

SPIRITUAL IDENTITY OF THE SALESIAN BROTHER FROM DON BOSCO TO FR. RICALDONE

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We begin with Don Bosco's Constitutions, and the acts of the 3rd and 4th General Chapters². In both of these documents, we find material on the identity of lay members of the Society, and of "coadjutors". These terms are similar in Salesian meaning, but not interchangeable.

1. Don Bosco's period

Where did that name "coadjutor" come from? And what other names were in use at the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales in Turin?

1.1. Names

When Don Bosco and his Mamma Margaret began to shelter boys in the late 1840s, there were students and artisans among them. Students are boys who study a course of humanities and classical subjects, leading to a career in the leading classes of society: teachers, writers, government officials, the clergy. In the 1850s, Don Bosco was setting up just this kind of school or *collegio*.

Artisans instead are those learning or practicing a trade: tailors, cobblers, tinkers, sculptors and painters, woodcarvers, stonemasons, ironworkers. In the same decade, Don Bosco was installing shops for tailoring, shoemaking, woodworking, printing and binding, and ironwork. These kept clothes, shoes and furniture in repair, printed the growing list of Oratory publications, and supplied valuable help in building and maintaining the expanding Oratory complex. Besides all this, Don Bosco could be surer of the boys' moral formation by keeping them in his own shops. As the shops expanded, Don Bosco hired local master artisans to run them. That had very mixed results³.

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² The acts of these two Chapters were combined as *Deliberazioni del Terzo e Quarto Capitolo Generale della Pia Società Salesiana*. San Benigno Canavese, Tipografia Salesiana 1887 (= GC3-4), also in OE XXXVI, 253-280 and partly in MB XVIII 691-704 (Appendices 36-40).

³ On the history of Salesian trade and professional education, the interested reader can begin with Pietro STELLA, *I Coadiutori Salesiani (1854-1974)*. *Appunti per un profilo storico socio-professionale*, in Pietro BROCARDO - Nicola CERISIO - Renato ROMALDI (edd.), *Atti del Convegno Mondiale dei Coadiutori Salesiani*. Roma, SGS 1976, and translated as *Acts of the World Congress of*

The school at the Oratory is the background for all the biographies of saintly boys that Don Bosco wrote, and is indeed the background for the legendary aspects of the Don Bosco phenomenon: the dreams, prophecy and miracle stories, games, moral formation in a thoroughly Catholic atmosphere, the whole picture of the wonder-worker and his huge, lively band of ragamuffins. There is no trace of the shops, or any other specific feature of the artisan's world, in any of those biographies.

Beginning in 1854, persons called "coadjutors" appear in the Oratory registers. They are a narrowly defined group of domestic workers: cooks, waiters, helpers in the laundry and cloakroom. Notice that these are not artisans; they did not work in the shops. These earliest coadjutors were not Salesians, either.

Who then were the Salesians? By 1860, Don Bosco had finished establishing that *collegio*, or high school for the students in his Oratory. The teachers were his own seminarians or "clerics", trained from Oratory boys: Michael Rua, John Baptist Francesia, Angelo Savio, John Cagliero and others. When they and 14 others met in Don Bosco's room to found the Salesian Congregation in December of 1859, there were as yet no laymen, no coadjutors, no artisans among them⁴.

Salesian Brothers. Madras, SIGA 1976. For the early period he or she can continue with Michael RIBOTTA, *Training Boys to Earn a Living. The Beginnings of Vocational Education at the Oratory*, in "Journal of Salesian Studies" (= JSS) 4 (1993) 1, 61-86; MB IV 458-463, 549, 574; V 5, 20-24, 497-499; VI 129-131; VII 38-42, 70-74; Eugenio CERIA, *Annali della Società Salesiana*. Vol. I. *Dalle origini alla morte di S. Giovanni Bosco (1841-1888)*. Torino, SEI 1941 (= *Annali* I), pp. 650-651 (summarizing Superior Chapter minutes of Dec. 14, 1885, when Fr. Giovanni Battista Rinaldi brought in a draft agreement with the outside shop teachers at Faenza: ASC D868, mf 1883 A11), and Luciano PAZZAGLIA, *Apprendistato e istruzione degli artigiani a Valdocco (1846-1866)*, in Francesco TRANIELLO (ed.), *Don Bosco nella storia della cultura popolare*. Torino, SEI 1987, pp. 16-17. These will give some idea of Don Bosco's difficulties in finding a stable organizational setup for his shops. The transition to trade education is already well advanced, though not without problems, by the 3rd and 4th General Chapters. See the proposals (and complaints!) of individual Salesians in Antonio TORRAS (ed.), *Fondo Don Bosco*. Roma, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco 1980 (= FDB), microfiche 1859 C1-1862 A11 "III Capitolo Generale (1883): Proposte", and mf 1865 A8-D6 "IV Capitolo Generale (1886): Proposte". For Don Bosco's strategy in moving toward trades and technical education, see Pietro BRAIDO, *Il progetto operativo di Don Bosco e l'utopia della società cristiana*. Roma, LAS 1982, and his *Laicità e laici nel progetto operativo di Don Bosco*, in *Atti della XII Settimana di spiritualità della Famiglia Salesiana*. Roma, Editrice SDB 1986, pp. 32-34, and studies of the development of Salesian trade and technical schools provided by Silvio TRAMONTIN, *Don Bosco and the world of work*, and José Manuel PRELLEZO, *Don Bosco and the professional schools (1870-1887)*, both in Mario MIDALI - Patrick EGAN (edd.), *Don Bosco's place in history*. Roma, LAS 1993, pp. 245-264, 341-364. For a 120-year overview of Salesian brothers, see Pietro STELLA, *Cattolicesimo in Italia e laicato nelle Congregazioni religiose. Il caso dei coadiutori salesiani (1854-1974)*, in "Salesianum" 37 (1975) 411-445.

⁴ The school at the Oratory is the background for all the biographies of saintly boys that Don Bosco wrote, and is indeed the background for the legendary aspects of the Don Bosco phenomenon: the dreams, prophecy and miracle stories, the games and plays and music, the moral formation in a thoroughly Catholic atmosphere, the whole picture of the wonder-worker and his huge, lively band of ragamuffins. There is no trace of the shops, or any other specific feature of the artisan's world, in any of those biographies.

What about Salesian coadjutors? In the 1858 Constitutions they do not appear at all, while in 1875 they occur in two places⁵. They are lay Salesians. This is the wide sense of the term “coadjutors”, and is that of the official definition coming from GC3-4. It is the meaning of “Salesian coadjutor” today.

The narrow sense is that of domestic workers; later some of these became Salesians. A look at the 1877 *Regulations for the Houses* (1877 R)⁶, as they evolved into the 1966 Regulations, is enough to convince us that these coadjutors do not evolve into the professional school staff but instead into non-Salesian service personnel or domestics. Those rules say the coadjutors must have no familiarity with the boys⁷. Salesian coadjutors (wide sense) are beginning to be separated from these service personnel (narrow sense) in GC1 and 2, a process complete only in 1924⁸.

“Lay Salesians” occur more than “coadjutors”. “Laymen” are in the Constitutions continuously from 1858, nearly always in the trinomial “priests, clerics and laymen”.

1.2. *Don Bosco's Constitutions*

Don Bosco's whole life and work can be summarized in the motto he lived and proposed to his Salesians: “Give me souls, take away the rest”. Right from the first and second articles of the Constitutions, in all versions from 1858 to 1875, the Salesians are urged to save their own souls and those of others.

All the other articles in Chapter I of Don Bosco's Constitutions follow a pattern: there is a need; there is a response; lay Salesians have a role in two of the three need-response pairs. Articles 3-7 describe “works of charity” or “exercises of charity” done for young people. Each of these is treated separately in one or two articles⁹.

⁵ See Giovanni Bosco, *Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales [1858]-1875*. Testi critici a cura di Francesco Motto. Roma, LAS 1982, pp. 176-177. The 1875 text is hereafter cited as 1875 C. See X.14, XIII.2 (“*sodales adiutores*” in all Latin versions), and XV.3 (“*socii adiutores*” in all Latin versions). Intermediate versions show “*fratelli coadiutori*” (1860-1864), more “*socii adiutores*” (1867-1873) in some drafts of XI. “Admissions (the fees)”. The full text of 1875 C is reproduced in OE XXVII, 10-99.

⁶ *Regolamento per le case della Società di S. Francesco di Sales*. Torino, Tipografia Salesiana 1877, reproduced in Pietro RICALDONE, *Don Bosco Educatore*. Vol. II. Torino 1952, pp. 499-580, also in OE XXIX, 97-196 (= 1877 R). See John RASOR, *Early Salesian Regulations: Formation in the Preventive System*, in JSS 8 (1997) 2, 206-265 for an overview of how scattered sets of rules developed into the Regulations from about 1850 to 1967.

⁷ See 1877 R, Part I, Ch. XII: “*Dei Coadiutori*”.

⁸ To see coadjutors turned into domestics, find them in *Deliberazioni del Secondo Capitolo Generale della Pia Società Salesiana....* Torino, Tipografia Salesiana 1882 (= GC2) Division III, Ch. I, art. 2 and 13; follow them through *Regolamento per le Case della Società di San Francesco di Sales*. Torino, Tipografia Salesiana 1905, (first of a 7-volume set produced by GC10): I. For the Houses Part II, Section II Ch. XVII. Domestics, Art. 586; then see them in *Regulations of the Salesian Society* (English translation of set produced by GC12) Ch. XVI, “The Domestics”, Art. 255 (London, The Salesian Press 1925).

⁹ They are all in Article 42 of the present 1984 Constitutions. That is in Ch. 4; the other

Let us now examine these need-response pairs.

Oratories have primacy in Don Bosco's Constitutions; they are "the first exercise (or work) of charity" in his versions.

3. The first exercise of charity shall be to gather together poor and neglected boys, in order to instruct them in the holy catholic religion, especially on feast days¹⁰.

Don Bosco's conference of March 31, 1876 to artisans and brothers gave several concrete examples of brothers teaching catechism in the missions.

The professional schools with their shops are the late-19th century development of what Don Bosco began with his work contracts, then moved into corners of the Pinardi shed and onto Mamma Margaret's kitchen table. The schools' purpose is clear from the Constitutions:

4. However, since one often finds boys so neglected, that, unless they are received into a school, every care would be expended upon them in vain, every effort shall be made to open houses in which, with the means that Divine Providence puts into our hands, they shall be provided with lodging, food and clothing. While they are instructed in the truths of the Catholic Faith, they will also be introduced into some trade or craft¹¹.

Notice the relation between the third and fourth articles. The fourth always notes that some boys are so poor and abandoned that the Oratory alone cannot save them as the third article directs. The houses or hospices where they are introduced into a trade are then the remedy; they later develop into the professional schools.

Some indications about the service or support ministry come from those 1877 R rules for the coadjutors. They give a picture of a person who does not teach, but nonetheless by piety and good example as well as concrete support plays a role in the educational process. The importance, even prominence, that one in the service ministry as a skilled administrator can assume is highlighted in a famous 1883 conference given at San Benigno, just after the 3rd General Chapter.

1.3. *The 3rd and 4th General Chapters*

GC3 discussed the brothers and decided to move their novitiate there (over Don Bosco's preference for keeping it at the original Oratory in Valdocco). Proposals to the Chapter, and discussions during its sessions, reveal widespread discontent among artisans, brothers, and superiors at trade schools. Don Bosco felt he had to do something quickly, not wanting to wait until the combined acts of GC3 and GC4 were published.

articles there present a global view of Salesian ministry.

¹⁰ 1875 C, I. 3.

¹¹ 1875 C, I. 4, and all its earlier and later incarnations to 1966.

In late October he went to San Benigno to talk to 22 brother novices, with their superiors. He opens saying that the novitiate for young men from the shops is up and running, and that the numbers of brothers must grow. These boys are artisans. Then he comes to the first of two points he wants to make, his “idea of the Salesian coadjutor,” a clear use of the wide meaning of “coadjutor” in the Constitutions. Here is the key paragraph, describing the brother’s function in the Salesian ministry:

Well now, you are gathered here to learn a trade and to train yourselves in religion and in piety. Why? Because I need helpers. There are some things that priests and clerics cannot do, and you will do them. I need to be able to take one of you and send you into a print shop, and say, «You take charge and see that all goes well». Another I will send into a bookstore and say, «You run this place and make it work well». I need someone I can send to a house and say to him, «It will be your job to see to it that this workshop or those workshops run in an orderly fashion and leave nothing to be desired. You will make sure the work is turned out as it should be». [...] I need people I can trust with these responsibilities. You will have to be the ones.

Note that the ministries described here are both direct (help the Church by spreading good books, teaching trades, etc.), and indirect (help the priests help the Church by supervising workers, running the kitchen, balancing budgets).

When the next paragraph was read later in 1922 at GC12, some questioned its authenticity:

In a word, you are not to be those who do the actual work or job, but rather those who direct. You are to be like bosses over the other employees, not their servants. But everything in its proper order and within proper limits. Your task will be to direct, as co-owners of the workshops. This is my concept of the Salesian coadjutor...you are not to be servants, but masters, not subjects, but superiors.

This does not sound much like the Gospel, where Jesus’ disciples are told that the master must be the servant of all; here is where the chapter members at GC12 had difficulty. But concrete models existed for this kind of role, men like Joseph Rossi in the purchasing office and Andrew Pelazza on the print shop floor. Don Bosco puts things in perspective in the next paragraph, where he says that the brothers, being bosses, must grow in virtue, must give good example to other workers and see to the moral good order of the enterprises just as they do for the material good order. Don Bosco has unwittingly described how he himself handles administration.

Don Bosco’s “first thought” is then about complementarity: there are obviously things that brothers cannot do, just as there are things priests cannot do. These have to do with material affairs. Thus Don Bosco implies that the brother’s specific role has to do with temporal affairs, while explicitly stating that it is distinct from and complementary to that of the priest.

His “second thought” is that to prepare for these ministries, growth in virtue, in good example, in energy as well as in numbers is needed. It is related to his reason for the first thought: “You are gathered here to learn an art and master religion and

piety". These novices must prepare to play that role sketched out in the first thought; they must grow both in technical and spiritual virtuosity. This really is a spiritual portrait of the brother, derived from his ministry. It is a portrait of an apostle whose work is his sermon.

GC3 met for only a week in September. Present were four brothers, called in by Don Bosco as experts: Joseph Buzzetti, Peter Barale, Joseph Rossi, and Andrew Pelazza¹². GC3 did not finish its document, but left that to GC4 in 1886 (with only Bro. Rossi, the Society's purchasing agent, attending as an expert on trade schools). The work of these two chapters was published together in 1887; we will call it "GC3-4". GC3-4 gives us a framework for the brother's identity in its Theme III: the general Salesian vocation, and the specific role of the "coadjutors" within it.

III. On the religious spirit and vocations among the coadjutors and the artisans.

§1. The Coadjutors

Our Pious Society is composed not only of priests and clerics, but also of lay persons (1875 C, I.1). They are called Coadjutors (X.14, XIII.2, XV.3) because their specific role is to help the priests in the works of Christian charity proper to the congregation. Throughout the history of the Church examples abound of lay persons who were of greatest help to the Apostles and other sacred ministers, and the Church has always had the services of the faithful for the good of the people and the glory of God¹³.

What does it tell us about identity? The brother shares Salesian religious life with his priestly and seminarian confreres, and is given a specifying apostolic identity: indirect ministry of support to that of the priests, and direct ministry, alongside the priest, working for the people and for God's glory. We heard this already at San Benigno. Notice how quickly GC3-4 passes from the specifically Salesian coadjutor to the lay person in the Church: it is saying that to understand the Salesian brother in the Salesians, just look at the lay person in the Church.

2. Rectorate of Fr. Rua (1888-1910)

Now I will examine the brother's identity in the rectorate immediately following the Founder.

2.1. The Task Facing the Salesians after Don Bosco's Death

Don Bosco's death left the Congregation with a clear vision, a clear identity, capable leaders and nearly a thousand members. But serious problems were also left.

¹² See minutes of General Ch. 3 session of Wednesday, Sept. 5, 1883, in ASC D5790263, FDB mf 1864 A2.

¹³ GC3-4, Theme III.

A bright spot was vocations. There were 289 novices, 102 of them brothers, in 1888. They increased to 960, including 421 brothers, in 1900 but then took a drop. In 1910, there were 171 brothers among a total of 475 novices¹⁴.

Rua's great achievement was to have novitiates and studentates of philosophy and theology all over Europe and America by 1910. Brothers' formation did not make similar progress. Another great achievement was organization by provinces. The Salesians had six of them covering five countries of Europe and four of South America. Don Bosco had preferred to keep the houses and the Directors in communication with the Rector Major¹⁵. A two-tier government could work for dozens of houses, but not the hundreds into which Fr. Rua's Salesians quickly grew. When Fr. Rua died in 1910, there were over 4000 Salesians in all continents, in 35 provinces covering 38 countries¹⁶.

An organizational problem was the Regulations and the deliberations of the General Chapters. Rules were being made faster than they could be coordinated, codified and observed. GC1 had aimed to do this, but the process was not complete until GC10 in 1904, and somewhat unwieldy even then.

2.2. *The Circular Letters of the Rector Major*

In 1876, Don Bosco began sending letters to all the houses, to be read to all the confreres. Fr. Rua continued and very much expanded the practice, and these circulars are a major source for following the development of the brothers' spirituality

¹⁴ See the Society's *Catalogo* or *Elenco* (list of members, offices and houses), published each year. The number of brother novices for 1890 is approximately three times the average for the years 1880-1890. A factor tending to keep the novitiate numbers high is multi-year stays in the novitiate, a common practice in the time of Don Bosco and early in this rectorate.

¹⁵ See 1875 C, IX.17 (H.10); GC2, D. I. IV; *Annali* III (*Il rettorato di Don Michele Rua dal 1899 al 1910*. Torino, SEI 1946), p. 576. An example of Don Bosco's concept of a Visitor would be Fr. Albera during his trip to America, 1900-1903: see *ibid.*, pp. 104-123 (mostly on the Co-operators' Congress and Mission Jubilee celebration at Buenos Aires with which Albera began the great tour); p. 149.

¹⁶ See statistics in the yearly catalogs (*Elenchi*) for that and similar years. For general Salesian history from 1888 to 1910, see Morand WIRTH, *Don Bosco and the Salesians*. New Rochelle NY, Don Bosco Publications 1982. Most of the book is a short and readable introduction to Salesian history after 1888. The next logical step for Salesian history in Fr. Rua's years would be to tackle the middle two volumes of Eugenio CERIA's *Annali* IV: *Il rettorato di Don Paolo Albera 1910-1921*. Torino, SEI 1951. For individual houses and provinces, see *Don Bosco in the World*. New York, Salesiana Publishers 1964³. The recent Italian edition *Don Bosco nel Mondo* (Roma, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco 1988) is less useful; it does not have the handy tables of houses and foundation dates. English biographies of Fr. Rua include Augustine AUFFRAY, *Fr. Michael Rua* (manuscript translation by Francis Klauder SDB). South Orange NJ; Angelo FRANCO, *The Heroic Fidelity of Venerable Michael Rua, Disciple of, and Successor to, Saint John Bosco*. Paterson NJ, Salesiana Publishers 1955; Peter LAPPIN, *The Wine in the Chalice*. New Rochelle NY, Salesiana Publishers 1972.

during his time as Rector Major. While none of these letters has anything like a unified identity for the brother, many furnish small pieces. They will be considered here, together with the General Chapters.

2.3. How the General Chapters Changed the Constitutions and Regulations

Fr. Rua presided over six General Chapters. Their greatest achievement is the codification and unification of the Constitutions and the Regulations.

GC6 produced a handy little book containing Don Bosco's 1875 Constitutions, followed by the over 700 articles produced by the six General Chapters¹⁷. This I call the "Little Codification of 1894".

The Tenth General Chapter, with the "Great Codification of 1906" finished what Don Bosco and GC1 began, and essentially closed the organizationally formative period of the Salesian Congregation. The result was the "organic deliberations", additions to Don Bosco's Constitutions deemed necessary due to changed conditions. These mainly deal with the General Chapters, the General Councilors, and the provinces. Then come the Regulations, 1406 articles strong, in 7 volumes.

The theme on brothers and artisans from GC3, 4 was fragmented. Note the shift away from artisans and vocations to exclusive and internal concern with coadjutors in these titles:

GC3, 4 Theme III: *On the religious spirit and vocations among the coadjutors and the artisans.*

GC1-6 D. IV. II: *On the religious spirit among the Coadjutors.*

1906 R I: *Regulations for the Houses, Chapter IX: To the Coadjutors*¹⁸.

GC10 kept "The Salesian education system and particular offices"; meaning a set of rules on how to apply the Preventive System. Thus a key organizational concept of 1877 R is kept alive. But it drops the professional component from GC3, 4's list of three educational components for artisans: moral-religious, intellectual, and professional. Instead, education now has five components: moral, religious, vocational, intellectual and physical. The breakup of GC3, 4 Theme III is now virtually complete: it has gone from a unified block in 1887 to a scattering of rules in 1906 for conduct in shop, rules for shop managers, teachers and assistants, and other chapters.

There is no chapter devoted to the brothers' specific formation, although individual articles are scattered here and there. Professional and agricultural training remain in the novitiate, and the post-novitiate finishing course for brothers is born. Nothing in the Rua years approaches Theme III of GC3, 4 as a unified exposition of the brother's identity.

¹⁷ *Deliberazioni dei sei primi Capitoli Generali della Pia Società Salesiana precedute dalle Regole o Costituzioni della medesima.* San Benigno Canavese, Tipografia Salesiana 1894 (= GC1-6).

¹⁸ 1906 R, 113 preserves some of the introduction to GC3, 4 Theme III.

2.4. *Identity Emerging from the Circulars, Constitutions and Regulations during the Rua Rectorate*

As with Don Bosco, we have to sort out some names.

In summary, “Coadjutor” does not have anything like a fixed and precise meaning in the two decades around 1900. At times, it means the third group of Salesians; at other times it means lay Salesians derived from the coadjutor-domestic group. Finally, it can mean boys who are neither students, artisans nor farmhands.

In adopting GC3, 4’s Theme III, GC6 had called for family-style relationships in community, not legal “equality”:

414. In every place and circumstance they shall show respect to Superiors and Priests, regarding them as fathers and brothers, with whom they are to live united by the bond of fraternal charity so as to form one heart and one soul¹⁹.

But a definite drift away from equality, without a compensating or complementary respect for different family roles, is underway. A GC10 article shows the situation in the refectory with glaring clarity, separating them from their priestly and clerical confreres.

Where the General Chapters move backward, Fr. Rua in the circulars moves forward. He often reminds Salesians that the brothers are needed, not just accepted. The whole Congregation is affected: “...we must make efforts to increase the number of good priests and good brothers, without which our Pious Society would not be able to do its mission”²⁰. In appealing for vocation efforts, the Rector Major echoes a Don Bosco conference:

By the character proper to our Society, there is reserved a most abundant harvest not only for ecclesiastics, but our dear brothers are also called to exercise a true apostolate in favor of youth in all our houses, especially in the professional schools. So religious vocations should be cultivated also among our young artisans and coadjutors²¹.

Here, then, is a very brief synthesis of the brother’s vocational identity, albeit incomplete: he is a Salesian youth apostle. His specific difference from the Salesian priest or cleric is not given.

How did Salesian brothers fit into the apostolate?

The Oratory is the way to confront the “workers’ question”, confronted by Pope

¹⁹ D. IV. II. The religious spirit among the Coadjutors (from GC3, 4 renumbered).

²⁰ RUA, *Circolari*, n. 24, Edifying letter, n. 2 (Jan. 29, 1894), 121; see also n. 26 (Aug. 24, 1894), 138.

²¹ Author’s translation from RUA, *Circolari* n. 32 (Jan. 31, 1897), 187. Compare with “rich harvest” in the conference of March 19, 1876 (C. 20-25).

Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*²². Brothers were there teaching catechism and promoting Leo's ideas to young workers.

Brothers were in 14 professional and one agricultural school in 1888. When Fr. Rua died in 1910, we had 53 professional schools and 17 agricultural schools²³. Many times, Fr. Rua talks about the importance of agricultural and professional schools, not only because they are the brothers' special field, but because it is important to the Congregation's whole program. Rua continues to view these schools as a means to help the poorest of the boys²⁴, and GC6 extends this concern to the whole question of social justice for workers. GC7 (1896) discussed the agricultural schools, and the possibility of setting up special novitiates to train brothers for them, complete with laboratories for soil analysis²⁵.

GC3, 4 introduced the idea of a superior in charge of artisans and professional instruction, and GC5 provided the first complete job description of the Councilor General for Arts and Trades. GC6 adopted it; GC7 extended the Councilor's realm to the agricultural schools. GC10 dealt with the General Councilor in an organic deliberation, and removed the domestics from the care of the local Councilor for Arts and Trades to that of the Prefect²⁶.

The very important position of shop manager was filled in Don Bosco's time by people like Bro. Rossi and Sir Federico Oreglia. A later generation would be represented by Bro. Pelazza and Bro. Barale, who were active into the Rua years and beyond. GC8 wanted people formed for this, even priests if need be; this is an indication of a shortage²⁷.

Some vocation appeals in the circular letters recommend searching for vocations to the service apostolate alongside the professional schools apostolate²⁸.

Don Bosco had made a considerable beginning on the brother's specific spiritual identity, but Fr. Rua has practically nothing in this area. He connected professional schools with the "workers' question" as in an 1898 circular on vocations²⁹, and recommends the life of the missionary Bro. Francis Frascarolo as good reading

²² Author's translation of RUA, *Circolari* n.31, Edifying letter n. 3 (July 2 1896), 177. See also n.51, Edifying letter #8 (July 2, 1906), 411, relating the experience of an Oratory Director who tried out these ideas.

²³ Professional and agricultural schools data taken from *Elenchi* of 1888 and 1910.

²⁴ See RUA, *Circolari* n. 31, Edifying letter n. 3 (July 2 1896), 175; n. 32 (Jan. 31, 1897), 187; n. 34. Edifying letter n. 4 (June 24, 1898), 207. Compare this last with n. 27 (Jan. 1, 1895), 146: there he recommends the use of the term "professional schools", unlike his use here. Add n. 49 (Nov. 21, 1905), 402.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, VIII. §III Proposals on the agricultural novitiate, 137-140. The proposal was adopted, and Fr. Rua suggested making a rules set after some experience with this kind of novitiate had been gained; see p. 142.

²⁶ See GC1-6, D. I. Ch. XI. The Councilor for Arts and Trades, introduction and Art. 104 (J.39-42); 1907 C, IX, 15 footnote 2 (H.9).

²⁷ See GC8, p. 78.

²⁸ See RUA, *Circolari* n. 49 (Nov. 21, 1905), 402.

²⁹ Author's translation of RUA, *Circolari* n. 34, Edifying letter n. 4 (June 24, 1898), 207.

for the boys, alongside those of Dominic Savio, Michael Magone and Francis Besucco³⁰.

One of the most striking features of the Salesian novitiate is its strongly apostolic character, different from the “purely” ascetic character among other Orders and according to the mind of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. But Salesian ascetics *is* the apostolate; hence we have Salesian cleric novices teaching catechism, and Salesian brother novices printing, binding and gilding Bible histories and copies of the Constitutions, even holding the world at bay like Bro. Frascarolo at the doorkeeper’s post in Lanzo.

In summary, Fr. Rua’s plan for organizing formation all over the Salesian world included each Province setting up brothers’ and clerics’ novitiates, or at least a unified novitiate. GC10 moved toward the unified novitiate, and established a stage of post-novitiate formation for all young brothers³¹.

2.5. *Fr. Rua: our Second Founder*

Every form of religious life needs a charism and an institution to carry it forward. For the Salesians, of course, the charism came in with Don Bosco. But a large share of the credit for forming an institution capable of incarnating that charism must go to his successor, Fr. Rua.

The great organizational challenges he faced in 1888 were, by and large, met. In 1910, the Society had a fully functioning network of provinces, a method for holding General Chapters that could work for a Society of thousands instead of hundreds, and a nearly complete formation program for its priests. The network of Salesian professional and agricultural schools, too, was beginning to assume the proportions of a globe-spanning educational and social project.

Twenty-two years of refining and organizing Don Bosco’s Salesian movement are the contribution made by Fr. Rua and the generation who, with him, saw Don Bosco’s dreams coming true. They made them come true in their own time; they began to lay down designs and programs for making them come true yet again. But in any translation of dream to program, a little magic is lost.

³⁰ See RUA, *Circolari* n. 13 (June 29, 1891), 70. The book cited is Giovanni Battista FRANCESIA, *Vita e morte edificante di Francesco Frascarolo Coadiutore Salesiano*. San Benigno Canavese, Tip. e Libreria Salesiana 1891.

³¹ 1906 R, II, Ch. VI Art. 936, and Ch. VII Art. 938 (J.37-38). For a sample of a professional program by Fr. Bertello, elected Arts and Trades Councilor at GC8 after Fr. Lazzero got sick, see LUCIANO PANFILO, *Dalla Scuola di arti e mestieri di don Bosco all’attività di formazione professionale (1860-1915)*. Milano, Centro Nazionale Opere Salesiane (CNOS) 1976, pp. 117-119.

3. Rectorate of Fr. Albera (1910-1921)

Fr. Paul Albera, like Fr. Rua, practically grew up at the side of Don Bosco, and filled important positions in the Congregation while it was still very young: first director at Sampierdarena and its professional school, first Provincial in France in 1881, Spiritual Director General in 1892, and Visitor to America in 1900-1903³².

3.1. *Vocational Identity*

What is the Salesian brother called to be? The answer to this question constitutes his vocational identity, and is being refined by every Rector Major.

3.1.1. Names

As with Don Bosco and Fr. Rua, there is a variety of names in play for those we now would call Salesian brothers, and related names for persons from whom brothers' vocations arise. [Condensed to here]

Like with Fr. Rua, "workers" is used to refer to some of the youth in our works. This time, it is in a very early number of ACS, and by the Councilor for Arts and Trades Fr. Ricaldone. He writes that Salesian charity to the poor is expressed principally, after the Oratory, in the formation of workers and farmhands³³. "Workers" seems to be replacing "artisan" in these years, a possible reflection of greater industrialization and the social tensions associated with it.

The Constitutions' trinomial "priests, clerics, and coadjutors" is still in use³⁴, as is the familiar binomial "priests and coadjutors"³⁵. Salesian coadjutors are always used in the wide sense; the narrow sense of the 1877 *Regulations for the Houses* disappears. Thus we arrive at the modern Salesian use of the term "coadiutore", translated here as "brother".

3.1.2. Multivalent Apostolic Identity, with Education as a Unifying Element

Combining the best features of the 1913 apostolates letter and the 1921 vocation letter, we have a brothers' vocational identity that covers the whole Salesian aposto-

³² An English biography of Fr. Albera is Angelo FRANCO, *A Lamp Resplendent. Life of Fr. Paul Albera, Second Successor to Saint John Bosco*. Paterson NJ, Salesiana Publishers 1958. General coverage of Salesian history from 1910 to 1922 can be had in *Annali IV*, and M. WIRTH, *Don Bosco and the Salesians...*, pp. 257-262, 308-318.

³³ See "Atti del Capitolo Superiore" (= ACS) 2 (1921) n. 1, 124-125. The binomial "workers and farmhands" recalls the Communist binomial: "workers and peasants".

³⁴ See Paolo ALBERA, *Lettere Circolari* n. 1 (Jan. 25, 1911). Torino, Direzione Generale Salesiana 1965² (= ALBERA, *Circolari*); *ibid.* n. 24 (March 31, 1918), 283.

³⁵ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 21 (June 25, 1917), 253, where it is written as a trinomial: "fervent religious, zealous priests and virtuous coadjutors".

late. Further, that apostolate is Oratorian and educative because it is aimed at saving souls. Because its soul saving aim is the same as that of divine love, this apostolate leads to perfection, and without perfection cannot achieve its aim.

What is Fr. Albera's view on the specific role of religious life in the pursuit of perfection and in harvesting souls?

In the 1913 apostolates letter, we read how Fr. Albera emphasized the Lord's initiative in giving the divine call. In another "Don Bosco, model" letter, this time of the Salesian priest, he retreats somewhat from the "perfection for all" idea he later wrote into the vocation letter. This he does to bring out the importance of vocation; his argument is that priests and religious are called to a higher perfection than simple Christians can reach³⁶.

Fr. Albera is content to leave professional school job descriptions to Fr. Ricaldone, except where he gives one for the Councilor General for Arts and Trades. His summary is rather sketchy; it parallels closely the clerical world of the Scholastic Councilor, and he disposes of the brothers' finishing course in a few words³⁷.

Brothers teaching in elementary and middle schools is new, something Fr. Albera brought up in the 1921 vocations circular: "So, our brothers must be ready to teach catechism, to give religious-social conferences, to teach in primary and middle schools..."³⁸.

Fr. Albera does not seem to see a special field for brothers in the missions, as did Don Bosco and Fr. Rua.

The service apostolate almost falls off the Albera radar screen. The only exception comes from the 1921 vocations letter, in which he says that brothers are needed to administer the goods of the community.

3.2. *Spiritual Style*

How does Fr. Albera see the particular Salesian way of doing apostolate and acquiring perfection? Taking the Founder as model like Fr. Rua did, he explains more fully, even theologically, what made Don Bosco Don Bosco.

3.2.1. Spirituality

Fr. Albera is the first to write to Salesians about spiritual theology. His interest is not to take sides in French speculative battles, but to help the Salesians in their daily striving for perfection. He wants them to have, in simple and usable form, the best of what was coming out the debates in this developing field.

The 1920 letter on pastoral charity said that the apostolate is the efficient cause of

³⁶ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 40 (March 19, 1921), 457.

³⁷ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 34 (Aug. 24, 1920), 356-359, in ACS 1 (1920) n. 2, 33-36, compared to GC1-6, D. I. XI. The Councilor for Arts and Trades (J.39-42).

³⁸ ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 42 (May 15, 1921), 505.

Salesian perfection, which is also based on the counsels. Perfection is the foundation of the apostolate. Work leads to Paradise; work and prayer are united in God's love.

No less than eight times does Fr. Albera touch on the problem of secular studies and the spiritual life. As early as 1911, he wants to limit the technical course (following GC11; GC2 recommended getting teaching credentials for it), as long as the "current educational laws" in Italy remain³⁹. Albera is against it because it does not look like it can give vocations if installed in the boarding schools, and would drain off candidates for the classical course: a point he makes in the apostolates letter. He adds there that we teach human sciences only to have the right to teach divine science⁴⁰. Naturally, when the war forced cutbacks, Albera fingered the technical course as the first to go⁴¹. After the war, he cited Don Bosco's Barcelona dream of 1886, where Mary warns him: "And watch out for the error prevalent today, which is mixing those who study human arts with those who study the divine, because the heavenly science can never be mixed with the earthly"⁴². Similar is the remark a few months later (taken from St. Thomas), that interest in things of this world and spiritual things are inversely related⁴³. Interpreted literally, this would mean that any human science is of no use to spirituality; indeed, is positively harmful.

But in 1921 the picture changes. Writing on spiritual direction for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Fr. Albera says learning and spiritual progress have to develop together, so as to be of mutual support. In a circular he practically retracts the 1913 "no mixing" doctrine of sacred and human sciences: we must cultivate the natural sciences⁴⁴. This is in line with papal teaching -- of Pius XI!

A return to the "no mixing" doctrine may seem to be the import of a piece from the vocations letter. It is a doublet of a piece from the 1913 apostolates letter; here are the two:

³⁹ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 3 (May 15, 1911), 45. The technical course of the 1859 Casati law is a kind of technical-business course for businessmen, officials, farm experts, technicians; not like the classical course. GC2, D. IV. Ch II. Art. 11 recommended credentials to teach it; see Appendix J.37. Prerequisite: "cultura generale". No lab, this is not a shop course. Titolo IV Dell'Istruzione tecnica (Art. 272-314) begins: "272. L'istruzione tecnica ha per fine di dare ai giovani che intendono dedicarsi a determinate carriere del pubblico servizio, alle industrie, ai commerci ed alla condotta delle cose agrarie, la conveniente cultura generale e speciale". *Codice dell'Istruzione secondaria classica e tecnica...* Torino, Tipografia scolastica di Seb. Franco e figli e comp. 1861, p. 81. On the Casati Law: Lorenzo MINIO PALUELLO, *Education in Fascist Italy*. New York, Oxford University Press 1946; Michael RIBOTTA, *The Day They Shut Down the Oratory School*, in *JSS* 2 (1991) 1, 19-44. The closure in question occurred in 1879. The Casati law was superseded by the Gentile legislation of 1923.

⁴⁰ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 10 (May 31, 1913), 137, 139.

⁴¹ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 19 (July 10, 1916), 232.

⁴² Author's translation from ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 29 (March 19, 1920), 325. Dream: MB XVIII 72-74.

⁴³ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 35 (Oct. 18, 1920), 370, part of a commentary on the "ten diamonds" dream.

⁴⁴ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 40 (March 19, 1921), 435-436.

| 1913 Apostolates letter: | 1921 Vocation letter: |
|--|--|
| <p>To achieve this, never let it pass from your minds, dear sons, that Don Bosco told us to cultivate human sciences only to have the right to teach that divine science that forms true Christians, and above all to work with God Himself in raising up numerous vocations from the great numbers of boys placed under our care.</p> | <p>Perhaps we have lost sight of the fact that Don Bosco told us to cultivate human sciences especially to have a way to teach that divine science that forms true Christians, and above all with the help of God to raise up numerous vocations from the great numbers of boys given to our care.</p> |

Note the change in emphasis: what is tolerated in 1913 as a means to teach boys about God is now actively promoted as such a means⁴⁵. But the classical course is still preferred to the technical course⁴⁶.

Fr. Albera’s teaching on spirituality in general and on the Salesian spirit in particular seem to be the biggest advance achieved for the brother’s identity in these years. I have already pointed out the advance in theologically discussing the rapport between the apostolate and the struggle for perfection. Fr. Albera, like no other before him, sets mystical and ascetic theological foundations for the Salesian spirit. He also opens the question of the relations among the sacred sciences, and their rapport with secular sciences.

3.2.2. Formation

Fr. Albera is the first to declare for an equal length formation for the clerics and brothers, as we saw in examining the vocation letter⁴⁷. But the short term effects of this are practically nil.

Both the apostolate letter and the vocation letter brought up the vocational value of fraternal charity that includes brothers⁴⁸. Fr. Ricaldone touched that point, too, in an early contribution to ACS: the good example of piety and especially of charity, union of hearts, joy will fascinate youth and pull them in⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 42 (May 15, 1921), 494 has “Forse si è perduto di vista che D. Bosco ci aveva ordinato di coltivare le scienze umane specialmente per aver modo d’insegnare la scienza divina che forma i veri cristiani, e soprattutto di suscitare, coll’aiuto di Dio, numerose vocazioni nell’immenso campo giovanile affidato alle nostre cure”. Which nearly reproduces n. 10, Edifying letter n. 1 (May 31, 1913), 139: “Per raggiungere questo fine, non vi passi mai di mente, o carissimi, che D. Bosco ci ha ordinato di coltivare le scienze umane solo per aver diritto d’insegnare la scienza divina la quale forma i veri cristiani, e soprattutto per suscitare, cooperando all’opera di Dio stesso, numerose vocazioni nell’immenso campo giovanile destinato alle nostre cure”. Letter n. 42, on p. 528, recycles a thought on motivations to the priestly vocation from the same source letter n. 10, on p. 141.

⁴⁶ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 42 (May 15, 1921), 525.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 520.

⁴⁸ ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 10 (May 31, 1913), 145; n. 42 (May 15, 1921), 499, 521, 525.

⁴⁹ See Pietro RICARDONE, *Il Consigliere Professionale*, in ACS 1 (1920) n. 4, 104-106, reproduced in Pietro BRAIDO, *Religiosi nuovi per il mondo del lavoro*. Roma, PAS 1961, pp. 55-56. He

The vocation letter told the Provincials to set up an aspirantate and house for Sons of Mary in each province⁵⁰. Fr. Albera continues the novitiate policy of Don Bosco and Don Rua: the novice brothers are to practice their trade. He adds that they might hesitate to enter if denied that chance⁵¹.

As did the 1894 Deliberations and 1906 Regulations, Fr. Albera centers responsibility for post-novitiate formation on the Directors. He has nothing to say on the brothers' post novitiate finishing course. But the reader will recall the extremely important and bold assertion in the vocation letter that brothers need as much formation, if not more, than clerics.

3.3. *The Albera Years: a Partial Identity*

The Congregation after the war was stronger than before, by any measure. But, like Fr. Rua, Fr. Albera occasionally forgets the lay Salesians. Again, this occurs in discussing vocations, but other blind spots have appeared: formation and virtues specific to brothers. The most glaring failure to see the brothers is in the 1913 attempt (corrected in the 1921 vocations circular) to read the professional schools out of the list of Salesian apostolic works.

Nonetheless, Fr. Albera's progress on delineating the brother's identity is considerable. He continues the task begun by Rua of supplying in his letters the void left by the loss of GC3, 4's identity introduction to the section on the brothers. He insists that brothers are called to perfection just as much as the priests; indeed, this vocation is a way of perfection open to many. And he states for the first time the principle of brothers' formation equal (at least) in length to that for priests.

4. Rectorate of Fr. Rinaldi (1922-1931)

Don Bosco's third successor guided the Salesians for the shortest rectorate in Salesian history. He is the last Rector Major to have worked with the Founder, and perhaps the closest to him for initiative and fatherly style⁵².

4.1. *GC12 and the Great Codification of 1924*

GC12 (scheduled to meet in 1916) was postponed to 1922 because of the war and postwar turmoil in Europe⁵³.

adds the retreat idea.

⁵⁰ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 42 (May 15, 1921), 518.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, 520.

⁵² See Peter RINALDI, *By Love Compelled. The Life of Father Philip Rinaldi, Third Successor of St. John Bosco*. New Rochelle NY, Salesiana Publishers [s.d.]

⁵³ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 16 (Nov. 21, 1915), 206-208; Convocation for 1922 in n. 28 (Jan.

When Fr. Albera died in October of 1921, Fr. Rinaldi as Prefect General re-convoled GC12 to elect a new Rector Major, and to revise the Constitutions and Regulations to conform with CIC 1917. There was also to be a Theme V on the brothers' formation and new forms of professional schools⁵⁴.

The Chapter met from April 23 to May 10, 1922 at Valdocco. Fr. Rinaldi was elected Rector Major, Fr. Ricaldone Prefect General, and Fr. Joseph Vespignani was elected Councilor General of Arts and Trades in his place.

GC12 looked at and discussed Don Bosco's famous San Benigno conference to the novice brothers in 1883⁵⁵. Fr. Costa doubted its authenticity, but Fr. Rinaldi, Fr. Fascie, Fr. Nai and Fr. Barberis all vouched for it. The Chapter saw that the theme of the brothers' formation was far too big to handle in the few sessions devoted to it; and so was content to recommend a special brothers' formation house⁵⁶.

4.2. GC12: Key Articles in the Regulations

The six major divisions of the GC10 Regulations are retained, but the number of articles is reduced from 1406 to 416. The first division, deriving ultimately from the 1877 *Regulations for the Houses*, remains essentially regulations for applying the Preventive System.

The second major block is on formation houses, logically structured: the novitiate, the studentates of philosophy and theology. Practical training is a purely clerical issue; it is treated under the "clerics" term of the trinomial "priests, clerics and coadjutors" in the first block's religious life part. While there are individual articles on the aspirantates and the brothers' finishing course, neither have an independent chapter.

At the individual article level, there were 15 detailed regulations concerning the brothers, now a compact set of four. Article 58 retains the weekly instruction for all brothers, but does not specify the Director to give it. Article 59 is the one about the brothers' little library; these two keep alive the idea of formation as a part of regular life in the houses. Article 60 is the big news: the brothers' finishing course is now a firmly established stage of formation. It is to be done in a designated house in each province, governed by the rules for clerics in practical training. It is not a formation

1, 1920), 321-323; ACS 2 (1921) n. 6, 258-261; n. 7, 283; n. 9, 312.

⁵⁴ For the attempts to convoke GC12, see ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 12 (April 5, 1914) 168-170; for 1916: n. 16 (Nov. 21, 1915), 206-208; for 1922 in n. 28 (Jan. 1, 1920), 321-323. Rinaldi's convocation for April 1922: see Filippo RINALDI, in ACS 2 (1921) n. 9, 312. The themes were those proposed by Fr. Albera: ACS 2 (1921) n. 7, 282-283.

⁵⁵ Reports on GC12, in ACS 3 (1922) n. 14, 3-8; n. 17, 39-45; n. 18, 59-65; Latin text with decree of approval in ACS 3 (1923) n. 21, 124-140; Italian text with decree of approval in ACS 3 (1923) n. 22, 151-169. Papers: ASC D 593 – D 597. Study: Antonio PAPES, *La formazione del salesiano coadiutore nel 1883*, in RSS 13 (1994) 144-147.

⁵⁶ A. PAPES, *La formazione del salesiano coadiutore...*, and Giuseppe VESPIGNANI, *Case di formazione per coadiutori. - Pubblicazioni professionali e agrarie*, in ACS 6 (1925) n. 30, 375.

house in the same sense that a studentate is. Finally, Article 61 keeps the recommendation, going back to GC3, 4, that brothers teach catechism in the Oratories⁵⁷.

Articles on the Director now give him the final responsibility of hiring and firing; GC5 and GC10 had given that to the Councilor General for Arts and Trades. He has to assure the technical competence of all the craftsmasters. The Prefect retains his special relation with the shops. The Catechist of the Artisans disappears, and his duties are absorbed into those of the Councilor for Arts and Trades. This Councilor's office is explicitly modeled on that of the Scholastic Councilor. The very important shop manager is given charge of the business operations of a shop or group of shops, and quality control, and must keep himself up-to-date in his area⁵⁸.

4.3. *The Cumiana Circular of 1927*

The accumulated weight of interventions between 1922 and 1929 on brothers' formation practically forced GC13 to give it a full theme.

The most important was a circular letter by Fr. Rinaldi on the occasion of the opening of the house of aspirantate and finishing course for missionary brothers at Cumiana. It discusses the brother's vocation from the spiritual point of view. Here are some parts.

2. In the Congregations of the old days, the lay brothers were a kind of second order dependent on the first, and shared its spiritual goods only to a minor degree; furthermore, they were not considered real missionaries, but only as helpers to the missionary priest... Now, from the Gospel it seems clear that one can be a religious without being called to the priesthood; not all the disciples Jesus sent through the cities, villages and towns to announce the Good News did he later make into priests. But if the divine Master wanted them to be missionaries while He was alive on Earth, it is obvious to suppose that they continued to be so after His Resurrection, and that most of them gave their blood in witness of their faith and preaching⁵⁹.

Now begins a reflection on how lay religious are also called to perfection; they have equal access to it with their priestly confreres.

Don Bosco cannot have missed this, and when he began to think about founding a new religious Society, he wanted all its members, priests, clerics and laymen, to enjoy the same rights and privileges... These are certainly no second order, but true

⁵⁷ See English 1925 R 161.

⁵⁸ See English 1925 R 152-173 for all these positions. On quality control: modern courses in non-destructive testing always include manufacturing processes.

⁵⁹ Translation by the author from Filippo RINALDI, *Cumiana - Scuola agricola per Aspiranti Missionari - Il 2° Cardinale Salesiano: S. E. R.ma Mons. Augusto Hlond, Primate della Polonia*, in ACS 8 (1927) n. 40, 572-580; cf P. BRAIDO, *Religiosi nuovi...*, pp. 92-103. The note on Cardinal Hlond takes up only the last page.

Salesians obligated to the same perfection, to the exercise, each in his own profession, art or trade, of the identical apostolate of education that forms the essence of the Salesian Society. The Salesian Brother is a genial creation of the great heart of Don Bosco, inspired by Mary, Help of Christians!

This section is also inspired by Fr. Albera's vocations letter⁶⁰. Fr. Rinaldi adds much valuable material on the equality of access to perfection.

3. [...] But with his Society, Don Bosco has opened the way of religious perfection not only to a given number, but to all laymen who felt called to sanctify themselves in the life of the community, doing the apostolate of education in the midst of poor and abandoned youth, or doing missionary apostolate among the savages⁶¹.

That is how Don Bosco made perfection accessible to every class of persons with his Society, by the very exercise of all the different cultural, artistic, mechanical and agricultural professions.

Fr. Rinaldi urges Salesians to make this known:

4. [...] We must all, my dear confreres, spread everywhere and make familiar in word, writing and every other way at our disposal, this too-little known truth: religious life is not just for those called to the priesthood, but also for those who feel the inner desire to lead a more perfect life, where they can better serve the Lord in the exercise of any number of different apostolates. We have to let the simple religious life, a divine gift of inestimable value, shine forth in all its beauty and greatness.

[...] In our families, in our home towns, among our acquaintances, in the festive Oratories, in the Schools and Parishes where we work, we can find good boys, destined to high perfection by God, who maybe are just waiting for that first push from us: why don't we give it, with prayer, the good word, with action?

Fr. Albera also mentioned God's generosity in giving vocations⁶². There is here a resonance with the personal vocation stories of both Don Bosco and Fr. Rinaldi. Don Bosco tells us he was happy to finally find someone to talk with about his vocation in the person of Fr. Calosso, and later Fr. Cafasso⁶³. In the case of young Philip, it was Don Bosco himself who helped him overcome his indecision.

Here is why the brother's vocation is essential to the Salesian Society:

[...] We have to form men at Cumiana filled with the spirit of God, which is the true Salesian spirit, so they can one day go to the Missions and live Christian doctrine in practice, so as to evangelize those savages that the missionary priest is instructing in the Faith. There, in the very person of the farmer and the artisan, must

⁶⁰ See ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 42 (May 15, 1921), *loc. cit.*

⁶¹ "My Father is the vinedresser": John 15:1.

⁶² ALBERA, *Circolari* n. 10 (May 31, 1913), 139.

⁶³ See MO, ch. 4 and 27.

shine forth Jesus model of work. Jesus with the carpenter's plane, with the ax, with the hoe; "*coepit facere et docere*"⁶⁴. Our Salesian brother must represent the life of Jesus at Nazareth.

Salesian lay and priestly complementarity, then, is a consequence of the second Article of the Constitutions. It is the action of Jesus, Worker and Teacher.

4.4. *The Rinaldi Years: from Codification to Implementation*

One could possibly sustain the thesis, then, that the brothers' post-novitiate formation program lagged that of Salesian priests by 30 years. Important theoretical components were in place by 1932: the all-important principle of equal length; Fr. Rinaldi advanced it beyond Fr. Albera's Initial statement by ticking off the need for articulated stages: finishing, practical training, teacher training.

Practical components like vocation ministry, aspirantate - finishing course combination houses, showplace operations in Cumiana and Rebaudengo, and insistence on Provincial planning and implementation, are all due to the efforts of Fr. Rinaldi, Fr. Vespignani, Fr. Giraudi, Fr. Ricaldone, some of the Provincials and Directors, and those increasingly qualified brothers. The results are clear from the statistics mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Add to this Fr. Rinaldi's important vocational identity reflections on sanctified work, and the result is a rectorate whose influence is far out of proportion to its nine short years.

5. Rectorate of Fr. Ricaldone (1932-1951)

This long rectorate spans the core of the twentieth century, including many of the events that stamp it as the most violent of all: a world economic depression, history's deadliest war, and the "Cold War" between two powerfully armed blocs of nations⁶⁵.

5.1. *Working on Formation*

One of Fr. Ricaldone's programmatic priorities was formation. It practically had to be, given the great expansion that took place during his time as Rector Major.

⁶⁴ "Jesus did and taught", Acts 1, 1.

⁶⁵ For a biography of Fr. Ricaldone, see FRANCESCO RASTELLO, *Don Pietro Ricaldone, IV successore di Don Bosco*. 2 vols. Roma, Editrice SDB 1976. For general Salesian history from 1932 to 1951, there is still WIRTH's *Don Bosco and the Salesians*, again no more than an overview. Sources are the Archives, the letters in ACS, the various editions of the *Salesian Bulletin*, the individual house archives. The researcher of this period will again find useful the yearly Catalogs (*Elenchi*), and earlier editions of *Don Bosco in the World*.

The Salesians were 8,493 in 1930, toward the end of Fr. Rinaldi's years. The expansion went right on: 12,881 in 1940, then 15,835 in 1950. But 9,000 novices or professed Salesians left the Congregation, so Fr. Ricaldone saw formation as key to any solution⁶⁶.

5.1.1. GC15 (1938): The Formation Chapter

Fr. Ricaldone convoked the Fifteenth General Chapter to meet at Rebaudengo, on June 23, 1938. Its general theme was to be formation⁶⁷. Its labors are amply reported in ACS; they are in the form of regulations for the various phases. Unlike the practice of General Chapters of the Rua era, however, GC15 did not add these new regulations sets to the Regulations of the Society⁶⁸.

Aspirants are divided into those for the priesthood, and brother aspirants. These last will learn a trade or agriculture, or do some other work⁶⁹; there could be shops or fields for their practice. Brother aspirants training for other jobs should do a special two year course and take turns in the sacristy, infirmary, kitchen, fields, etc. Those to the priesthood should have finished their regular course of studies in the program approved by the Scholastic Councilor before going to novitiate; artisan and farmer aspirants should have finished their respective programs.

An appendix after the articles has more on the novice brothers. Their studies are much like the clerics'; they include the local language, mathematics, drafting, and notions of liturgy that will help them be good sacristans. Their timetable is similar as well⁷⁰.

In some ways, articles for the brothers' finishing course are similar to those for practical training, and in others, to those for the studentates. Parallelisms occur among the particular articles dealing with the setting up of the formation houses, purposes, programs, the role of the Director in 1923 C 195, etiquette and hygiene, Sodalities and catechism teaching in Oratories. Alone among the regulations sets, that for the finishing course recommends diocesan certification of brothers for catechism teaching. GC15 prescribes the finishing course for all brothers; the parallelisms between it and the studentates here show a clear move in the direction of the brothers' formation houses considered as a kind of studentate⁷¹.

⁶⁶ See Pietro BRAIDO, *Tratti di vita religiosa nello scritto "Ai Soci Salesiani" di don Bosco del 1875. Introduzione e testi critici*, in RSS 14 (1995) 92, with statistics to show that defections may have prompted Don Bosco to write the spiritual *Introduction* to the Constitutions.

⁶⁷ See Pietro RICALDONE, *Lettera del Rettor Maggiore: 1. Convocazione del XV Capitolo Generale*, in ACS 18 (1937) n. 83, 421-423.

⁶⁸ All of these are to be found in *Capitolo Generale XV: Regolamenti*, in ACS 19 (1939) n. 91, 7-40 (= GC15).

⁶⁹ GC15 thus discards a short-lived Ricaldone experiment with naming "catechists" those aspiring to be brothers in the service apostolate. See Pietro RICALDONE, *Formazione del Personale Salesiano*, in ACS 17 (1936) n. 78, 98, 106-107; and below, "Names".

⁷⁰ See GC15, pp. 7-22.

⁷¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 30-32; cf P. BRAIDO, *Religiosi nuovi...*, p. 155. This the Section III ch. 1

Nothing like this unified set of formation regulations has ever existed before. There is no spiritual background (*Normae Secundum Quas* is still in effect), but the letters and especially the *Salesian Formation* series explain these regulations, sometimes in minute detail.

5.1.2. Fr. Ricaldone's 1939 Letter on the Novitiate

Of Fr. Ricaldone's many long letters on formation, perhaps the most representative is the one of 1939 on the novitiate, appearing just after GC15. It is Part II of Ricaldone's monumental *Salesian Formation* series, begun in 1936. Here are the letters in the series that were published in ACS: *Vocations, aspirantate*: "Formazione del Personale Salesiano" (1936)⁷²; *Novitiate*: "Formazione del Personale Salesiano: Noviziato" (1939)⁷³; *Studentates*: "Formazione del Personale Salesiano: studentati filosofici e teologici" (1945)⁷⁴; *Teacher training*: "Formazione del Personale Salesiano: preparazione degl'insegnanti, complemento della formazione sacerdotale, capitoli e consigli" (1946)⁷⁵; *More on studentates*: "Formazione del Personale Salesiano: Programmi e norme per gli Studentati Filosofici e Teologici della Società Salesiana" (1946)⁷⁶.

5.2. *The Ricaldone Era at a Glance*

Besides the near doubling of the numbers of Salesians and 70% increase in the number of brothers during the amazing, violent and transforming two decades from 1930 to 1950, we have seen Fr. Ricaldone preside over an enormous development of formation. This is true not only in the formation regulations of GC15 and Ricaldone's own vast corpus of writings, but also in visible houses, operating programs, and a yearly river of 200-250 novice brothers.

Fr. Ricaldone also brought a distinctive governing style. Right from GC14, when he reserved to himself the appointment of two vacancies on the Superior Chapter, then seemed to have no interest in reporting on its discussions, his centralizing instinct is evident. This is a rectorate of efficient, centralized government, of large plans and large projects. When one reads a letter like the one on the Provincial visi-

referred to by the acts of GC18 in ACS 39 (1958) n. 203, p. 40, with retouches by GC16 and GC17. See also 1924 R, 60 for parallelisms among the finishing course, practical training, and the two kinds of studentates. 1923 C 195: kindness to, and instruction of, the novices; C 184: Director does what 195 says for young confreres in formation.

⁷² ACS 17 (1936) n. 78, 3-163.

⁷³ ACS 20 (1939) n. 93, 166-284. Note that this letter's pagination follows that of the 1936 number, not continuing from XIX 92.

⁷⁴ ACS 25 (1945) n. 131, 1-80.

⁷⁵ ACS 26 (1946) n. 134, 1-67.

⁷⁶ Renato ZIGGIOTTI, in ACS 26 (1946) n. 138/2, 1-87.

tation, with all its minute detail, the impression of centralized control and planning is unavoidable. Neither does Fr. Ricaldone show any interest in the larger world: the coming of war and of peace, of radar, television and atomic energy, all merit at most passing mention. Nor do other religious families rate much attention: Fr. Ricaldone is pleased to tell others what Salesians do, but has no interest in learning from others, as we saw with Sodalities. His favorite Salesian school model is the hermetically sealed boarding school, itself an aspirantate in all but name.

This remarkable rectorate is foreshadowed in the beginnings made by the one before it, and will still throw a long shadow over the one after it.