



SOCIETA' DI SAN FRANCESCO DI SALES

CASA GENERALIZIA SALESIANA  
Via della Pisana 1111 - 00163 Roma  
*Il Vicario del Rettor Maggiore*

Rome, December 12, 2014  
Prot. N. 14/0393

For the kind attention of:  
**The Reverend Fr. Provincials  
and Provincial Councils**  
at their respective addresses

**Subject: Convening the Provincial Chapters**

Dear Fr. Provincials,

In keeping with the three-year fixed term laid down in Article 172 of the Constitutions, the Provinces and Vice-Provinces are called upon to convene their Provincial Chapters in the year 2015-2016. Articles 170-174 of the Constitutions and 161-169 of the Regulations provide the necessary guidelines for achieving a fruitful experience of communion, discernment and convergence on practical issues within the provincial community.

The local communities too are involved in the Chapter process, according to the guidelines that will be issued by the Provincial and the Moderator of the Provincial Chapter. In the last Provincial Chapters the opportunity to participate was offered to some members of the Salesian Family and some lay people with responsibilities in our works; this seems to be an accepted practice and deserves to be continued.

The Rector Major with the General Council call attention to the **two tasks** to be carried out by all Provincial Chapters, the first of which is an ordinary task, while the second is specific: "*The implementation of the GC27*" and the "*Reshaping of the Salesian presences of the Province*". These are the titles of the two documents that will have to be sent in for approval.

**1. "The implementation of the GC27"**

With regard to the first task, I wish to remind you that, according to the Constitutions, after the conclusion of a General Chapter, the Provincial Chapters have to determine how to implement its deliberations (cf. C 171). Each Province will continue the process begun during the Provincial Chapter in preparation for the GC27, assessing and improving its implementation. It is a matter of

once again taking up the Provincial Chapter's contribution to the GC27 and reviewing it in the light of the Chapter itself.

## **2. “Reshaping the Salesian presences of the Province”**

As regards the second task, the Province is called upon to reshape its presences. It is a matter of determining the criteria and guidelines for the communities and works: strengthening them and ensuring their relevance; re-dimensioning or closing them; looking at growth prospects and opening new works. In this operation it will be necessary to ensure the number and quality of each community, the availability of confreres, the balance between the various types of presences in the Province, the balance between expansion and the qualification of the confreres, the different ways of managing the works, the shared responsibility of laypeople, the involvement and shared responsibility of the Salesian Family in the area, the care of vocations to Salesian consecrated life, financial sustainability...

It is all a matter of governance for which the Provincial Chapter is responsible; in fact, the Regulations say that “it belongs to the Provincial Chapter to suggest ideas and criteria for the planning and reorganization of the works of the Province” (R 167). This is a task to be taken up by all the Provinces; in the case of having to reshape the Province, this task is urgent and must be completed before the reshaping process. With the approval and the guidelines given by the Rector Major and the General Council, the Province will continue its work of implementing the Chapter, providing a timetable to be followed.

In this regard, in addition to the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> General Chapters, the GC27 offers some practical operational guidelines:

- “Ensuring consistency in number and quality of communities by wisely and courageously reshaping communities” (GC27 69.6).
- “Promoting in Provinces a profound assessment of our significance for and presence among poorer youth in our works in accordance with the criteria offered by General Chapters and the Rector Majors, in view of “structural pastoral conversion” and a shift towards new poverties” (GC27 73.1).
- “Encouraging international communities also through a worldwide redistribution of confreres and the promotion of missionary projects in the Congregation” (GC27, 75.5).
- “Creating teamwork with other Salesian Family Groups who are working for the young and promoting their rights” (GC27 71.2).

## **3. Methods of implementation**

The Provincial Chapters will be held starting from **September 2015**. The two Chapter documents that have been mentioned and any changes in the Provincial Directory must be approved by the Rector Major and the General Council. They should be sent, in digital form only, to the General Secretariat by **May 15, 2016** and be accompanied by a letter of introduction from the Provincial.

I would like to remind you that the *Provincial Strategic Plan (progetto organico ispettoriale)* is prepared by the Provincial with his Council; it would be appropriate to envisage it for six years, from one General Chapter to the next, so that it can meet the General Chapter's requirements. The Provincial Chapter can offer the Provincial and his Council certain criteria, guidelines and priorities for completing or drawing up the Provincial Strategic Plan, which will

therefore cover the period from 2015 to 2021. The Provincial Strategic Plan does not need to be approved by the Rector Major and the General Council; it is sent to the Regional Councillor for his information and comments, if any.

The *Provincial Educative and Pastoral Plan* and the *Provincial Formation Plan* too are the responsibility of the Provincial and the Provincial Council and do not need the approval of the Rector Major and the General Council; they can be studied in the Provincial Chapter; they are sent to the Councillor for Youth Ministry and the Councillor for Formation respectively for their information and observations, if any.

To foster a true experience of discernment, discussion and sharing, the primary concern should not be that of drafting documents. The documents should receive proper attention and be prepared well; but at the same time, long-windedness and repetitions should be avoided.

I thank you for your kind attention and send you my cordial greetings.  
In Don Bosco,



don Francesco Cereda  
Don Francesco Cereda