

acts

**of the General Council
of the Salesian Society
of St John Bosco**

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ANIMATION AND COMMUNICATION FOR THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION

N. 311

**Year LXV
december 1984**

ACTS OF THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

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Editrice S.D.B.
Edizione extra commerciale

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PRESENTATION

In the booklet: "22nd General Chapter - Documents" (Rome, June 1984) were published the practical directives, deliberations, messages, addresses, letters and chronicle which provided the authentic documentation of the work carried out by the GC22.

It was not possible at that stage to include the texts of the Constitutions and general Regulations (even though these formed the substance of all the chapter's work), because it still remained to obtain the necessary approval of the Apostolic See and the final careful revision of the whole text which the members of the chapter asked should be done by the Rector Major with his council.

Now that we have finally available the revised and approved texts we publish them officially in the Acts whilst awaiting the printing of the more precise and detailed edition for the use of the confreres. Also reproduced are the other texts, few in number and already published in the "Documents of the GC22", which are an expression of the strictly collegial work of the chapter.

May the Lord help us to study, assimilate and render fruitful so many evangelical riches inherited from our Founder: the "Rule of life" is indeed the channel for the transmission of his influence and inspiration.

Rome, 24 November 1984

Fr Egidio Viganò
Rector Major

SACRED CONGREGATION
FOR RELIGIOUS
AND SECULAR INSTITUTES

Prot. n. T.9 - 1/84

DE C R E E

The Society of St Francis de Sales, whose Generalate is in Rome, has as its particular mission in the Church that of being signs and bearers of the love of God for the young, and especially those who are very poor, according to the teaching of its Founder, St John Bosco.

In obedience to the directives of the Second Vatican Council and other dispositions of the Church, the Society has drawn up a new text of its Constitutions which the Rector Major, in the name of the general Chapter, has submitted to the Holy See for approval.

This Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, having entrusted the text to the study of its Consultors, and noting the positive vote of the Congress held on 9 September 1984, by this present Decree approves and confirms the text with the modifications made by the same Congress, as given in the prototype copy in Italian which is preserved in the Sacred Congregation's archives, in accordance with the requirements of canon law.

Faithful to the spirit of their Institute, let the Sons of St John Bosco continue with generous commitment to fulfil the specific mission entrusted to them by the Church, striving to ensure that their apostolic activity stems always from their intimate union with God.

Rome, 25 November, Solemnity of Christ the King,
in the year of the Lord 1984

✠ **V. Fagiolo**
Secretary

✠ **fr. J. Hamer, O.P.**
Pro-Prefect

PROMULGATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS AND GENERAL REGULATIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF ST FRANCIS DE SALES

The "Rule of life" which is our precious heritage and constitutes the identity of the salesians of Don Bosco, has now attained its renewed expression in the text of the Constitutions, approved officially by the Apostolic See, and in that of the general Regulations, approved by the general chapter.

The work of re-elaboration has been long and not without difficulty; it has called for intensive and enduring work by every province. The central concern has been to express with the greatest possible fidelity the thought, inspiration and original intuition of Don Bosco. The gift made to the Church in the person of our Father and Founder, a gift received and approved by the Church itself, is offered once again today in all its unalloyed integrity, albeit in different words.

For this specific purpose, after the renewing visitation by the Spirit of the Lord in the Second Vatican Council the Congregation came together in unity, and through its collegial organisms, which nevertheless allowed ample opportunity for the contributions of individual confreres and of communities, submitted proposals, suggestions and desires, which reflected on the one hand the characteristic spirit of adaptation to the changed conditions of the times and the multiplicity of cultures, and on the other the profound desire for a double loyalty: to the doctrine of Vatican II and to the inspiration of the Founder.

Beginning with the GC19, which took place towards the end of the Council, no fewer than eight chapters were held in each province; they were prepared with great care and spread over long periods involving the contribution by every salesian community of time and means, of energy and personnel. Their results coalesced in the various general chapters, from the "special" GC20, through the significant GC21 and ending with the latest GC22, which was able to reap the harvest of so much work so generously carried out.

No small contribution was provided by the critical edition of the Constitutions of St John Bosco, scrupulously compiled and attentively followed so as to discern from the first literary constitutional texts the

genuine spirit which must animate our consecrated life. Other contributions were provided in abundance by the studies and researches of specialists and consultants; these became particularly numerous and of undoubted value in the final period. So too was the salesian experience of effectively five continents, which shed light on the work of the last general chapter with its reflection of the practical experiences, with sensitivity to the needs of poor youngsters, of those who live in their midst, carrying out pastoral work in thickly populated lower-class neighbourhoods to which our vocation directs us.

Redrafted in such circumstances, the text produced by the chapter emerged in an enriched and updated form, as well as appearing with a new and more organic re-ordering of its contents.

And now, after the remaining work of formal revision and refinement that was necessary and explicitly requested, the Apostolic See, by its rescript of 25 November 1984, Solemnity of Christ the King, has approved the rewritten text of the Constitutions. For this we are deeply grateful and we pledge ourselves to make this evident by our daily witness of fidelity.

With the authority inherent in the office which has been entrusted to me by the will of the chapter members, and in conformity with what the Constitutions themselves prescribe, I now promulgate officially on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 8 December 1984, the renewed text of the Constitutions of the Society of St Francis de Sales.

At the same time and with the same authority I promulgate the renewed text of the general Regulations.

Finally I direct that both Constitutions and general Regulations shall now come into force in accordance with the universal law.

I consider it a special gift of divine Providence that it has been possible to choose the date of this Marian solemnity for the promulgation.

There come spontaneously to our minds those words of Don Bosco: "All our greatest events and enterprises began and reached fulfilment on the feast of Mary Immaculate" (MB XVII, 510). Let us receive with joy our "Rule of life" from the hands of the Virgin Mary. Let us meditate on it with faith and practise it with profit; it is for us, disciples of the Lord, a way that leads to Love.

Given at Rome, 8 December 1984, solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Fr Egidio Viganò
Rector Major

The Italian edition of n. 311 of the Acts of the General Chapter carries at this point the authentic approved text of the Constitutions and Regulations, followed by the practical directives and deliberations of the GC22 and the list of the chapter members.

For the authentic approved Italian text, readers are referred to the Italian edition.

For the practical directives and deliberations and for the list of members of the GC22, v. "22nd General Chapter - Documents" pp. 11-16 (directives and deliberations) and pp. 123-128 (chapter members).