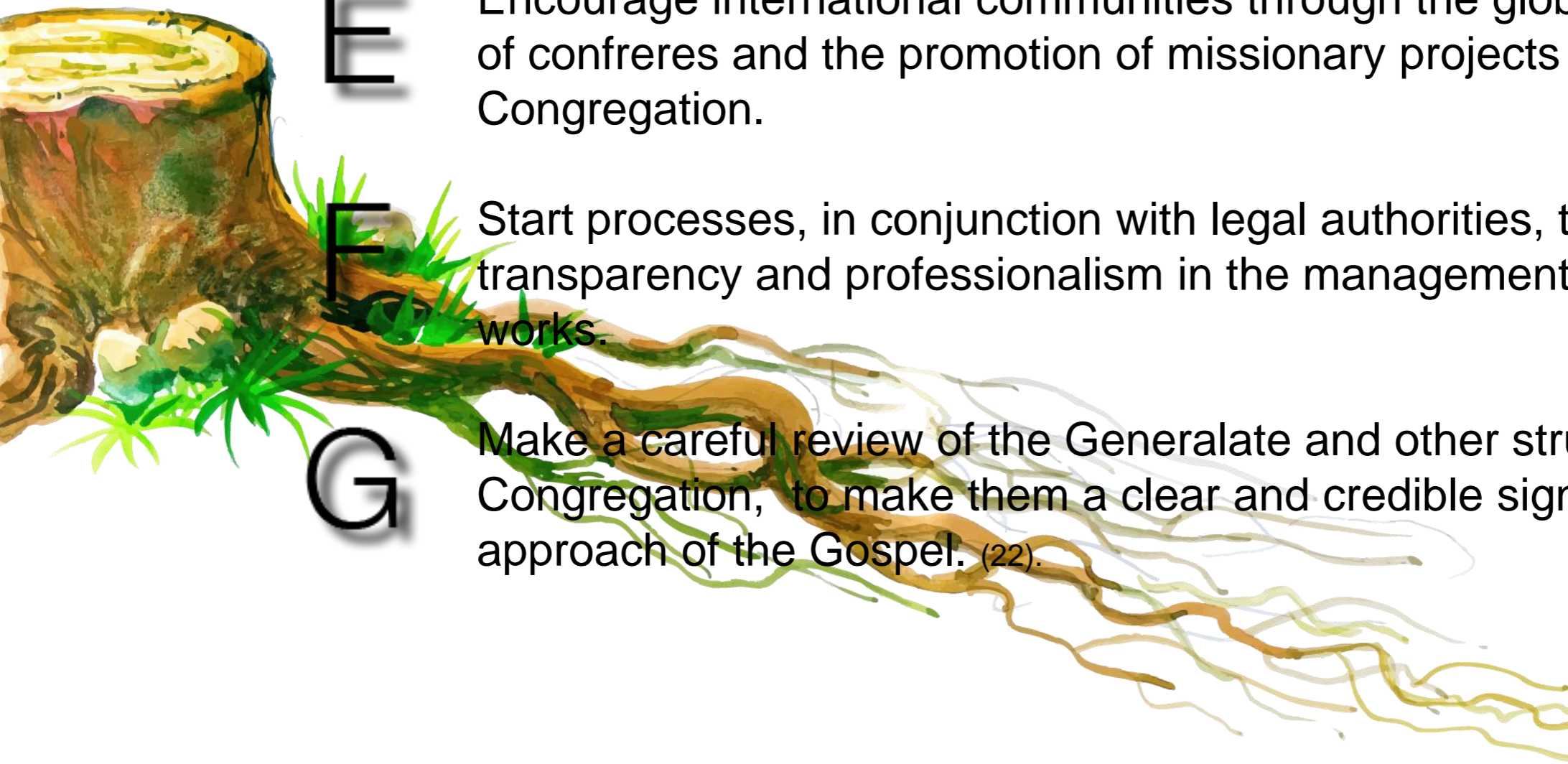


To achieve these processes we resolve to:

E Encourage international communities through the global distribution of confreres and the promotion of missionary projects of the Congregation.

F Start processes, in conjunction with legal authorities, to ensure transparency and professionalism in the management of goods and works.

G Make a careful review of the Generalate and other structures of the Congregation, to make them a clear and credible sign of the radical approach of the Gospel. (22).



Producido por:



En colaboración con:



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