ARTHUR J. LENTI

DON BOSCO

HISTORY AND SPIRIT

4.

BEGINNINGS OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY AND ITS CONSTITUTIONS

LAS - ROMA

Don Bosco: History and Spirit
4. Beginnings of the Salesian Society and Its Constitutions

This fourth volume of the series *Don Bosco: History and Spirit*, focuses on the early Salesian constitutions as presented by Don Bosco for approval (1860-1874)–in the times of the Turin Archbishops–of Luigi Fransoni (in exile) and ensuing four-year vacancy, of Alessandro Riccardi di Netro (1867-1870) and of Lorenzo Gastaldi (1872-1874).
In introductory Chapters 1 and 2, the process of approval is set in the context of the historic events of the unification of Italy by the taking of Rome and the dispossession of the pope, at the time of the of the First Vatican Council and of the Franco-Prussian war. Out of these painful experiences, Don Bosco "prophetically" decries the hubris of the perpetrators of such injustices (France and Italy) and envisions God's terrible chastisements in prophecies and letters of 1870-1873.
The constitutions are discussed from a double point of view: first, under the aspect of the historical process of approval and of the principles that brought Don Bosco in confrontation with his Archbishops and the Roman authorities (Chs. 3-6); secondly, under the aspect of the novel religious outlook, profound insights and spirituality that Don Bosco sought to embody in the constitutions (Chs. 7-10). To highlight this second aspect, selected articles from selected chapters are chosen for discussion.

The series *Don Bosco, History and Spirit* consists of **seven volumes**. The first three volumes survey the life and times of John Melchior Bosco ("Don Bosco," 1815-1888) up to 1864, with particular attention to nineteenth-century political, social and religious history. This survey looks at Don Bosco's own education, at his spiritual and theological formation. It examines the growth of the work, and the founding and initial development of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, in the context of the liberal revolution and the unification of Italy (1848-1861).
This and the next three volumes describe Don Bosco's life and work in the period following the unification of Italy. In this setting *Don Bosco, History and Spirit* discusses the institutional developments and organization of the Salesian Society. It describes Don Bosco's further ministerial choices, and surveys the expansion of the Salesian work. At the same time it examines the development of permanent structures to guarantee the continuance of the Salesian work, and discusses some of the founder's insights and ideas, especially as they emerge from the reflective writings of his maturity.

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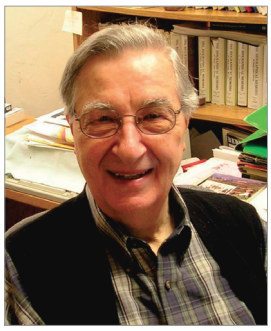

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DON BOSCO

History and Spirit - 4

ARTHUR J. LENTI

DON BOSCO: HISTORY AND SPIRIT

Vol. 4
BEGINNINGS OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY
AND ITS CONSTITUTIONS

(Edited by Aldo Giraudo)

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DON BOSCO: HISTORY AND SPIRIT

A Survey of the Life and Work of Saint John Bosco (1815-1888)

A Word to the Reader

The chapters that make up this series of volumes are a survey of the life and times of St. John Bosco, framed and punctuated by the events that brought both the Western Church and the Western World into modern times.

I call this survey, "Don Bosco, History and Spirit"–"History," because Don Bosco's life and work were played out in the context of the fateful events that created a new religious and political world, and thereby also shaped his thinking and action; "Spirit," because through discernment, interpretation and acceptance he discovered the meaning of this new world and courageously responded to its challenges: his vocation.

These chapters were born, so to speak, in the classroom. The historical materials were the burden of private reading as well as of the instructor's presentation. But the "Spirit" in them emerged through fairly intensive critical reflection involving the collaboration of both instructor and students.

For the present purpose the material had to undergo considerable revision and re-writing for greater readability, and a number of chapters had to be expanded with Appendices. These contain biographical sketches of figures that were deemed relevant to the matter under treatment. They also contain texts that seemed necessary or useful for a better understanding of the topic under discussion.

Acknowledgments

The presentation at many point is indebted, sometimes heavily, to the work of scholars, too numerous to mention, who have labored diligently and critically in the field of Salesian Studies, and other related fields. To them goes my grateful acknowledgment.

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Institute of Salesian Spirituality
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Berkeley, California (U.S.A.)

Vol. 4

BEGINNINGS OF THE SALESIAN SOCIETY AND ITS CONSTITUTIONS

This fourth volume of the series, *Don Bosco: History and Spirit,* focuses on the early Salesian constitutions as presented by Don Bosco for approval (1860-1874)–in the times of the Turin Archbishops–of Luigi Fransoni (in exile) and ensuing four-year vacancy, of Alessandro Riccardi di Netro (1867-1870) and of Lorenzo Gastaldi (1872-1874).

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Chapter 1

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE PERIOD 1861-1874

EBM IX, 370-402 (Vatican I); *EBM* X, 49-59 (Prophecies 1870-1873); Stella, *DB:LW*, 148-149; *DB:RO&S*, 74-85; Duggan, *Italy*, 129-157; *Sussidi* I, 29-33, 58-67, 74-76, 86-93, 101-106; G. Martina, *La Chiesa nell'età del liberalismo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1980) 159-181; Giuseppe Bonfanti, *La politica ecclesiastica nella formazione dello Stato unitario* (Brescia: La Scuola, 1977) 117-125.

Summary

1. The Unification of Italy (Briefly Recalled).
2. The Roman Question
3. Social and Political Unrest and Government's Predicament
4. The September Convention (1864)
5. Italy's Third War of Independence (1866)
6. Garibaldi's Military Action Against Rome in 1867
7. The First Vatican Council, the Franco-Pussian War, the Taking of Rome and Aftermath
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8. The Law of Guarantees (1871)
9. Don Bosco and His Work in the Decade 1862-1874

Appendices: 1. Test of Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors (1864); 2. Don Bosco Inquiry Concerning Attendance at Vatican I

1. The Unification of Italy[1]

The armistice concluded between France and Austria, ending the Second War of Italian Independence, was finalized by the Peace of Zürich (November 10, 1859), in which Piedmont played no part. The treaty provided for Lombardy to be annexed to the Kingdom of Sardinia, and envisaged in general terms a federation of Italian regional states, with their legitimate rulers restored.

[1] Only a brief summary is given here. For a more extended treatment see Vol. 3, Ch. 2, p. 83.

Lombardy was annexed to Piedmont, but otherwise things took a different turn. Napoleon III's true position found expression in the pamphlet *Le Pape et le Congrès* (The Pope and the Congress). Written by Baron Louis-Étienne de la Guéronnière but inspired by Napoleon himself, it was published simultaneously in Paris, London, Frankfurt, Turin and Florence on December 22, 1859. The pamphlet recognized the necessity for the pope to retain territorial sovereignty, but suggested that "the smaller the territory, the greater the sovereignty." It also suggested explicitly that the pope might begin by surrendering his rule over the Legations of Romagna (the northernmost part of the Papal States). The pamphlet drew the ire of the Catholic press and a condemnation from Pius IX, who was unaware of its true authorship.

The pamphlet's implications were clear: the emperor was lending qualified support to Cavour's program for the unification of Italy, being apparently committed also to defending the pope's sovereignty. He was also adroitly furthering French interests. In March 1860, following a referendum, Tuscany, Parma, Modena and the Legations of Romagna were officially annexed to Piedmont. In recognition of French support, by a separate accord, Nice and Savoy (up to that point, June 1860, part of the Kingdom of Sardinia) were ceded to France.

Following an uprising against the Bourbon government in Palermo (Sicily), Garibaldi, at the urging of the Action Party leaders, mounted an expedition to Sicily in support of the revolutionaries. In spite of opposition from Victor Emmanuel II and Cavour, who regarded his radical republican commitment as dangerous, he gathered a small volunteer force (the "One Thousand") and landed in Sicily. In battles fought from Palermo to Naples between May and October 1860, he defeated the Bourbon forces and overthrew the monarchy. By this time Garibaldi's volunteer army had risen to some 50,000 in number.

Piedmont had to make a preemptive move to take the initiative for the "liberation of Italy" away from Garibaldi. Such engagement on Piedmont's part (with France's acquiescence) would involve entering the Papal States. Thus it was that the Piedmontese army invaded the Marches and Umbria, where the movement for annexation had been strong. On September 18, 1860 the Piedmontese army defeated the papal forces, and led by King Victor Emmanuel moved on towards Naples. On October 26, Garibaldi met Victor Emmanuel at Teano (north of Naples). He saw no alternative but to hail Victor as king of Italy, surrender his "conquest," and dismiss his volunteer army.

Referendums were held at Naples and in the Papal States, and the "conquered" regions were annexed to Piedmont. These actions paved the way for

the proclamation of Victor Emmanuel II as king of united Italy by vote of the first Italian parliament and senate, and by law of March 17, 1861.

2. The Roman Question

Territorially, Italy was not completely united. On the one hand, the Veneto and other areas in the extreme northeast remained under Austria. On the other, the pope still held Rome and the surrounding territory (Latium). From the point of view of the Italian *Risorgimento* such deficiency gave rise to two critical questions: one regarding the territories still under Austria in the North; the other regarding those still under papal rule. The latter is referred to as the Roman Question.

The Third War of Italian Independence (1866) would settle (even though incompletely) the first question. The latter question (the *Roman Question*) was by far the more sensitive for it entailed dispossessing the pope on the one hand, and on the other having to deal with Napoleon III, who maintained a garrison in Rome for its protection against possible take-over attempts. From this point on the Roman question threatened to be the most divisive issue in Italian society.

On March 23 (1861) the first cabinet of the new nation was formed with Count Camillo Benso of Cavour as Prime Minister. Since the unification of Italy was achieved by annexation of Italian regional states to Piedmont, and not (for example) through federal union, Turin functioned naturally as its first capital. But the Roman Question, that is, whether Rome should be claimed from the pope as the historic capital of Italy, immediately came to the fore. On March 26-27, in two speeches delivered in Parliament, Cavour presented the government's position and strategy. The unification of Italy could be regarded as complete only when Rome became its capital. The "liberation" of Rome, therefore, must remain the goal of the *Risorgimento*, a goal to be pursued with France's acquiescence. It must be accomplished without infringing upon the pope's spiritual freedom and independence, of which Italy must be the guarantor before the world. In addition, Italy must guarantee to the pope the payment of a yearly sum comparable to his accustomed revenues. Such a policy would exemplify the liberal principle, "A free Church in a free state."

Cavour, however, died suddenly on June 6, 1861. In September, Cavour's successor, Baron Bettino Ricasoli, following Cavour's idea, presented a proposal of "reconciliation" between Italy and the Holy See to Paris and to

Rome. The Holy See would renounce all *territorial* sovereignty, in exchange for the recognition of the pope's *personal* sovereignty, right to diplomatic representation, and a large yearly endowment (to be underwritten also by other Catholic nations). The Italian government would pledge not to interfere in the nomination and appointment of bishops. It would also accept international control as to the obligations assumed.

1 – Baron Bettino Ricasoli (1809-1880)
second Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Italy

Ricasoli's proposal may have been "Cavourian," but his speeches lacked Cavour's moderate and reassuring tone. In his July 1 address in Parliament he said among other things:

> "We will have Rome not to destroy but to build up, for we will offer the Church the opportunity and the means for self-reformation. We will guarantee freedom and independence for the Church as the means whereby it may renew

itself in that purity of religious faith, simplicity of life style, austerity of discipline that were the honor and glory of the papacy in the early days. Such renewal would naturally follow from the willing surrender of that worldly power that is diametrically opposed to the spiritual nature of the Church's institution."[2]

Apart from Ricasoli's arguable notion of the Church, such rhetoric was not likely to encourage dialogue. The Holy See ignored the overture. France refused to enter into any discussion of the Roman Question on any terms. On the other hand, as will be seen below, the Italian government's ecclesiastical policy, more than its words, aggravated an already tense situation.

3. Social Unrest, Plots by Mazzinian Republicans and the Government's Predicament

For the next 15 years the government remained in the hands of the moderate liberals of Cavourian stamp (the so-called Historic Right).[3] But the governments were weak and incapable of dealing with the chaotic situation that developed throughout the peninsula.

The government adopted a policy of repression and coercion, administered by army units and police, as a method for dealing with social unrest. This was especially true for the southern parts of Italy and Sicily, where banditry, the Mafia and resentment against "Piedmontese rule" fueled frequent uprisings and required the deployment of as many as 100,000 soldiers.

No less disturbing for the government were the schemes of the radical

[2] *Sussidi* I, 67.

[3] The governments of the moderate Liberal Right (Historic Right) after Cavour were ineffectual and came tumbling down at every crisis, as the mere enumeration of Prime Ministers suggests: Bettino Ricasoli (June 1861 – March 1862), Urbano Rattazzi (March – December 1862), Luigi Carlo Farini (December 1862 – March 1863), Marco Minghetti (March 1863 – September 1864), Alfonso Ferrero La Marmora (September 1864 – December 1865), La Marmora II (December 1865 – June 1866), Ricasoli II (June 1866- April 1867), Rattazzi II (April – October 1867), Luigi Federico Menabrea (October - December 1867), Menabrea II (January 1868 – May 1869), Menabrea III (May – November 1869), Giovanni Lanza (December 1869 – June 1873), Minghetti II (last government of the Right, July 1873 – March 18, 1876) [*Compact De Agostini*, 765]. In 1876 the government passed into the hands of the radical Liberal Left (Historic Left). Although holding the government in a constitutional monarchy, these politicians professed the ideology of Mazzini's republicanism and of the Action Party, with socialist leanings.

Republicans hatched by Mazzini and Garibaldi. The latter had seen fit to "hand over" his conquest of the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to King Victor Emmanuel II. But the pure patriots' sights were now focused on Rome and Venice. On December 16, 1861, the committees that had been formed to support Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily in 1860, were re-established in Genoa and re-named, "Committees for the Liberation of Rome and Venice." Because of disagreements with Mazzini's faction, Garibaldi at first refused to accept the leadership. But when the committees met again (March 9-10, 1862) to form an "Association for the Liberation of Italy," Garibaldi stifled his personal grudges and accepted the presidency of the association. Some time later, a band of volunteers attempting to move against Venice was dispersed by the Italian regular army, while Mazzini, Garibaldi and other leaders of the Association planned an expedition against Rome. Garibaldi gathered a small volunteer force in Sicily with the oath, "Either Rome or Death (*O Roma o morte!*)." The force crossed over into Italy and was met by Italian regulars at Aspromonte. After a brief skirmish, Garibaldi was wounded in the foot and taken prisoner together with other volunteers (August 29, 1862). One month later, they were amnestied on the occasion of a royal wedding.

A further cause of concern for the government was the anger of Pius IX over the loss of much of his temporal power. The pope's condemnation of the new political arrangement, and his efforts to mobilize Catholics in defense of the Church, were seen as an attempt to undermine the state from within.[4] The ecclesiastical policies of the Liberal Right were a major cause of this state of alienation. These policies maintained the jurisdictionalist position, ingrained in the tradition of the Kingdom of Savoy, and exemplified by the Siccardi and Rattazzi Laws of 1850 and 1855. The laws of suppression of religious orders and congregations and of confiscation of their properties were extended to the whole of Italy between 1864 and 1867. "In 1866-7, 2,000 religious congregations were deprived of legal status and 25,000 ecclesiastical bodies were suppressed. In the course of the next fifteen years over a million hectares of church land were sold off."[5] The government also interfered with the appointment of bishops to vacant dioceses.

[4] Cf. Duggan, *Italy*, 147-152.

[5] Duggan, *Italy*, 135. Cf. G. Bonfanti, *La politica ecclesiastica* […], quoted in *Sussidi* I, 89-90.

4. The September Convention

The year 1864 marked a turning point in the story of the Roman Question, as also in Church-state relations in Italy. Garibaldi's triumphal tour through England in April, his meeting with Mazzini, and talk of Italian unification in the British press, alerted France and Italy to the danger of a possible reconciliation of the two "patriots." Hence, in June, conversations on the Roman Question were held between Emperor Napoleon III's minister of foreign affairs and the extraordinary envoy of the Italian government, at the time headed by Prime Minister Marco Minghetti. These negotiations led to the signing on September 15 (1864) of an accord between France and Italy known as the "September Convention." It provided for the withdrawal by stages of the French garrison from Rome over a period of two years, thus allowing the Holy See to draft and train its own army. In exchange the Italian government pledged to respect the territorial integrity of the city of Rome and surrounding region, that is, what was left of the Papal States, and to underwrite a portion of the Holy See's public debt. A secret clause provided for the transfer of the Italian capital from Turin to some more central Italian city (Florence heading the list), as a token of renunciation of Rome as capital.

The September Convention left the solution of the Roman Question in limbo. The Italian government understood the provision of respecting the territorial integrity to mean that the pope would voluntarily surrender Rome so that armed intervention would not be necessary. It also understood the transfer of the capital from Turin to Florence as an interim measure. The French government, on the contrary, understood the non-aggression clause as binding the Italian government not to attack, and to control the Garibaldi and Mazzini factions, which might be tempted by the withdrawal of the French garrison. It also understood the transfer of the capital to a more important city (other than Rome) as a valid compromise.

Pope Pius IX obviously mistrusted the provisions of the September Convention, for he feared that the withdrawal of the French garrison would invite armed attack. His fears were not ill founded. His concern, however, transcended the political developments. On December 8, 1864, he published the encyclical *Quanta Cura* with the appended *Syllabus of Contemporary Errors*, which restated the Church's opposition to all that the liberal revolution stood for.[6]

[6] With the encyclical *Quanta cura* Pius IX put the finishing touch on an intense doctrinal and disciplinary program the purpose of which was to reaffirm the Church's authority in all

When the government announced that Florence had been chosen as capital, violent demonstrations in Turin brought the government down, for the move was perceived as a surrender of Rome as capital. A permanent committee was established to oppose any government that did not pledge to make Rome the capital of Italy. But in spite of opposition, on November 19, 1864, the Italian Parliament in Turin approved the transfer of the capital. The Bill was passed into law on December 11, 1864, and on February 3, 1865, King Victor Emmanuel II moved the court to Florence. The departments of government followed by stages.

National elections were held on October 20, 1865. Only 2% of the population had the franchise, and only about 54% voted. Moderate liberals won 250 seats, the more radical opposition, 120, and the conservatives, 20. Some 50 seat went to numerous splinter groups. A month later, the king inaugurated the legislature. By year's end a government was formed with General Alfonso Ferrero La Marmora as Prime Minister, and Giovanni Lanza as Minister of Interior.

It was at this juncture that Don Bosco became tangentially involved in negotiations aiming at filling vacant episcopal sees as discussed in Vol. 5.

5. Italy's Third War of Independence Against Austria (1866)

By early 1866 political relations between Austria and Prussia had deteriorated to the point that war seemed imminent. Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck coaxed Italy into a military alliance by offering Italy the prospect of freeing the regions still subject to Austria. Prussia declared war on Austria on June 17 and Italy on June 20. This is reckoned as the Third War of Italian Independence.

In the battle of Sadowa (Bohemia, July 3) Austria suffered a decisive de-

areas of contemporary society. The *Syllabus of Contemporary Errors* was an intransigent condemnation of the "most pernicious errors" of the liberal revolution. It condemned liberty of conscience, religious tolerance, the lay character of the school, scientific progress, and freedom of thought, etc. The last article condemned "progress, liberalism and modern civilization." The *Syllabus* was received with pride and joy by conservative Catholics. But it also spelled the end of Catholic Liberalism and fueled anticlerical hostility. For, if understood in a purely religious context the *Syllabus* could be read as a theological statement addressed to Catholics, under the circumstances it was widely understood as a political and social manifesto (text of Syllabus given below).

feat. At the same time Italian regulars fought successfully in the Veneto region, while Garibaldi and his volunteers defeated the Austrians in the Alps. The Italian fleet, however, suffered total defeat by a much superior Austrian fleet off the island of Lissa in the Adriatic Sea. After Sadowa Austria asked Napoleon III to mediate an armistice. Without Italy's knowledge (contrary to the terms of the military alliance), the armistice was signed by Austria and Prussia, and Italy was forced to follow suit. Garibaldi was ordered to cease hostilities.

By the treaties of peace of August 3 and October 3, Austria ceded Venice and the Veneto region to Italy, but not the territories claimed by Italy in the extreme Northeast.

At the height of the war, on July 7, 1866, the Italian government passed a law denying juridical recognition to (hence, suppressing) the remaining religious orders and congregations and providing for the confiscation of their property. (The Bill had been presented in Parliament by Francesco Crispi at the beginning of 1865.) The law also provided for paying into the state's trust fund for the upkeep of religious worship 5% of the revenues derived from the auctioning of confiscated properties. The buildings of suppressed monasteries and convents were made available to local and provincial systems for schools, kindergartens, hospitals and charitable institutions. Confiscated books and works of art were assigned to public libraries and museums. The confiscation law of 1866 merely made universally binding what had been done in the Kingdom of Sardinia by the Rattazzi law of 1855, which had already been extended to single regional states upon annexation. It is also worth noting that extending Piedmontese law and administrative systems to regional states and finally to the whole of Italy was germane with the principle of "unification by annexation."

In accordance with the terms of the September Convention, the French garrison completed its withdrawal from Rome, begun in early November 1865. The last contingent left Rome in October 1866, leaving the city poorly defended by the reorganized papal army.

This situation is reflected in Pius IX's Allocution of October 29, 1866. Understandably, the pope denounced in the strongest terms the "unjust and iniquitous acts" perpetrated by the Italian government against the Church. Then (not so understandably), he went on to affirm the absolute necessity of the pope's temporal power to guarantee his complete freedom in the exercise of his pastoral office. He added as a final salvo that in the event of a take-over of Rome by Italy, he would not hesitate to go into voluntary exile.

2 – General Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882) in his old age
(from: *L'Illustration. Journal Universel*, July 10, 1882)

Deprived of French protection, Rome was inviting attack. In March 1867, Garibaldi escaped from his retreat on Caprera, the small island where he was confined, and began to rally volunteers for a military expedition against Rome. In September he was arrested and imprisoned, but was quickly returned to Caprera following widespread popular protests. In October an ultimatum from the French government demanded that Italy stop Garibaldi and his volunteers. The French then initiated the deployment of a new garrison to be stationed near Rome for the protection of the city and the pope.

6. Garibaldi's Military Action against Rome in 1867

The rhetoric and the activities of Italian revolutionaries, Garibaldi's in particular, in the year following the removal of the French garrison showed how

perilous the situation had become. France's demand that the Italian government keep revolutionaries in check and prevent an attack on Rome had no effect in spite of the best intentions. On October 20, 1867 Garibaldi again escaped from Caprera and marched on Rome with some 9,000 volunteers, while a bloody but unsuccessful uprising was taking place in Rome.

The papal troops surrendered to Garibaldi at Monterotondo, near Rome, but because of the failure of the uprising within the city he refrained from attacking Rome itself. Instead, on November 3 he engaged and defeated another contingent of papal troops at Mentana. But the French force stationed at Civitavecchia took the field and with its superior chassepot firepower drove the insurgents back into Italian territory, where Garibaldi was captured by Italian contingents, placed under arrest and returned to Caprera.

During the whole Roman crisis in the year 1867, popular protests in support of Garibaldi and dissention in regard to the Roman question caused the repeated fall of the government.

Ricasoli was unable to form a cabinet. Rattazzi and Menabrea, who succeeded him, were unable to sustain the pressure and were forced to resign. The chaotic condition of the economy, the war debt, and the mounting deficits, for which the sale at auction of confiscated Church property and additional taxes were unequal to compensate, complicated the problem.

The years 1868 and 1869 were especially troubled years. In Italy nationwide popular unrest and mass demonstrations against the grist tax (May 21, 1868) required deployment of army units and the use of force with numerous victims.[7] In Rome revolutionaries were executed or imprisoned in great numbers.

In 1868 Garibaldi was elected to parliament from his district for the second time, but refused. In a letter dated December 24, 1868, he denounced the government as "the negation of God," for betraying the cause during the recent failed attempt against Rome. He added: "What can one expect from a government that is nothing but an internal revenue service, a corrupt devourer of public wealth, and an agent in the pay of a foreign tyrant?"[8]

[7] The grist tax was levied on all cereals brought for grinding to the public mills. It consisted of a percentage to be paid either in money or in kind.

[8] *Compact De Agostini*, 161.

7. The First Vatican Council, the Franco-Prussian War, the Taking of Rome and Aftermath

1. The First Vatican Council (Dec. 8, 1869 - Oct. 20, 1870)

On June 28, 1868, Pope Pius IX published the bull of convocation of an ecumenical council, the First Vatican Council. It opened on December 8, 1869 with the participation of some 600 Council fathers. It was to climax the series of reforms put into effect in the Church by Pope Pius. It held 89 general congregations and 4 public sessions. The agenda included several important doctrinal and pastoral issues, among which the much debated dogmatic definition of papal infallibility.

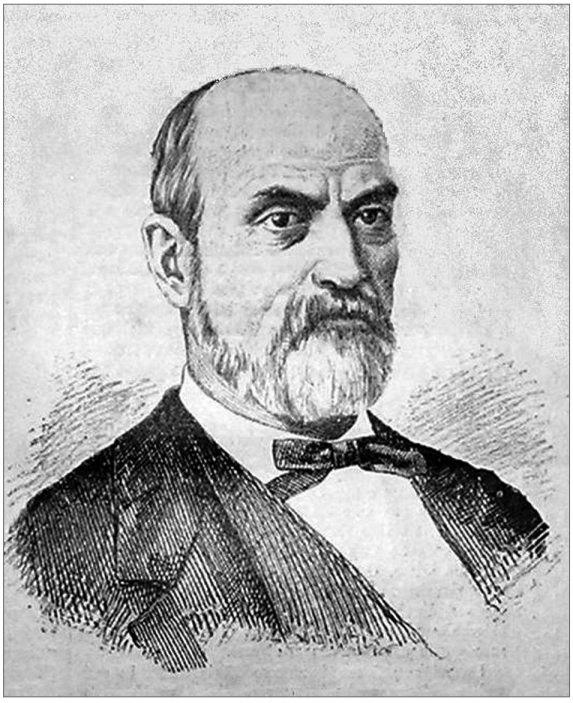
The council promulgated two doctrinal constitutions. *Dei Filius* (on God, Revelation, Faith and Reason) won unanimous approval on April 24, 1870. *Pastor Aeternus*, defining the jurisdictional primacy and the infallibility of the pope, was approved on July 18, 1870 not without lively debate and significant dissent, especially from some French, German and Piedmontese bishops.

The significance of the definition lay not so much in the area of doctrine, as in that it strengthened papal authority over against episcopal and conciliar tendencies in the Church. In the perception of some it also seemed to strengthen the position of the papacy in relation to the secular state in that it claimed for the pope supreme authority in the moral field, which is obviously related to various areas of society and politics.

Don Bosco had queried Rome, by letter to the Council's secretary (see Appendix 2 below), regarding his right to participate in the Council as Superior of a religious congregation. The reply was in the negative; nevertheless he spent over a month in Rome (January 20 – February 25) during the early phases of the Council. As was to be expected, Don Bosco was a staunch and outspoken supporter of papal infallibility and tirelessly pleaded the case with bishops of the opposition, while his printing presses in Turin were turning out copy in its support. He may have been instrumental in winning Bishop Lorenzo Gastaldi of Saluzzo over to the cause.[9]

The First Vatican Council held its last session on September 1, 1870. It was adjourned *sine die* on October 20, after the occupation of Rome by the Italian army on September 20, 1870.

[9] *EBM* IX, 372-373, 381-385.



3 – Giovanni Lanza, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Italy from 1869 to 1873

Meanwhile on the political front, the election of Leftist members of parliament to leadership posts forced the resignation of Prime Minister Menabrea and the dissolution of his cabinet. On December 14, 1869, Prime Minister Giovanni Lanza, who also held the Ministry of Interior, formed a new government. Shortly thereafter, in February 1870, taking advantage of popular unrest, Giuseppe Mazzini returned to Italy secretly with the object of organizing a revolution, overthrowing the constitutional government, taking Rome and establishing a republic. Uprisings broke out in several Italian cities in the months that followed, but the revolts were put down, and Mazzini was arrested in Palermo (Sicily) and imprisoned. (He was later released on the occasion of the amnesty decreed to celebrate the occupation of Rome.)

Such attempts made the solution of the Roman question all the more urgent. Italy's occupation of Rome and surrounding territory (all that remained of the Papal States) was itself "occasioned" by the Franco-Prussian War, which left Rome practically defenseless, due to the recall of the French garrison.

2. *The Franco-German War (July 19, 1870 – May 10, 1871) and the Taking of Rome (Sep. 20, 1870)*

On July 19, 1870 (the day after the definition of papal infallibility) France declared war on Prussia.[10]

The war was quickly over. On September 1, in the battle of Sedan, the French suffered a crushing defeat, and Napoleon III himself surrendered to King William I of Prussia and acknowledged himself a prisoner. On September 4, 1870 the Third Republic was proclaimed in Paris. Paris itself surrendered to the Germans after a fairly prolonged siege (September 19, 1870 – January 28, 1871), after which a treaty of peace was drafted at Versailles and finalized at Frankfurt am Main on May 10.

During the siege and after peace settlement, Paris passed through a terrible period of internal disorder. An uprising of "communists," that is, fanatical democratic republicans who demanded a federation of the townships (*communes*), attempted to overthrow the elected government of the Third Republic. They seized and fortified the northern part of the city, and a new reign of terror began. There was much bloodshed, and many public buildings, including the "Pantheon," were set on fire.[11] The insurrection was at length suppressed.

At the onset of the hostilities between France and Prussia, the Italian Parliament in extraordinary session voted for a quick settlement of the Roman question "in accordance with national aspirations." A memorandum was dispatched to the European powers emphasizing the urgent need of settling the Roman question, so as to forestall a republican revolutionary takeover.

France had recalled the garrison stationed for the protection of Rome in early August. On September 5, following Napoleon III's defeat, the Italian government reached the unanimous decision to occupy Rome, though not before making a further attempt to get Pius IX to surrender the city voluntarily and peaceably. Count Gustavo Ponza di San Martino was the bearer of a letter from King Victor Emmanuel II to Pius IX guaranteeing the Holy See's

[10] A note on the causes and on the conduct of the war is given in the next chapter in connection with Don Bosco's prophecy of 1870.

[11] In the Prophecy of 1870, in the apostrophe to Paris, Don Bosco mentions the Pantheon specifically: "Your idol, the Pantheon, shall be razed to the ground." The Pantheon was first intended as a church dedicated to St. Geneviève, patroness of Paris. During the Napoleonic period it was dedicated instead as a monument to the "great men" of France. Used as a church during the Restoration, it was re-converted to secular use in the Third Republic.

complete independence for the exercise of its spiritual office. As expected, Pius IX rejected the proposal with disdain. On September 20, 1870, the Italian artillery opened a breach in the wall at Porta Pia, and the ensuing skirmishes left 49 Italian and 19 papal soldiers dead. The surrender was signed, and the whole city, with the exception of the Vatican palaces where Pius IX had taken refuge, was occupied. In early October by popular referendum Rome and the surrounding territory of Latium were annexed to Italy. With the encyclical *Respicientes* of November 1, 1870, Pius IX declared the occupation "unjust, violent, null and illegal." He deplored the condition of captivity that prevented the pope from exercising his sovereign pastoral office. He excommunicated the king of Italy and anyone who might have had anything to do with the usurpation.

8. The Law of Guarantees

To reassure the international community, but also pursuing a policy that had guided the Historic Right since Cavour, Prime Minister Lanza introduced a Bill to establish the guarantees for the free exercise of papal power that the king had promised in his letter. On January 22, 1871, debate began in parliament of a Bill entitled "Prerogatives of the Pope and the Holy See, and Relations between Church and State in Italy." The "Law of Guarantees," as the Bill is commonly known, was approved in the Senate on May 2, and published on May 15.

The Law of Guarantees was based on Cavour's political principle, "a free Church in a free state." It was divided into two parts: "Prerogatives of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Holy See," and "Relations between Church and State in Italy."

Part I comprised Articles 1-13. Specifically, Articles 1-8 dealt with the pope's prerogatives. They were as follows: (1) immunity of papal territorial residences (the Vatican, the Lateran and the villa of Castelgandolfo); (2) an endowment of 3,225,000 *lire*, comparable to the former papal revenues; (3) personal inviolability; (4) right to honors as a sovereign ruler and to a corps of armed guards; (5) free, unimpeded exercise of the spiritual power; (6) right to free, uncensored communication in and outside Italy, and the power to receive and appoint ambassadors. Articles 9-13 of Part I dealt with the Holy See's right freely to communicate with the faithful, with the clergy and with governments throughout the world.

Part II (comprising Articles 14-19) exempted the clergy from royal controls. In particular it abolished the bishops' traditional oath of allegiance to the king and all restrictions to the clergy's right of assembly. The final article 20 abrogated all preceding contrary laws and customs.

By the encyclical *Ubi nos* (May 15, 1871) Pius IX rejected the law as a scheme "to deceive Catholics and soothe their anxiety." He affirmed once again that temporal power was the only true guarantee of the pope's independence.

In spite of papal rejection, the law remained in effect until the concordat of 1929.

At the same time, Prime Minister Lanza presented a Bill to transfer the capital from Florence to Rome. The official transfer took place on July 1, 1871, and on July 2 King Victor Emmanuel II and his ministers made their official entry into the eternal city.[12]

In the context of the historic events of the unification of Italy and its immediate aftermath Don Bosco becomes actively engaged on many fronts to consolidate and expand his work.

9. Don Bosco and His Work in the Decade 1862-1874

The *fifties and early sixties* may be characterized as the decade (among other aspects) of Don Bosco's great experiment as educator and spiritual master, of his full engagement in the apostolate of the press, of the first stage of the Founding–a *first stage* in the development of Don Bosco's work. The *sixties and early seventies*, on the other hand, might be characterized as a *second stage* in the development and consolidation of the work. This includes especially the approval of the Salesian Society and of its constitutions and the founding of a religious congregation for women, the expansion of Don Bosco's work of education in schools, the development of the work in Turin, the gradual establishment of central structures in view of a projected worldwide expansion.

Therefore, while continuing the many initiatives of the earlier stage, the years 1862-1874 are *constructive* and *special* in many ways, as the following partial list may show:

(1) *The Society of St. Francis de Sales and its constitutions* were definitively ap-

[12] The government and parliament were established in the Montecitorio Palace later in 1871. It still took the better part of a year before the transfer of government offices was completed. Officially Florence had served as the capital of Italy from February 3, 1865 to July 1, 1871.

proved (1864-1874). This set on a juridical basis the institution that was to be the chief vehicle for the Salesian apostolate.

(2) *The Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians* on a "dependent" juridical basis of affiliation to the Salesian Society. The institute, founded by Don Bosco in association with Mary Mazzarello and the Mornese group of Mary Immaculate (1864-1872) was in effect a parallel congregation for women with the same aims as the Salesian Society.

(3) In the context of liberal school reforms and in response to a call of the Church, the Salesian work (especially in the form of *the boarding school* (*collegio*) experienced a remarkable growth in Piedmont and Liguria.

(4) *Mary Help of Christians* (the Madonna of the 1860s) and her shrine (1863-1868) become the symbol of a *new commitment* of the Salesian service to the Church, the focal point of a *new charismatic consciousness* in the Founder and his Community, with an accompanying upsurge of the "supernatural" and of a distinctive spirituality.

(5) In the context of the political arrangements and the ensuing political climate that marked the years of Italy's unification (1865-1874), we see Don Bosco *involved in Church-state affairs*, as mediator in negotiations to fill vacant episcopal sees and to obtain the royal *Exequatur* and the rightful temporalities for bishops once appointed.

(6) Beginning with the 1860s the status of the *Lay Salesian Vocation* (the Salesian Brother) embodied in the constitutions is clarified and confirmed. It will acquire definition, identity and organization after mid-seventies, especially through the work of the general chapters.

(7) Don Bosco *envisions a global expansion* of the Salesian work in the context of his growing global consciousness (strengthened by the experience of the First Vatican Council, 1869-70). The realization of this plan, including the missions proper, falls in the next decade.

Appendices

1. Syllabus of Errors (1864)

The 80 propositions condemned by Pius IX by the Syllabus of 1864 and attached to the encyclical *Quanta Cura* are a document of the Liberalism of the time. They should be understood in the context of the papal utterances (such as encyclicals) from which they were excerpted. Likewise, the terms employed (such as "Liberalism") should be understood in that same context, not in the modern sense.

Both *Quanta Cura* and the Syllabus had been ready for some time, but were withheld (on Cardinal Antonelli's advice). They were released when the September Convention between Italy and Napoleon III (1864) stirred up Pius IX's anger.

[It should be noted that each proposition describes an error, and therefore its statement is condemned.]

Text of the Eighty Propositions of the Syllabus[13]

[Extreme Rationalism: God, Revelation, Faith and Reason, Holy Scripture, Jesus Christ]

1. There exists no supreme, all wise, most provident divine being distinct from the universe. God and nature are one, and God is therefore subject to change. Actually, God is produced in man and in the world. God and the world are identical, as are spirit and matter, true and false, good and evil, just and unjust.

2. All action of God upon man and upon the world is to be denied.

3. Human reason, without any regard whatsoever to God, is the sole judge of the true and the false, of good and evil. It is a law unto itself and suffices by its natural powers to secure the welfare of men and nations.

4. All truths of religion derive from the natural force of human reason; hence reason is the principal rule by which man can and should attain the knowledge of all truths of whatever kind.

5. Divine revelation is imperfect, and therefore subject to continued and indefinite progress, which corresponds to the progress of human reason.

6. Faith in Christ is opposed to human reason; and divine revelation is not only unprofitable, but is even harmful to the perfection of man.

7. Prophecies and miracles, set forth and narrated in Holy Scripture, are poetical

[13] Denzinger- Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum...*, ed. XXXV rev. (New York: Herder, 1973) # 2901, 576-584.

fiction. The mysteries of Christian faith are the results of philosophical investigation. The books of both Testaments contain mythical inventions; and Jesus Christ Himself is a mythical fiction.

[Moderate Rationalism: Religion and Philosophy, Dogmas, Authority, Church Decrees, Theology]

8. Since human reason is on a level with religion itself, it follows that theological studies are to be treated as we treat philosophical studies.

9. Without exception, all the dogmas of the Christian religion are the object of natural science or philosophy. Human reason, developed solely by history, can by its own natural strength and principles arrive at the true knowledge of even the more abstruse dogmas, provided these dogmas be proposed as the object of reason.

10. Since the philosopher is one thing and philosophy another, the philosopher has the right and duty to submit himself to that authority which he shall recognize as true; but philosophy neither can nor should submit itself to any authority.

11. The Church should never censure philosophy, but ought to tolerate its errors and leave it to correct itself.

12. The decrees of the Apostolic See and the Roman Congregations hinder the free progress of knowledge.

13. The method and principles by which the ancient scholastic Doctors developed Theology are by no means suited to the needs of our age and the progress of the sciences.

14. Philosophy should be treated without any regard for supernatural revelation.

[Indifferentism, Latitudinarianism]

15. Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall believe true.

16. Men may in any religion find the way of eternal salvation and attain eternal salvation.

17. We may entertain at least the hope of the eternal salvation of all those who are in no way in the true Church of Christ.

18. Protestantism is nothing but another form of the same true Christian religion, in which it is equally possible to please God as in the Catholic Church.

[Errors Concerning The Church and Her Rights]

19. The Church is not a true, perfect and entirely free society, nor does she enjoy peculiar and perpetual rights conferred upon her by her Divine Founder. It belongs

to the civil power to define what are the rights of the Church and the limits within which she can exercise them.

20. The Ecclesiastical power may not exercise its authority without the permission and assent of civil government.

21. The Church has not the power of defining dogmatically that the religion of the Catholic Church is the only true religion.

22. The obligation under which Catholic teachers and writers are bound applies only to those things that are proposed by the infallible judgment of the Church as dogmas of faith.

23. The Roman Pontiffs and the Ecumenical Councils have exceeded the limits of their power, have usurped the rights of rulers, and have erred even in the definition of matters of faith and morals.

24. The Church has no right to employ force, nor any direct or indirect temporal power.

25. Besides the power inherent in the Episcopate, any further temporal power is granted to it either expressly or tacitly by the civil authority, which power is on that account revocable by the civil authority at its pleasure.

26. The Church has no natural and legitimate right to acquire and possess property.

27. The ministers of the Church and the Roman Pontiff ought to be absolutely excluded from all care of, and dominion over, temporal things.

28. It is not right for Bishops without the permission of the government to promulgate even their apostolic letters.

29. Favors granted by the Roman Pontiff must be considered null unless requested by the civil government.

30. The immunity of the Church and of ecclesiastical persons derives its origin from civil law.

31. Ecclesiastical courts for temporal cases of the clergy whether civil or criminal should by all means be abolished, even without the concurrence and despite the protest of the Apostolic See.

32. The personal immunity exempting clerics from military service may be abolished without violation of natural right or equity. Civic progress demands its abolition especially in a society constituted upon principles of liberal government.

33. It does not pertain exclusively to ecclesiastical jurisdiction by any proper and inherent right to direct the teaching of theology.

34. The teaching of those who compare the Roman Pontiff to a free sovereign acting in the universal Church is a doctrine that prevailed in the Middle Ages.

35. There is nothing to prevent the sentence of a general council or the act of the assembled nations from transferring the supreme pontificate from the Bishop and city of Rome to some other Bishop or city.

36. The definition of a national council admits of no further discussion, and the civil administration may regard such an affair as settled.

37. National Churches can be established after being withdrawn and openly separated from the authority of the Roman Pontiff.

38. The arbitrary rulings of the Roman Pontiffs have brought about the separation of the Church into eastern and western divisions.

[Errors Concerning Civil Society Considered both in Itself and in Its Relation To The Church]

39. The commonwealth is the origin and source of all rights, and enjoys rights that are not circumscribed by any limits.

40. The teaching of the Catholic Church is opposed to the wellbeing and interests of society.

41. The civil power, even when exercised by an unbeliever, possesses an indirect and negative right over religious affairs; therefore it possesses not only the right called *exequatur*, but also that called *appellatio ab abusu*.

42. In the case of conflicting laws of the two powers, civil law prevails.

43. Without the consent of the Holy See and even against its protest, the lay power has the authority to break and to declare and render null the solemn treaties, commonly called concordats, concluded with the Apostolic See concerning the use of rights appertaining to ecclesiastical immunity.

44. The civil authority may interfere in matters pertaining to religion, morality, and spiritual government. Hence it has control over the instructions which the pastors of the Church issue for the guidance of consciences and conformable to their duty. Furthermore, with regard to the administration of the divine sacraments, it possesses the power to decree the dispositions necessary for their reception.

45. The entire direction of public schools in which the youth of any Christian state are educated, except to some extent in the case of episcopal seminaries, may and must belong to the civil power. This must be in such a way that no other authority whatsoever shall be recognized as having any right to interfere in the discipline of the schools, the direction of studies, the conferring of degrees, and the choice and approval of teachers.

46. Even in ecclesiastical seminaries the method of studies is subject to civil authority.

47. The best theory of civil authority demands that the public schools, which are open to children of all classes, and in general all public institutions intended for the education of youth in letters and higher learning, shall be free from all ecclesiastical authority, government and interference, and shall be completely subjected to the civil and political authority according to the desires of the rulers and the opinions of the age.

48. Catholics may approve of that theory of education for youth which separates it from the Catholic faith and ecclesiastical power, and which is confined exclusively,

or at least primarily, to the knowledge of natural order alone and the purpose of social life on earth.

49. The Civil authority may prevent Bishops and the faithful from free and mutual communication with the Roman Pontiff.

50. Civil authority has in itself the right of presenting Bishops, and can demand that they take over their dioceses before they have received canonical institution and the apostolic letters from the Holy See.

51. Furthermore, lay government has the right of deposing Bishops from the exercise of their pastoral ministry, and it is not bound to obey the Roman Pontiff in those things which refer to the institution of episcopal sees and Bishops.

52. The government has the right to change the age prescribed by the Church for religious profession of women as well as of men, and it can require all religious orders to admit no one to solemn vows without its permission.

53. The laws that pertain to the protection of religious bodies and of their rights and duties should be abrogated. Moreover, the civil government can assist all those who wish to abandon the religious life and to break their solemn vows. Likewise the government can suppress religious bodies, collegiate churches, and simple benefices, even those of private patronage, and take over their goods and revenues to be administered and disposed of by the civil power.

54. Kings and princes are not only exempt from ecclesiastical rule but are even superior to the Church in disputed questions of jurisdiction.

55. The Church should be separated from the State and the State from the Church.

[Errors Concerning Natural and Christian Ethics]

56. Moral laws do not require a divine sanction, nor is there any need for human laws to be conformable to the law of nature or to receive their binding force from God.

57. The science of philosophy and morals, and likewise that of civil laws, may and should be withdrawn from divine and ecclesiastical authority.

58. No other forces are to be recognized save those which reside in matter; and all moral teaching and moral excellence ought to consist in the accumulation of riches by every possible means, and in the enjoyment of pleasure.

59. Rights consist in the mere material fact, and all human duties are an empty name, and every human deed has the force of right.

60. Authority is nothing but the result of numerical superiority and material force.

61. An unjust act, when successful, inflicts no injury upon the sanctity of right.

62. The principle of nonintervention, as it is called, ought to be proclaimed and adhered to.

63. It is lawful to refuse obedience to legitimate princes, and even to rebel against them.

64. The violation of a solemn oath and any atrocious crime against the eternal law is not only not reprehensible but is lawful and worthy of the highest praise when done for the love of country.

[Errors Concerning Christian Marriage]

65. The teaching that Christ elevated marriage to the dignity of a sacrament can in no way be admitted.

66. The sacrament of matrimony is but an accessory of the contract and separable from it, and the sacrament consists in the nuptial blessing alone.

67. The marriage bond is not indissoluble according to the natural law, and in certain cases divorce, properly so-called, may be sanctioned by civil authority.

68. The Church has no power to enact the diriment impediments to marriage. That power belongs to the civil authority, which can do away with the existing impediments.

69. The Church began to introduce impediments only in later times, and then not by her own right but a right borrowed from civil power.

70. The canons of the Council of Trent which placed the censure of anathema on those who dare deny to the Church the power of enacting diriment impediments either are not dogmatic or should be understood as a delegated power.

71. The Tridentine form does not oblige under penalty of nullity where the civil law prescribes another form or wishes to validate the marriage by means of this new form.

72. Boniface VIII was the first to declare that the vow of chastity pronounced at ordination rendered a marriage null.

73. A civil contract can constitute true marriage among Christians; and it is false to affirm either that the marriage contract was always sacramental or that there is no contract if the sacrament be excluded.

74. Matrimonial cases and espousals belong by their very nature to civil jurisdiction.

[Errors Regarding the Civil Power of the Roman Pontiffs]

75. Good Catholics dispute among themselves upon the compatibility of the temporal with the spiritual power.

76. The abrogation of the civil power of the Apostolic See conduces in the highest degree to the freedom and happiness of the Church.

[Errors Concerning the Liberalism of the Day]

77. In our times it is no longer necessary that the Catholic religion should be the only religion of the State to the exclusion of all others whatsoever.

78. Hence it has been wisely provided by law that in certain regions, Catholic in name, immigrants shall be allowed the public exercise of their own forms of religion.

79. Moreover, it is falsely maintained that civil liberty of every kind of worship and full power granted everybody to manifest openly and publicly any opinions whatever, conduce to corrupt more easily the minds and morals of the people and to the propagation of the plague of indifferentism.

80. The Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile and align himself with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.

Comments

The Syllabus aroused hostility among governments and generally in anti-Catholic circles. It also embittered some of the most brilliant Catholic intellectuals of Europe, such as Charles de Montalembert, Johann von Döllinger, John Emerich Acton. It ended the hope these men had that Rome would embrace legitimate liberal principles. (Döllinger eventually left the Catholic Church.)

The Holy Office, fearing a backlash from European chanceries, had suggested some other venue (such as a papal Allocution). Secretary of State Card. Antonelli especially feared the reaction of Napoleon III (whose troops protected Rome) and advised delay in publication. It was in fact delayed.

However, the September Convention (1864) concluded between the French and Italian government, so angered Pope Pius that he released the encyclical *Quanta Cura* with the Syllabus.

To soften the impact of the Syllabus, Card. Antonelli argued that it was a declaration of abstract principles that did not call into question concrete liberal institutions. It had been drawn up at the request of the bishops meeting in Rome in 1862 for the canonization of the Japanese martyrs. The Syllabus was a mere memorandum for the bishops summarizing points already dealt with in earlier papal utterances.

This was true enough, and moreover a number of the propositions condemned dealt with basic religious beliefs, such as Pantheism, Naturalism, Rationalism, Indifferentism. However, most of the Syllabus dealt with such sensitive matters as the political order, the ordering of civil society, social ethics, the rights of the Church.

The following condemned propositions deserve special critical consideration: Nos. 24, 30, 45, 47, 55, 63, 67, 77, and especially 80, which sets the pope against "progress, liberalism and modern civilization."

We have no record of Don Bosco's reaction to *Quanta Cura* and the Syllabus. Lemoyne has only a brief comment in the *Biographical Memoirs*.[14] He sees the publication of the Syllabus as a "great triumph." It is unlikely that Don Bosco disagreed with any part of its contents. In the *History of the Church* (1846), in the *Catholic Instructed* (1853), in the *History of Italy* (1856) and in other writings, Don Bosco is completely in line with the ecclesiology of the *Syllabus*.

In a letter by a Father Mongini published in the anticlerical newspaper *La Gazzetta del Popolo* on August 5, 1879 in the context of the attempt to close the Oratory school, Don Bosco is referred to as a "walking Syllabus."

> Operating schools in Italy and elsewhere, even in [South] America, Don Bosco has a political clout that he hides under the cloak of humanitarianism, so-called "doing good." His clout consists of the education he imparts, imbued as it is with the principles of the Syllabus, and under whose guise he is training generations hostile to Italy and to worldwide civilization. Don Bosco, who seems to have the gift of being everywhere at the same time, may well be called "the traveling Syllabus." Coated with honey, he doles out the Syllabus to his pupils in small spoonfuls to make it more tasty and easy to go down, much as a mother gives her children pills. He is a genius in inflaming people with love for the papacy, and in this he is far more successful than a thousand priestly teachers or a thousand Catholic journalists, even the extremists. Woe to Italy if its hundred cities harbored a Don Bosco in their midst. At the very least, the government would be embarrassed without end, and the consequences would be clearly in evidence. All this is to say that even if the law cannot correct all the blunders plaguing secondary education, it must still be severely applied to institutions of this kind, with regular inspections, and, if necessary, they must be shut down. [15]

2. Don Bosco's Inquiry Concerning Attendance at Vatican I

Letter to Msgr. Joseph Fessler, Secretary of Vatican Council I, November 22, 1869

On June 28, 1868 Pius IX published the Bull of convocation of the First Vatican Council, to open in St. Peter's on December 8, 1869. As the date of opening approached, Don Bosco wrote to the Council's secretary inquiring about attendance.[16]

[14] *IBM* VII, 830-831 (abridged in *EBM* VII, 491).

[15] *IBM* XIV, 188-189; *EBM* XIV, 135. (Overlook inappropriate editor's note in *EBM*!)

[16] Motto, *Epistolario* III, 153-154, # 1375, from ASV *Acta S. S. Concilii Vaticani, Secretariat*

Turin, November 22, 1869

Your Excellency,

Needing to have information regarding attendance at the up-coming ecumenical council, I take the liberty of addressing my humble request to Your Excellency. Here then is my question.

Letters and private information received from friends assure me that Superiors General of religious orders that have been definitively approved and have jurisdiction may attend the up-coming ecumenical council. However, I have not been able to ascertain whether religious congregations have the same right.

I happen to be the Superior General of the Society of St. Francis de Sales, definitively approved as a congregation with simple, perpetual vows reserved to the Holy See.

If in your great kindness you would have someone indicate to me whether as Superior of such a congregation I am eligible for participation in the council, I should regard it as a signal favor. I should not want to appear remiss in anything that would render homage to the Holy See, just as I would not like to intrude where I don't belong.

Trusting that in your kindness you will forgive the trouble this request might cause you I pray that God grant you good health and long life.

With deep gratitude I am

Your Excellency's most devoted servant,
Father Gio Bosco

Comment

The reply, in the negative, was immediate: Superiors General of congregations with simple vows, even if perpetual and reserved to the Holy See, did not have the right to participate in the Council.[17] The motivation that Don Bosco gives for his inquiry is of interest: He would not want "to appear remiss in anything that would do homage to the Holy See." (Don Bosco spent over one month in Rome, Jan 20-Feb 25, during the early phase of the Council.)

of the Council from No. 1 to 200, 117, Don Bosco's holograph. Joseph Fessler, born in 1813 in Tyrol (Austria) took his doctorate in theology at the university of Vienna and was professor of Church history there. He was ordained bishop in 1862, and served as secretary of Vatican I (1868-1870) [Motto, *Ibid.*, 153].

[17] Motto, *Epistolario* III, 153.

Chapter 2

DON BOSCO'S PROPHECIES OF 1870-1873

Summary

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2. Course
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1. The Franco-German War (July 19, 1870 – May 10, 1871)

Ploetz' *Epitome of History*, Tr. by William H. Tillinghast (NY: Blue Ribbon Books, 1925) 513–520.

1. General Causes

1. The idea entertained by a great part of the French nation, and kept alive by historians, poets and the daily press, was to retrive for France of the left bank of the Rhine (*les frontières naturelles*).

2. The French, not understanding the long struggle of the German nation for political unity, saw in the consummation of this union only a forcible aggrandizement of Prussia, and in Prussia's victory over Austria (1866) an attack on French military fame.

2. Special Causes

1. Internal dissent troubled the government of Napoleon III.
2. The fact that Prussia rejected, ever since 1866, France's demand for "compensation," for the growth of Prussia in extent and population.
3. News of the approaching introduction of an improved weapon for the north German infantry, which threatened to put in question the superiority of the French *chassepot* rifle.

3. Immediate Cause

1870, July: The election of the *prince of Hohenzollern* to the throne of Spain was represented in Paris as a Prussian scheme endangering the safety of France. The request made by the French ambassador Benedetti in Ems of King William I in person, that he should forbid the prince of Hohenzollern to accept the Spanish crown, was refused. After the voluntary withdrawal of the prince, the French government expected the King of Prussia to make a clear announcement "that he would never again permit the candidacy of the prince for the Spanish crown." King William refused to discuss the matter, and referred Benedetti to the regular method of communication through the ministry at Berlin. This was regarded as an insult to France. The tremendous excitement in Paris was artificially orchestrated.

July 15: In the *corps législatif*, a small group led by Adolphe Thiers opposed the declaration of war ("because France is not prepared for war"). But the government (Napoleon III) declared that war was forced upon them by Prussia.

4. Declaration of War

1870, July 15: In Germany the attitude of the government and the people was quiet but decided. William I received enthusiastic ovations in Berlin. The

same evening mobilization of the north German army and the convocation of the *Reichstag* were ordered.

South Germany understood that a French attack, although apparently directed against Prussia alone, was in reality an attack upon the *German* nation, and that Napoleon's purpose was the conquest of German territory and the establishment of a new Confederation of the Rhine.

1870, July 16: Louis II ordered the mobilization of the Bavarian army, a move that had a decisive influence upon other German states.

1870, July 19: Delivery of the French declaration of war.

1870, July 23: Opening of the north German *Reichstag*, which unanimously voted a war credit.

The French cabinet had counted on the neutrality of south Germany and an alliance with Austria and Italy. That having failed, the French grand army was deployed in four divisions under separate commands, totaling over 500,000 men, with a reserve of some 320,000. Emperor Napoleon III acted as commander-in-chief, and marshal Leboeuf chief of the general staff.

The German forces moved in three great armies, totaling 750,000 (north German) and 100,000 (south German). King William I was commander-in-chief, and General von Moltke chief of the general staff.

5. Course of the War

At first the Germans took defensive positions, but a French delay permitted the Germans to advance to the border. The French made an attack on Saarbrücken.

1870, August 2-6: In several engagements the Germans secured Saarbrücken, and the French retreated to the Moselle River.

1870, August 14-19: In new battles the French were divided and forced to retreat to Metz, a fortress badly equipped for so large an army.

1870, August 19-October 27: Siege of Metz by the Germans; at the same time.

1870, August 14-September 27: Siege of Strasburg by the Germans.

Meanwhile the Germans pursued their advantage toward *Châlons*, while a French army (100,000) under general MacMahon (accompanied by Napoleon III) attempted by an encircling move to liberate Metz. Met by the Germans, MacMahon retreated and concentrated his forces at Sedan. Vastly superior German forces (240,000) surrounded the French army.

1870, September 1: Battle of Sedan.

1870, September 2: Capitulation of Sedan. Napoleon III delivered his sword to William I and declare himself a prisoner. The entire French army of Sedan was taken prisoner of war: 39 generals, 2,300 officers, 83,000 soldiers. Napoleon was conducted to Wilhelmshöhe.

1870, September 4 marked the end of the empire and the proclamation of the (Third) French Republic. Provisional government was set up. Paris was in a state of shock and chaos. Empress Eugénie fled to England.

1870, September 4-16: the German armies marched upon Paris. Paris was defended by a series of outlying bastions, trenches and forts, and by some 300,000 soldiers.

Negotiations between Prussian chancellor Bismarck and French foreign minister Favre failed through unwillingness to surrender territory. Hence,

1870, September 19 – **1871**, January 28: the German armies laid siege on Paris, with headquarters at Versailles.

[**1870**, September 20: the withdrawal of the French garrison from Rome at the beginning of hostilities opened the way for the Italian army to capture Rome, thus ending the temporal power of the Pope. (See below)].

1870, September 27: Capitulation of Strasburg.

1870, October 27: Capitulation of Metz (3 marshals, 6,000 officers, 187,000 soldiers, 622 field artillery pieces, 876 fortress canon).

Meanwhile the French had put together two armies for the relief of Paris (Army of the North and Army of the Loire). They suffered quick defeats by the German forces released from Strasburg and Metz in a series of battles: on November 27 and 28; and on December 2-4 (Battle of Orléans).

1870, late December: the move of German heavy artillery to Paris was completed.

1870, December 27: Opening of the bombardment of the outlying forts of Paris.

1871, January 8: Opening of the bombardment of Paris, while French forces were destroyed or taken prisoners in final battles.

1871, January 15-17 (Battle of Belfort), January 19 (Battle of St. Quentin).

The last great sortie of 100,000 troops from Paris was beaten back). Meanwhile:

1871, January 18: in the palace of Versailles (become German headquarters) the German sovereign princes and free cities crowned King William I emperor of Germany.

1871, January 28: Capitulation of Paris and Convention of Versailles took place, with imposition of the following terms:

1. All the forts and munitions of war were surrendered, and city walls disarmed.

2. All French soldiers in Paris were considered prisoners of war, with the exception of 12,000 men and the national guard needed to preserve order. The French officials were to provision the city.

3. The city of Paris paid an indemnity of 200 million francs.

4. Truce was declared for three weeks (then prolonged to March 3) to allow for the free election of a national assembly that was to meet in Bordeaux and decide whether to sue for peace or to continue the war.

Adolphe Thiers was elected head of the executive department to conduct the peace negotiations with Bismarck.

1871, February 26: Preliminaries of peace were held at Versailles, with the following terms:

1. France ceded to the German Empire most of Alsace and the German Lorraine, including Metz (a total of 1.5 million inhabitants).

2. France agreed to pay an indemnity of 500 billion (milliard) francs in three years.

1871, May 10: Peace was definitively concluded at Frankfort am Main, ratifying the preliminaries with details.

The *results* of the war were: (1) the destruction of the military power of France; (2) the acquisition by Germany of a secure western boundary; (3) the realization of the political unification of the German nation; (4) the rise of federated Germany as a dominant power with Chancellor Otto von Bismarck.

6. Political and Social Disorders and "the Burning of Paris" in the Aftermath of the War

After the conditions of peace with the Germans were settled, Paris passed through a terrible period of disorder caused by the uprising of the "*Communists*." These "communists" are not to be confused with communists in the socialist sense. The party comprised a multitude of fanatical democrats of the lower classes, of the 1792 Reign-of-Terror stamp, and ready for the most violent measures. These communists were bent on establishing municipal independence (self-government of the *Commune*), and a democratic republic.

They demanded a federation of the townships, or *communes*, and the end of the type of republicanism represented by the officials of the Third Republic who were in power.

The communists had risen several times during the siege of Paris and had tried to seize power, but had been put down by the troops. After the surrender of Paris, they gained possession of the northern part of the city, and fortified it. The attempt by the troops to win back control of that part of the city caused the great communist uprising of March 18, 1871.

A new reign of terror began, and many influential citizens, including Archbishop Darboy of Paris, were murdered.

Marshal MacMahon, acting for the Assembly, besieged Paris anew. The Germans remained neutral in the forts that they still held under the terms of the treaty. In the fierce struggle for the possession of the city, the principal buildings of Paris were set on fire by the communist mob. The Tuileries, the Hôtel de Ville, part of the Palais Royal, the "Pantheon," and other buildings were destroyed or heavily damaged.

The insurrection was at length suppressed, and severe punishments were inflicted. A large number of the ringleaders were either shot or transported to penal colonies.

2. Don Bosco's Prophecies of 1870-1873

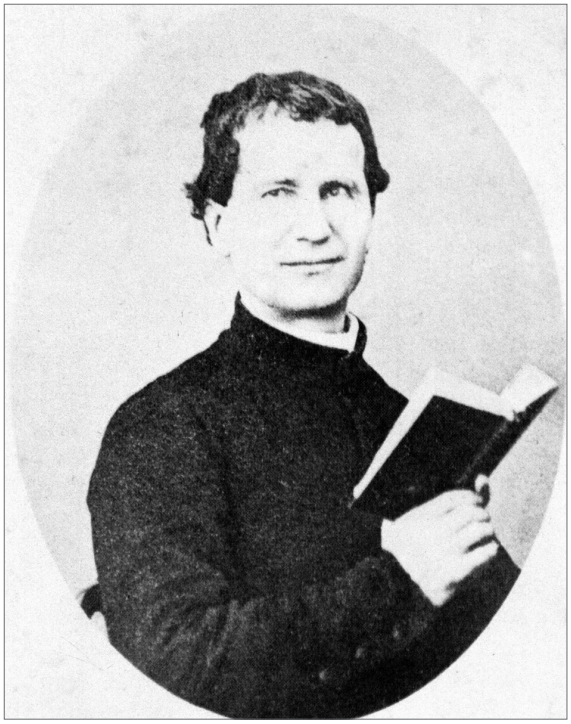
In the context of the Franco-German War Don Bosco had visionary experiences that issued in various "prophetic" utterances. They deserve some discussion at this point.

1. Sources and Text Histories of the Prophecies

Located in *ASC* 223: Autografi-Sogni (*FDBM* 1346 A1-1347 D3), are ten "authenticated" dreams and prophecies of Don Bosco.[1] Among them are:

(1) Prophecy of 1870,
(2) Prophetic Message to Pius IX of 1873, and
(3) Prophetic Message to Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria of 1873.

[1] These texts have been edited by Cecilia Romero, FMA, *I sogni di Don Bosco.* Edizione critica (Torino: LDC, 1978).



4 – Portrait of Don Bosco by Photographer Achille de Sanglau
(Rome, February 26, 1867)

Prophecy of 1870: "God alone is almighty..."

Documentation

Of the 9 manuscript copies of the prophecy in *ASC*, Fr. Berto's manuscript is basic. This is a copy made by Berto, Don Bosco's Secretary, in 1874 from Don Bosco's original autograph. Since Don Bosco destroyed the original, no complete autograph of the prophecy of 1870 is extant.

The only *extant autograph portion* is the *Address to Pius IX* ("Now the voice of heaven...") that Don Bosco wrote separately (probably in Rome in January-February, 1870) and that he may have read or spoken to the Pope. Fr. Berto managed to salvage the document and in 1874 he inserted this autograph

portion into his draft of the prophecy of 1870 [see Division and Contents below].[2]

Later (as the Salesian Society's archivist) Father Berto glued the autograph Address onto a blue folder, on which he wrote the following explanation: "Don Bosco's holograph: Prophetic fragment written as a complement to the prophecy sent to the Holy Father Pius IX on February 12, 1870. [...] Of this prophecy copies were made from the original to satisfy requests from some pious persons. The original is no longer in our possession, for it was returned to Don Bosco and destroyed by him. He did, moreover, bind me to absolute secrecy, and I for my part, for as long as *he* lived, have been true to my pledge." [3]

In 1874 Don Bosco made marginal interpretative notations thus authenticating the Berto manuscript.[4] On March 1 and April I, 1874, Don Bosco also dictated (or wrote) interpretative comments ("clarifications") on fifteen points of the prophecy. These appear as an appendix to the main text in the Berto manuscript,[5] and in our transcription below.

Division and Contents

Introduction, three parts (with insertion) and epilogue:

[i] Introduction: Circumstances and nature of the "prophetic experience" in Don Bosco's words:

> "On the vigil of the Epiphany of this year, [January 5] 1870, all material things in my room disappeared, and I found myself contemplating supernatural matters. It was only a matter of an instant, but I saw a great deal. Although what I witnessed was sensibly present, I find it extremely difficult to communicate it to

[2] In the text edited by Amadei in the *Biographical Memoirs* [cf. *EBM* X, 52-53] the Address to Pius IX is marked with asterisks.

[3] Father Berto notes that he kept his pledge of secrecy for as long as Don Bosco lived "in spite of pressures brought to bear by some superior (Fr. Rua?)." This statement shows that Fr. Berto wrote his archivist's note after Don Bosco's death (1888). The secret must have referred to the author of the prophecy, rather than to its contents, because the prophecy itself was known.

[4] In *EBM* X, 52-53 these notations appear not in the margin but within the text, between parentheses and in italics. In the transcript given below, they appear within the text in square brackets and in *italics*.

[5] Cf. *EBM* X, 54-55.

others intelligibly, as one may realize by what follows. This is the Word of God in human parlance."

[ii] Part 1: Prediction of God's punishment on France-Paris through a threefold visitation, in the context of the disastrous Franco-German War.

[iii] Part 2, Interlude: Vision of the "Warrior from the North" meeting the "Venerable Old Man of Latium."

[iv] Insertion: *Address to Pius IX* mentioned above ("Now the voice of Heaven is addressed to the Shepherd of Shepherds"). It is an exhortation to the Pope to proceed with the "solemn conference" (the First Vatican Council just begun) "until the hydra of error has been beheaded."

[v] Apostrophe and oracle against Italy, also severely punished by God, and against Rome, which will be visited with chastisements four times–the third visitation culminating in the fall of the city and in a blood bath.

[vi] Epilogue: A message of hope: "the great Queen of Heaven is at hand" to restore the Pope to his former status, to end the reign of sin, and bring on the rainbow of peace "before two full moons shall have shone in the month of flowers."

Message to Pope Pius IX of 1873: entitled, "May 24 - June 24, 1873. It was a dark night..."

Prophetic Inspiration

A note appended to the text by Don Bosco seems to confer on this second prophecy the same "prophetic" status as on the first. The note reads: "The person reporting these things is the same who unerringly predicted what happened to France a year before it took place. These predictions were widely known and were fulfilled day by day [...]."

Documentation and Text

Preserved in ASC are:

[i] A much corrected autograph by Don Bosco

[ii] A faithful manuscript copy by Fr. Berto

[iii] A few marginal interpretative notations made by Don Bosco on the Berto manuscript. (In *EBM* X, 55 these appear not in the margin but within the text, between parentheses and in italics.)

[iv] Also a manuscript by Fr. Lemoyne and a fourth partial manuscript

Division and Contents

Pius IX and followers flee from Rome and then return – in three parts:

[i] Pius IX leaves the Vatican and Rome at the head of a throng of men, women, children, monks, nuns, and priests (many of whom die or are wounded) and come to a stop after a 200-day march.

[ii] Two angels appear and offer to the pope a banner bearing the inscriptions, "Queen conceived without sin" and "Help of Christians." They bid the pope return with his followers and start a movement for the re-evangelization of the world.

[iii] The pope and his followers (now growing in number) return to Rome (another 200-day journey) to find the city and all the land devastated. They offer thanksgiving in St. Peter's. Darkness vanishes and the sun begins to shine.[6]

Prophetic Message to the Emperor of Austria (Francis Joseph I) of 1873: "Thus says the Lord to the Emperor of Austria..."

Prophetic inspiration

The message is presented as the Word of the Lord: "Thus says the Lord [...]."

Documentation and Text

Preserved in ASC are:

[i] A much corrected autograph by Don Bosco.

[ii] A copy by Fr. Berto that differs from Don Bosco's holograph considerably, though not substantially (a unique case).

[iii] A copy by Fr. Lemoyne from Fr. Berto's manuscript.

An appended note states that the message was delivered through an intermediary, and that the emperor received and acknowledged it.

Contents

In this brief message "the Lord" challenges the emperor to be "the rod of my power," and "to carry out my inscrutable designs and become the benefactor of the world." There follow suggestions regarding alliances and tactics.

[6] The prophecy reached Pius IX, either in written or oral form, through a cardinal [Cf. *EBM* X, 50].

The Three Prophecies as Edited in the Biographical Memoirs

BM IX [*EBM* IX, 372-378] (Lemoyne) records (1) the Prophecy of 1870 (text only), and the Prophecy of 1873 (text only)–with biographer's comments.

According to Lemoyne, Don Bosco saw the prophecy "in a dream" on January 5, 1870, the night before the second session of Vatican I and the profession of faith by the Council fathers (feast of the Epiphany) [p. 373].

BM X [*EBM* X, 49-59] (Amadei) records (1) the Prophecy of 1870 with Don Bosco's marginal annotations and 15 appended clarifying statements; (2) The Prophecy of 1873 with Don Bosco's marginal interpretations; (3) The Prophetic Message to Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria–with biographer's comments.

IBM transcribes the original manuscripts with near-literal fidelity. *EBM* translates *IBM* with substantial fidelity.

Chronological Table of the Text History of the prophecy of 1870 and Contemporary Events

Chronology of the tradition of the text of the prophecy of 1870	**Chronology of pertinent contemporary events**
	Dec. 8, 1869 – Oct. 20, 1870: First Vatican Council:
[1] Jan. 5, 1870: Prophetic experience. *[2] Jan. 6-20, 1870: Don Bosco's autograph is written and copies of the prophecy are made. [DB's eventually destroyed his own autograph.] DB takes copy with him to Rome (Jan. 20 – Feb 23, 1870), but does not convey it to the Pope. [None of these copies are extant.]* *Jan. 20 to Feb. 25, 1870: DB in Rome with secretary Berto. – Audiences on Feb. 8, and perhaps 15 (Feb. 12 audience is Lemoyne's inference, on the basis of Berto's archival note of 1874, see below].* *[3] February 12, 1870: copy received by an "important person" in Rome and filed with the Civiltà Cattolica [no longer extant].* *[4] Jan. 20 - Feb. 15, 1870 (while in Rome): DB composes "Address to Pius IX" and reads [?] it to the Pope during the audience of February 15 [?]. [DB's autograph extant, filed by Berto].*	
	July 19, 1870 to May 10, 1871: Franco-Prussian War –Here, only pivotal dates: *Sep. 1, 1870: Battle of Sedan: Defeat of the French. Army, Napoleon III prisoner of war.* *Sep. 20, 1870: Occupation of Rome by Italian army. End of Pope's temporal power.* *Oct. 20, 1870: Vatican I adjourned sine die.*
	Sep. 19, 1870 – Jan. 28, 1871: Siege and Capitulation of Paris.

[5] October 29, 1870: copy of Prophecy of 1870 sent to Cardinal Berardi (not extant) and perhaps conveyed to the Pope (see Letter below.)

Meanwhile during the siege and after the capitulation: in Paris uprisings of communists (radical democrats) against the established republican government, for control of the city.
March 18, 1871: great communist uprising and reign of terror in Paris. Many clergy and people murdered, public buildings destroyed, etc.; the Panthéon damaged by bombs and fire, but not destroyed.
January 22-May 15, 1871: "Law of Guarantees" passed by the Italian Government defining relations with the papacy.

May 21-28, 1871: End of the Paris Commune.

[6] April 23, 1872: excerpts of prophecy are published in the Jesuit journal Civiltà Cattolica [manuscript copy of prophecy (as in [3] above) no longer extant].

[7] March 1, 1874: Berto produces copy of the 1870-1873 prophecies, containing: (1) Prophecy of 1870, with inserted Address to Pius IX; (2) Prophecy of 1873 [from DB's extant autograph]. (3) Message to the Emperor of Austria of 1873 [from DB's extant autograph].
[8] March 1, 1874: To Berto's text of the Prophecy of 1870 DB added: (1) marginal notes; (2) appended additional Clarifications on 14 phrases of the prophecy'.
[9] April 1, 1874: to this appendix DB added a further (15th) clarification.
Thus authenticated by Don Bosco, this is the first complete extant text of the Prophecy of 1870.

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2. Text of the Prophecies of 1870-1873

EBM X, 49-59.
Note: the short texts appearing in *italics* characters within square brackets are Don Bosco's own marginal annotations to Berto's copy, on March 1, 1874.

First Prophecy (January 5, 1870)

Don Bosco's Introduction

God alone is almighty, all-knowing, all-seeing. God has neither past nor future; everything is present to Him, everything at a single point of time. Nothing eludes God. No person, no place is distant from Him. In His infinite mercy and for His glory He alone can unveil the future to man. On

the vigil of the Epiphany of this year, 1870, all material things in my room disappeared, and I found myself contemplating supernatural matters. It was only a matter of an instant, but I saw a great deal. Although what I witnessed was sensibly present, I find it extremely difficult to communicate it to others intelligibly, as one may realize by what follows. This is the Word of God in human parlance:

Prophetic Text

"War will come from the south, peace from the north."

[Part I; Against France and Paris]

The laws of France no longer recognize the Creator. The Creator will reveal Himself by visiting her three times with the scourge of His wrath. The *first time* He will destroy her pride by defeat, pillage, and destruction of crops, cattle, and men. On His *second visit* the great whore of Babylon, which the faithful grievingly call Europe's brothel, shall lose her leader and fall prey to chaos.

Paris! Paris! Instead of fortifying yourself with the Lord's name, you surround yourself with houses of ill repute. You yourself shall destroy them; your idol, the Pantheon, will be razed to the ground, so that it may truthfully be said that 'iniquity has lied to itself' [Ps. 26, 12]. Your enemies will plunge you into anguish, famine, terror, and the contempt of nations, but woe unto you if you do not recognize the hand that smites you! I want to punish your immorality, your desertion, your contempt for My law, says the Lord.

On My *third visit*, you shall fall under the foreign yoke. From afar your enemies will see your palaces in flames, your homes in ruins, soaked in the blood of your heroes who are no more.

[Part II, Interlude: Meeting of the "Warrior from the North" with the "Old Man of Rome"]

But behold, a great warrior from the north appears, a banner in his right hand, his arm bearing this inscription: "Irresistible is the hand of the Lord." At that moment the Venerable Old Man of Rome went forward to meet him, wielding a flaming torch. The banner then grew larger and its blackness became while as snow; in its center stood out the name of the Almighty in golden letters.The warrior and his followers bowed profoundly to the Venerable Old Man and joined hands with him. [*Don Carlos and the Pope*]

[Inserted Address to Pius IX (Don Bosco holograph)]

Now the voice of Heaven is addressed to the Shepherd of Shepherds. [*To Pius IX*] "You are in solemn conference with your co-workers [*the Vatican Council*] but the enemy of good never stands idle. He cunningly plots and sets all his wiles against you. He will sow discord among your helpers and will rear enemies among My sons. [*The grave frustrations of Pius IX during the Vatican Council*] The powers of the world shall vomit fire. They would love to smother My words in the throats of the guardians of My law, but they shall not succeed. [*This has already been attempted and will still be attempted, especially in Prussia*] They shall do much harm, but only to themselves. Hurry! If knots cannot be untied, sever them. Do not halt in the face of difficulties, but go forth until the hydra of error has been beheaded. [*through the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility*] At this blow earth and hell shall tremble, but the world will be saved and the faithful shall exult. Gather around you only two co-workers, yet wherever you go, carry on the task entrusted to you and bring it to completion [*the Vatican Council*] Days go by swiftly and your years are reaching their appointed number, but the great Queen will always assist you, and, as in the past, She will always be *magnum et singulare in Ecclesia praesidium* [the mighty and special bulwark of the Church].

[Part III: Against Italy and Rome]

But you, O Italy, land of blessings, who has plunged you into desolation? Not your enemies, but your own friends. Do you not hear your children begging for the bread of faith, unable to find one to break it for them? What shall I do? I shall strike the shepherds and scatter the sheep so that those who sit upon the chair of Moses may seek better pastures and their flock may gently listen and be fed. [*A seeming allusion to inadequate religious instruction*].

But My hand shall be heavy upon both flock and shepherds. Famine, plague, and war shall cause mothers to mourn the blood of their sons and husbands shed on foreign soil. [*A seeming allusion to this year's famine; pestilence and war shall follow.*]

What shall befall you, ungrateful, effeminate, proud Rome? You have reached a point when you seek and admire nothing in your sovereign but luxury, forgetting that both your glory and his lies in Golgotha. Now he is old, frail and dispossessed. [*Present condition of Pius IX*] Nevertheless though captive, his words cause the whole world to tremble.

O Rome, *four times* will I come to you! The *first time* I shall smite your region and its people. The *second time* I shall bring slaughter and destruction to your

very gates. Should not that make you open your eyes? A *third time* I shall come and demolish your defenses and defenders. [*The present state of Rome*] At My Father's command, terror, dismay and desolation shall reign.

My wise followers flee, [*many live away from Rome, many are obliged to disperse.*] but My law is still trodden underfoot. Therefore, I will come a *fourth time*. Woe to you if My law again shall go unheeded. There shall be defections among both learned and ignorant. [*This has happened and is still happening*] Your blood and that of your children shall wipe out your transgressions. [*A seeming allusion to some future disaster*]

War, plague, and famine are the scourges to smite human pride and malice. [*This summarizes the above-mentioned punishments*] Where are your magnificent villas and palaces, your people of wealth? [*We shall see!*] They have become litter in your squares and streets!

"And you priests, why are you not prostrate between the vestibule and the altar, weeping and praying that the scourge may cease? Why do you not take up the shield of faith and preach My Word from the rooftops, in the houses, streets and squares, and even in inaccessible places? Do you not know that this is the terrible two-edged sword that smites My enemies and placates the wrath of God and man?

These things shall inexorably come to pass, all in succession.

Conclusion

Things follow too slowly upon each other, but the great Queen of Heaven is at hand; the Lord's power is Hers. Like mist She shall scatter Her enemies. She shall vest the Venerable Old Man with all his former garments.

There shall yet come a violent hurricane. Iniquity is at an end, sin shall cease, and before two full moons will have shone in the month of flowers, the rainbow of peace shall appear on the earth.

The great Minister shall see the Bride of his King clothed in glory. Throughout the world a sun so bright shall shine as was never seen since the flames of the Cenacle until today, nor shall it be seen again until the end of time.

Clarifications

[Note: On March 1, 1874 Don Bosco on a separate sheet wrote the following tentative "clarifications" to fifteen clauses of the Prophecy of 1870.]

1. "War will come from the south […]" – From France, which declared war on Prussia.

2. "[…] peace from the north." – From the north of Spain where the present [Carlist] war began. Furthermore, Don Carlos resided in Vienna, which is north of Italy.

3. "The Pantheon will be razed to the ground!" – Contemporary newspapers reported that it was damaged by several bombs. But what concerns France has not yet fully taken place.

4. "But, behold, a great warrior from the north appears […]" – Don Carlos from northern Spain.[7]

5. "The Venerable Old Man of Rome went forward to meet him, wielding a flaming torch." – Faith in God, which guides and upholds the great warrior in his undertakings.

6. "The banner then grew larger and its blackness became white as snow […]" – The massacre ceased. "Blackness," symbol of death or persecution, such as the *Kulturkampf*.

7. "[…] In its center stood out the name of the Almighty in golden letters." – According to press reports, Don Carlos' banner bears on one side a picture of the Heart of Jesus and on the reverse that of the Immaculate Conception.

8. "[…] Wherever you go […]" – A seeming allusion to the Pope's exile. See the second prophecy.

9. "[…] War shall cause mothers to mourn the blood of their sons […] shed on foreign soil." – This has still to come.

10. "[…] I shall come a fourth time." – This visit to Rome has still to take place.

11. "There shall yet come a violent hurricane." – See the next prophecy where the hurricane is fully described.

12. "[…] Before two full moons shall have shone in the month of flowers." – This year, 1874, the month of May has two full moons, one on the 1st and the other on the 31st.

13. "[…] The rainbow of peace […]" – A hope that seems to be rising in Spain today, March 1, 1874.

14. "Throughout the world a sun so bright shall shine […]" – Triumph and growth of Christianity.

[7] Later on, Father Berto (so it seems) added a question mark and these words: "No! Emperor William [I] of Prussia" [Author Amadei]. This reflects the idea (stemming from Don Bosco?) that William might be the "Warrior from the North."

[On April 1, Don Bosco added one last clarification:]

15. "[…] His [the warrior's] arm bearing this inscription: 'Irresistible is the hand of the Lord'!" – Newspapers say that Don Carlos apparently began his exploits without weapons, money or victuals, and only with fourteen men. Yet today, April 1, 1874, he has an army over 100,000 strong. There is no report as yet that he has lost a single battle.

Second Prophecy (entitled May 24-June 24, 1873)

[Sad and Frightening Departure from Rome; 200-day journey]

It was a dark night [*error*], and people could no longer find their way back to their own countries. Suddenly a most brilliant light [*faith in God and in His power*] shone in the sky, illuminating their way as at high noon. At that moment from the Vatican came forth, as in procession, a multitude of men and women, young children, monks, nuns, and priests, and at their head was the Pope. [*This seems to allude to the suppression of monasteries and schools run by religious and to the Pope's exile.*]

But a furious storm then broke out, somewhat dimming that light, as if light and darkness were locked in battle. [*Perhaps this means a battle between truth and error, or else a bloody war.*][8]

Meanwhile the long procession reached a small square littered with dead and wounded, many of whom cried for help. The ranks of the procession thinned considerably.

After a two-hundred-day march, all realized that they were no longer in Rome. In dismay they swarmed about the Pontiff to protect him and minister to him in his needs.

[Interlude: Two Angels Hand the Pope a Banner]

At that moment two angels appeared, bearing a banner that they presented to the Supreme Pontiff, saying: "Take the banner of Her who battles and routs the most powerful armies on earth. Your enemies have vanished; with tears and sighs your children plead for your return." One side of the banner bore the inscription, *Regina sine labe originali concepta* [Queen conceived without

[8] Here a penciled marginal addition read, *Dogali* [Author Amadei]. At Dogali, a small locality about thirteen miles from Massaua, Eritrea, five hundred Italian soldiers were ambushed and massacred in 1887 [Editor]. For Dogali see next Vol. 5, Ch. 7.

original sin], and the other side read, *Auxilium Christianorum* [Help of Christians].

The Pontiff accepted the banner gladly, but he became very distressed to see how few were his followers.

[Commissioning of the Pope and 200-day Return Journey]

But the two angels went on: "Go now, comfort your children. Write to your brothers scattered throughout the world that people must reform their lives. This cannot be achieved unless the bread of the Divine Word is broken among the peoples. Teach children their catechism and preach detachment from earthly things. The time has come," the two angels concluded, "when the poor will evangelize the world. Priests shall be sought among those who wield the hoe, the spade and the hammer, as David prophesied: "God lifted the poor man from the fields to place him on the throne of the princes of His people."

On hearing this, the Pontiff moved on, and the ranks began to swell. On reaching the Holy City, the Pontiff wept at the sight of its desolate citizens, for many of them were no longer. He then entered St. Peter's and intoned the *Te Deum,* to which a chorus of angels responded, singing: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis* [Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will]."

[Conclusion 1: Hope]

When the song was over, all darkness vanished and a blazing sun shone. The population had declined greatly in the cities and in the countryside; the land was mangled as if by a hurricane and hailstorm, and people sought each other, deeply moved, and saying: "*Est Deus in Israel* [There is God in Israel]."

From the start of the exile until the intoning of the *Te Deum,* the sun rose two hundred times. All the events described covered a period of four hundred days.

[Conclusion 2: Seer's Prophetic Inspiration and a Prediction]

Note: The person reporting these things is the same who unerringly predicted what happened to France a year before it took place. These predictions were widely known and were fulfilled day by day, as if a script were being followed. According to this same person, France, Spain, Austria and a German power would be the instruments of Divine Providence in preventing the collapse of civil society and restoring peace to the Church, which for so long and in so many ways has been fought against. These events would start in the

spring of 1874 and would be completed within a year and a few months, unless new iniquities should be perpetrated against God's will.

Third Prophecy: Don Bosco's Letter to Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria (July 1873)

Thus says the Lord to the emperor of Austria: "Be of good cheer and look after My faithful servants and yourself. My wrath is now spilling over on all the nations because they want to make people forget My laws, glorifying those who defile them and oppressing My faithful adherents. Will you be the rod of My power? Will you carry out My inscrutable designs and become a benefactor of the world? Rely on the Northern Powers, but not on Prussia. Enter into relations with Russia, but form no alliance. Join forces with Catholic France; after France, you shall have Spain. All together, become one in will and action.[9]

Observe absolute secrecy with the enemies of My holy name. Prudence and vigor will make you and your allies invincible. Do not believe the lies of whoever tells you otherwise. Abhor the enemies of the Cross. Put your hope and trust in Me. I make armies victorious. I am the Savior of nations and of sovereigns. Amen. Amen.

Note: This letter was sent to the emperor of Austria in July 1873 through a trusted person who delivered it to him in person. He read it attentively and sent his hearty thanks to the sender, saying that he would avail himself of it.[10]

3. "Prophetic" Letters of Don Bosco from the Time of the Prophecies of 1870-1873

Note: A number of letters of Don Bosco from these years reveal his position and hopes in the wake of the political developments of 1870 and thereafter. We submit only a few.

(The paragraphs of the text of the letters are numbered for easy reference.)

[9] Here Father Berto added this note: "This prophecy fitted the political situation in Europe that year. Later, things changed, both in regard to France and to Prussia" [Author Amadei].

[10] Here Don Bosco added the name of the trusted person: Countess Lutzow. See Amadei's final comment in *EBM*, 57-58.

1. Don Bosco's Letter to Cardinal Giuseppe Berardi, October 29, 1870[11]

This letter makes reference to the Prophecy of 1870 and to the possible role of King (Emperor) William I of Prussia.

Text

Turin, October 29, 1870

[Your Eminence.]

[1] The piece of writing herewith enclosed comes from someone who has on other occasions given evidence of possessing supernatural gifts. I had it with me in Rome this winter.

[2] I had occasion to mention some of these things to the Holy Father but did not dare to leave him the manuscript. Now that he has been so kind as to send me word that I should speak *clearly and explicitly, leaving nothing out*, I have decided to pass it on to you. There are other things that cannot be put in writing but that might be said in person by word of mouth with the secrecy that the subject demands. Should anything seem unclear, I might obtain the necessary clarification. You may freely make use of this piece; all I ask is that you do not mention my name on any account, for reasons that you will readily appreciate.

[3] If I knew of a reliable, discreet person to carry a message to the King of Prussia, I would certainly have a number of things to convey to him that might please him. Grant us your holy blessing.[12]

[Father Gio. Bosco]

[11] Motto, *Epistolario* III, 267-268, # 1480, from Don Bosco's holograph (without address or signature) in *ASV SdS* [from the papers of Pius IX]. Photocopy in *ASC* B31210, Bilio (A 1790218), *FDBM* 2,645 B8; edited in Ceria, *Epistolario* II, 127, in *IBM* IX, 828-829 and in *EBM* IX, 401-402. My translation is given here.] The letter was thought to have been addressed to Card. Bilio.

[12] The Biographical Memoirs add: "As an added item to these predictions," so Father Gioachino Berto attests, "Don Bosco declared, 'A revolution will break out. There shall be apostasies among both the learned and the ignorant. Prussia will be converted. Then shall follow a great victory for the Church and a great triumph for the Pope'." [*EBM* IX, 402, my translation.]

Comment

The "someone" in Paragraph [1] is obviously Don Bosco himself, and likewise the "piece of writing" he is passing on to Cardinal Berardi is the prophetic vision of January 5, 1870 that he had with him in Rome in January and February.

In Paragraph [2] we learn that in the papal audience (now to be dated February 8) he did not convey everything to the Pope, nor did he leave the manuscript with him. But since Pius IX had expressed his desire to know more, Don Bosco was sending a copy to the Cardinal to use as he saw fit (obviously also to present it to the Pope).[13]

The King of Prussia [Paragraph 3] was William I, the Victorious, who defeated Austria in 1866 and France in 1870-1871. This victory paved the way for the federation of Germany over which he reigned as emperor until 1888. According to Berto (as quoted in the *Biographical Memoirs*, see above), Don Bosco envisioned the conversion of Prussia followed by a triumph of the Church. In this scenario he may at this point in time (1870) have considered the possibility that William I was the "Warrior from the North" of the Prophecy who would restore the "Venerable Old Man of Latium" (the Pope) to his rightful domains. Apparently Don Bosco did not reckon with the redoubtable Otto von Bismarck and his *Kulturkampf*.

[13] With regard to the papal audiences during Don Bosco's stay in Rome (Jan. 20 – Feb. 23, 1870) Francis Desramaut [in "Le récit de l'audience pontificale du 12 février 1870 dans les *Memorie Biografiche* de don Bosco," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 6:1 (1987) 82-104] has corrected Berto's and Lemoyne's dates. The date of February 8 for a first audience is firm. When Berto filed Don Bosco's autograph "Address to Pius IX" (see above), he gave February 12 as the date of the "sending" of the prophecy to the Pope. Lemoyne inferred this to be the date of the audience at which Don Bosco presented the prophecy to the Holy Father. But in his letter of October 29 to Cardinal Berardi Don Bosco makes the point that, though he did have a copy of the prophecy with him in Rome, he did not present it to the Pope. The date February 12 is most probably (according to Desramaut) the date on which a copy of the prophecy, sent to some important person in Rome (not the Pope), came into the possession of an editor of the *Civiltà Cattolica*. Some two years later the Jesuit journal published an article on prophetic messages and referred (anonymously) to Don Bosco's prophecy. It noted that the prophecy had been made before the events of the Franco-Prussian War and the taking of Rome and had been (with reservations) fulfilled in those events ["I vaticini e i nostri tempi, parte seconda," *Civiltà Cattolica*, Serie VIII, 6: 525 (April 23, 1872) 303-304]. Desramaut also discounts Lemoyne's third audience of February 23, and dates a second audience on February 15, when Don Bosco may have presented the "Address to Pius IX" either in writing or orally.

In 1873, on the other hand, in his Address to Francis Joseph I of Austria, Don Bosco invited the emperor to lead the counter-revolution (as the "Warrior from the North"). Both rulers are from the geographical north.

But in his 1874 annotations to the Prophecy of 1870, Don Bosco mentions "Don Carlos" as the possible "Warrior from the North." The Don Carlos in question is Carlos María de los Dolores de Borbón y Austria-Este, Duque de Madrid (1848-1909). He was the third (or forth) Carlist pretender to the Spanish throne (as Charles VII), the eldest son of the third Carlist pretender, Don Juan de Borbón. This third (or fourth) Don Carlos (Duque de Madrid) provoked a bloody civil war (1872-1876) and achieved successes in the north of Spain. He was ultimately defeated and went into exile after Alfonso XII came to the throne in 1874. Apart from political considerations, the Carlists represented the most conservative Catholic position against liberal developments in Spain.[14]

2. Don Bosco's Letter to Cardinal Giuseppe Berardi, April 11, 1871[15]

Text

Turin, April 11, 1871

Your Eminence,

[1] Bishop Manacorda was bearer of good news, and we were overjoyed to hear that Your Eminence is well, for we were really worried. Now we may thank the Lord that in the midst of public turmoil you are in good health and able to work for the good of the Church.

[2] How I would wish to have comforting news to convey by this letter, but unfortunately I have only distressing news. Nevertheless a person who at times in the past was favored with extraordinary lights is giving us assurance that the present situation in Rome will not last beyond the current year.

[3] In May the morning star will appear and will show us wherefrom we may hope to have salvation. By Mary's Assumption [August 15] all good people will rejoice on account of the wonderful boon received from heaven. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception [December 8], solemn celebrations

[14] On "Carlism" and Don Carlos, see below.

[15] Motto, *Epistolario* III, 320-322, # 1529, from *ASC* B31010, *Lett. orig. Berardi* (A 1690709) *FDBM* 2,641 B 10-12.

will be held in peace. In the interval, however, dreadful events will take place in Rome, as I have already indicated to you in a previous letter, assuming that you received it.

[4] These dreadful events in Rome will be in the nature of plunder of property both sacred and secular and oppression of persons resulting in bloodshed and victims.

[5] Guided by divine inspiration, the Holy Father will know what to do in such a situation. But for his own safety and that of his people he may have to leave the Vatican, though only to return a short time thereafter to be the comforting angel of the sorrowing and despairing.

[6] Regarding the cause of these evils or, more accurately, the reason why God permits such dreadful calamities, I already expressed my belief to the Holy Father and to Your Eminence last year. The reason is especially to be sought in the serious failure on the part of priests to break the bread of the divine word to children as well as adults. In four fifths of the towns and villages in Italy no catechetical instruction is offered to children, or to adults for that matter. What's the *catechismus ad parochos* for then? Yet in some of these towns there are crowds of priests who have nothing to do but kill the time of day.

[7] Add to this another bane, the pursuit of the good life [by priests]–eating, drinking, making money–the consequence of which being unchastity (*de sexto*).

[8] There are many hard-working priests surely, as there are many faithful and fervent lay people. But their good influence is practically negated by the wickedness of the others. Furthermore, do we preach on the great Gospel verities, for example, on the text, *Quod superest date pauperibus* [What is over and above give to the poor]? How many priests do this in earnest?

[9] At this point I feel bound to draw a curtain of silence over a delicate matter, for I don't dare commit it to paper: *the progress of Freemasonry in Rome.*

[10] For your saintly self I have no message except that you should take care of your health and continue to be, as you've always been, an ever-available help to the Holy Father. *The person who foresaw your elevation to cardinal believes to have had a vision of a cardinal, perhaps the very same, as in a tableau. The Holy Father sat on a hillock while the cardinal sat on another. A thick fog that became progressively thicker separated the two. Meanwhile a breeze arose that lifted and blew away the sand on which the cardinal [or the Pope?] was seated.*[16]

[16] La persona che presagì la sua elevazione crede di aver ravvisato un porporato, che sia quello stesso, in questo atteggiamento: il Santo Padre era sopra un poggio, il porporato sopra

[11] Now am I in a bind for having been such a clown! I beg two favors of you: that you will overlook the liberty I've taken, and that you'll tear this sheet to pieces once you've read it. Please do not save it under any circumstance.

[12] As for the rest, I want to assure you again that we will pray every day for you, for your brother's family, especially for young Master Gaetano to whom we offer our best wishes.

[13] Things are well with us, both as to numbers and as to religious observance. But we're being taxed out of existence, among other troubles. Kindly remember us in your prayers and continue to keep us under your sure protection.

With deepest reverence and heartfelt gratitude I have the honor to be
Your Eminence's most devoted servant,

Father Gio. Bosco

Comment

The person endowed with supernatural illumination mentioned in Paragraph 2 is the same person of the previous letter and of the Prophecy of 1870, discussed above, namely Don Bosco himself. In Paragraphs 2-4 he tells the Cardinal what his eminence knew only too well, that is, the bad situation in Rome after the take-over.

This letter was written while the Law of Guarantees was being debated in the Italian Parliament and was nearing passage. In spite of the rhetoric of freedom for the pope, the Italian government claimed the right to approve the nomination of bishops and pastors, and to issue permits before they could take possession. At the same time oppressive restrictions were imposed. Religious services were being interfered with, and Catholics were denied the right of canvassing, of assembly, and of holding processions and other public manifestations. On the other hand, the government freely permitted anticlerical assemblies and demonstrations.

What's more, in line with the program of legal unification, the punitive *Rattazzi Laws* against religious congregations, in the form already applied to the united kingdom of Italy in 1866 and 1867, were being extended to Rome itself. These laws, always a hot topic in the press and on the street, took effect on June 19, 1873. Since many religious congregations had established

di un altro. Esso era diviso da quello da una folta nebbia che si andava ognor più addensando. Intanto un vento soffiando agitava e sperdeva l'arena sopra cui sedeva.

general houses in Rome, the application of this policy seemed even more monstrous.

In Paragraph 4, Don Bosco anticipates dreadful events for the period August-September 1871: plunder and bloodshed, as he had told the Cardinal in a previous letter. The plunder may refer to the anticipated suppression of religious corporations and the confiscation of their property. The remark about bloodshed is more mysterious.

Paragraph 5 expresses Don Bosco's fear that the Pope might have to flee from Rome. In this respect, Don Bosco's Prophecy of 1873, addressed to Pius IX, voices such a premonition even more emphatically (see above). That message is entitled, "May 24 - June 24, 1873," and begins with the words, "It was a dark night." There Don Bosco predicts persecution and bloodshed and the Pope's flight from Rome at the head of a throng of men, women, children, monks, nuns, and priests (many of whom die or are wounded). Fortunately such a prediction or premonition went unfulfilled.

Don Bosco closes the letter with "a vision" [Paragraph 10] in which the Cardinal and the Pope appear in counterpart. The wording is unclear and so is the meaning. Perhaps Don Bosco is envisioning the Cardinal's elevation to the papacy.

3. Don Bosco's Letter to Pius IX, April 14, 1871[17]

In the same political and religious context described above, as debate on the Law of Guarantees was coming to an end, Don Bosco penned a letter to the Holy Father to offer support and comfort.

Text

*Turin, April 14, 1871

Most Holy Father,

[1] The fact that Bishop Manacorda is returning to Rome gives me the welcome opportunity to kneel at your feet and express my filial devotion to

[17] Motto, *Epistolario* III, 322-323, # 1530, from ASV *Ep. Lat. Pos. et Mm.* 117; Don Bosco's holograph.

Your Holiness' person, also in the name of the whole Salesian Congregation and all the young people in our care.

[2] We want to assure you that very often throughout the day our thoughts turn to you in the Vatican. We grieve over the painful condition imposed on our good father, though we cannot bring you any comfort except that of our prayers, both private and common. All of us, priests, seminarians, students and working boys with the participation of other priests and lay people, offer special prayers morning and evening for the peace of the Church and for the freedom and independence of its Head.

[3] While we pray that the days of trial may be shortened and that the Lord may quickly show his mercy, we make every effort to fight godlessness. We do this by preaching and through the press and the dissemination of good books. Our books are favorably received, not merely tolerated. The *Catholic Readings* now have a circulation of 15,000 pamphlets each month, and the *Italian Young People's Library*, 5,000.[18]

[4] About 5,000 young people are enrolled in our schools and they behave like good Christians and good Catholics.

[5] Would that we knew what to do to provide some comfort to Your Holiness. Hopefully God will satisfy our desires and answer our prayers, so that before the year comes to an end we will have the happiness of seeing the Church at peace. Then we will pay homage to its Supreme Head in the Vatican, master of his house and of his Church.[19]

[6] But there's going to be an interval of time that, it is feared, will be very trying for Rome and its children. God however, will let God's Vicar know what he must do. In any event, it is certain, so we believe, that Your Holiness

[18] The Italian Young People's Library (*Biblioteca della Gioventù Italiana*) was a serial publication of Italian classics edited for use in schools. It was launched on November 18, 1868. As part of its editorial policy Don Bosco stipulated that "those classics that dealt with subject matter offensive to religion or morality should be presented in expurgated form or entirely omitted, no matter how high their credentials" [*IBM* IX, 429 (omitted in *EBM*)]. After getting the series under way, Don Bosco appointed the learned Father Celestino Durando its editor-in-chief. Publication continued until 1885, and came to an end with the publication of the 204th volume. The works chosen represented some 100 authors ranging from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century.

[19] Speriamo che Dio appagherà i nostri voti, esaudirà le nostre preghiere, e che prima [che] termini questo anno avremo la grande consolazione di vedere la chiesa in pace ed ossequiare il Supremo di Lei gerarca nel Vaticano padrone di sé e della sua chiesa.

shall have to bear the brunt of a terrible storm, which, however, will end in a triumph so glorious that perhaps it has no equal in history.[20]

We shall meanwhile keep on praying. Give us your holy blessing, so that we may bear the heavy trials that come every day to torment us.

In your kindness please allow me these expressions of filial devotion. All of us are ready and eager to sacrifice possessions and our very lives for that holy Catholic religion of which Your Holiness is Christ's Vicar on earth and Supreme Head appointed by Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your Holiness' most affectionate, indebted and devoted son

Father Gio. Bosco

Superior of the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales

Comment

The "painful condition" imposed on the Pope of which Don Bosco speaks in [# 2] refers to his "imprisonment" in the Vatican. It should be borne in mind that the Italian government had left only the Vatican, the Lateran and the villa at Castelgandolfo under the Pope's control, all that remained of the Papal States.

Paragraphs # 5 and 6 voice again, as indicated above, the belief that a great trial awaited the Holy Father, but that it would not be protracted beyond 1871.

These letters (and others like them), no less than the "prophetic" utterances discussed above, leave us perplexed. They show us a Don Bosco praying and agonizing over the political and religious situation created by the liberal revolution in Italy and Italy's unification by the taking of Rome. He seems to be expecting, or hoping for, some kind of counter-revolution that would restore the Pope ("the Church") after a period of persecution and great suffering.

Don Bosco to his dying day continued to hope for a restoration of the rights of the Pope (the Church). Carlo Maria Viglietti, who attended Don Bosco during the last illness, notes in his chronicle that in late 1887 Don Bosco seemed to be expecting some important event to happen soon, some kind of

[20] Ma vi è un tempo di mezzo, che si teme assai grave per Roma e pei suoi figli; ma Dio suggerirà al suo Vicario quello che dovrà fare, e in tutti i casi si tiene per certo che V[ostra] B[eatitudine] deve fra non molto sostenere una burrasca terribile, di cui vedrà la fine con un trionfo che forse non ha riscontro nei tempi andati.

counter-revolution. Viglietti writes: "Don Bosco said repeatedly: I am awaiting with great apprehension the important events of 1888 and 1891."[21] He expressed himself more clearly some time later:

> This morning, after I had read the newspapers to him, Don Bosco remarked: "Just wait and see; if not by the time of the pope's jubilee, certainly some time in the near future, a crusade will be formed against the revolutionaries. There may not be any blood shed, but they will have their backs to the wall and will be forced to give back to the pope what is his by right.[22]

One is hard put to understand the inspiration and the attitude that were the root source of Don Bosco's total rejection of the movement that ushered in the modern world in Europe. His agony over the passing of the old order forced him into an apocalyptic understanding and judgment of events and into strange oracular utterances.

[21] Viglietti, *Original Chronicle*, Vol. VII, 37, "Valsalice, September 2, 1887," *FDBM* 1226 E12.

[22] Viglietti, *Original Chronicle*, Vol. VII, 54f. "November 27, 1887," *FDBM* 1227 A9. "The pope's jubilee" would be the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination (1887-1888). Don Bosco seems to be thinking of a restoration of the pope's temporal power.

Appendices

1. Don Carlos, Carlists and "Carlism"

Encyclopedia Britannica (Micropedia) 2: 871 and 172.

As we noted above, Don Bosco wondered who the "Warrior from the North" of the Prophecy of 1870 might be. After looking to William I of Prussia (1870) and then to Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph II (1873) for that role, in his annotations of 1874 his choice fell on Don Carlos. Who was Don Carlos?

"Carlism"

A word on "Carlism" and the succession of Carlist Pretenders, all bearing the by-name of "Don Carlos," will help us understand Don Bosco's shift.

"Carlism," (*Carlismo***)** was a Spanish political movement of traditionalist, conservative character. It originated in the 1820s in the *Apostólico,* or extreme clerical party, and in 1827 it took the form of a paramilitary royalist volunteer group. The Carlists' opposition to Spanish liberalism crystallized in the 1830s around the person of *Carlos Maria Isidro de Borbón, conde de Molina* (1778-1855), younger brother of King Ferdinand VII. Molina is regarded as the first Don Carlos (Pretender to the Spanish throne as Charles V).

In claiming the right to succeed his brother Ferdinand, Don Carlos denied the validity of Charles IV's "pragmatic sanction" of 1789, then being used by Ferdinand to ensure the succession of his infant daughter Isabella (born on October 10, 1830). The Carlists, on the other hand, invoked the Salic Law, introduced into Spain by Philip V in 1713, which excluded females from the royal succession.

The disputed succession and its ideological overtones provoked the *first Carlist War* (1833-39). The Carlists, though defeated, thereafter upheld their cause despite the conservatism of the reign of Isabella II, and despite the unsuccessful attempts to effect a dynastic reconciliation through a marriage between Isabella II and Molina's heir, *Don Carlos Luis de Borbón, conde de Montemolín* (1818-1861), regarded as the second Don Carlos. The Carlist claim passed to Montemolín (as Pretender Charles VI) upon the "abdication" of Molina (first Don Carlos and Pretender as Charles V) in 1845.

On the death of Montemolín (the second Don Carlos and Pretender Charles V) in 1861, the leadership of the cause passed to his brother, Don Juan (reckoned by

some as the third Don Carlos). His alleged liberalism, however, brought about his "abdication" in 1868 in favor of his son, *Don Juan Carlos Maria de Dolores de Borbón y Austria-Este, duque de Madrid (1848-1909)*. He is regarded as the third Don Carlos and Pretender Charles VII, who then led the movement until his death in 1909.[23]

This was the Don Carlos on whom Don Bosco appeared to pin his hopes as the "Warrior from the North" in 1874.

Don Bosco's Don Carlos

The *third Don Carlos* (and Pretender Charles VII) was born on March 30, 1848, at Leibach (Ljubljana, Slovenia, then part of the Austrian Empire). Perhaps that fact caused Don Bosco to think of him as the "Warrior from the North." He was the great-grandson of Charles IV (1788-1808) and the eldest son of the Carlist Pretender, Don Juan de Borbón, who abdicated on his behalf during the revolution that deposed Isabella II in 1868. Taking advantage of the resulting political instability, "our" Don Carlos rallied his forces and provoked a bloody civil war (Third Carlist War, 1872-76). His lack of leadership and his military incompetence led to the final decline of the Carlist cause for, although the Carlists scored some notable successes in the north of Spain, their cause was doomed by the accession of Isabella's son Alfonso XII to the Spanish throne in 1874.

After his decisive defeat in 1876, Don Carlos fled and became a wandering exile. Opportunities for a comeback were offered at the death of Alfonso XII (1885), and again at the time of national discontent following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War (1898). But he failed to take action. After his death in exile at Varese (Italy) in 1909 the Carlist party fell into decline with the advent of liberal Catholicism in Spain.

Don Bosco and Don Carlos in Barberis' Chronicle (1875)

As noted above, Don Bosco in 1874 conjecturally identified the "Warrior from the North" as Don Carlos. This was at the time of the Civil War of 1872-76, when Don Carlos' army was scoring some successes in the North of Spain. Father Giulio Barberis writing in 1875 in his chronicle reports a discussion by Don Bosco on the subject.

[23] During the 19th century the Carlists frequently resorted to armed rebellion. For example, a second Carlist War was unsuccessfully waged in the late 1840s, an abortive military coup d'etat was attempted in 1860, and full-scale war resumed between 1872 and 1876 during the political upheavals following the deposition (1868) of Isabella II.

[In the dining room after a late supper] the subject of Don Carlos came up in the conversation. Someone mentioned that Archbishop Simeoni was accredited as papal nuncio in Madrid at the court of Don Alfonso [XII] (Don Carlos' rival), and that this appointment had to be very damaging to the Carlist cause. Don Bosco did not think so, because Don Carlos did not view this action by the Holy See as being against himself, and he had explained its meaning to his followers. In other words, he knew that the Holy See was sympathetic to his cause; but since matters of importance to the Church, such as securing benefices to bishops, were about to be negotiated, a Nuncio had to be appointed. "This is the true reason for this appointment," Don Bosco said, and he continued: "When I was in Rome this past winter, I discussed this very matter with Archbishop Simeoni. I asked him how he would handle matters in Madrid [as Nuncio]. He told me that he was bearing two sets of credentials from the Holy Father, one set *nominatim* for Don Alfonso, the other set blank to be completed to the name of whoever might be in power. As for me, I have always spoken openly in support of Don Carlos' cause from the start. But when I realized that different views were held in Rome, I became a lot more cautious."[24]

In another entry of his chronicle for 1875 Barberis reports speculations by Salesians about the identity of a mysterious illustrious person that was expected to visit the Oratory. The boys were told to wash up and change into their finest. The band was to stand ready for the reception. Some thought it might be Prince Amadeus of Savoy or perhaps the heir apparent Prince Humbert.

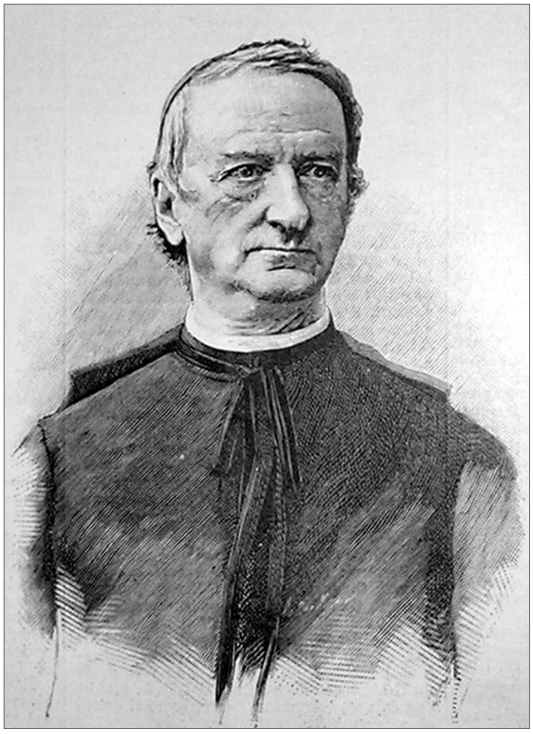
Others, however, insisted that it might be Don Carlos: "Don Carlos may be passing through on his way to Rome to see the Holy Father, and may want to stop at the Oratory [to see Don Bosco] […] Nor would this be so remarkable since Don Carlos himself came by [Turin] four years ago."[25]

2. Formation of a Conservative Catholic Movement in Italy

A fairly sizable minority of educated Italian Catholics, after a period of suffering and waiting, began to plan for some form of participation in Italian political life. To this end, two courses of action seemed open: (1) to accept the new political situation, and work and struggle within it (as the French and Belgian Catholics were doing), or (2) to reject the new political situation, and set up an opposition movement

[24] Barberis' Autograph Chronicle, June 2, 1875, Notebook I, 43-44, *FDBM* 833 E5-6.

[25] Barberis' Autograph Chronicle, July 5, 1875, Notebook II, 31-32, *FDBM* 834 C8-9. The illustrious visitor turned out to be Cardinal Giuseppe Berardi, Don Bosco's and the Salesians' great friend. He arrived incognito, in civilian clothes, with two young companions, on a secret mission. He stayed at a hotel and said Mass in the Cathedral. Don Bosco was his constant companion on visits to the Oratory and to places in the city.



5 – Giacomo Margotti, S.T.D. (1823-1887),
"intransigent" Catholic priest and journalist

in defense of the Church. Their option was for this second course of action. Its immediate objective was that of "transforming society," that is, working to create a "Catholic majority," with the ultimate objective of winning back political power.

In the sixties, with inspiration and encouragement from such conservatives as Louis Veuillot, Henry Manning, Gaspard Mermillod,[26] and of the Holy See itself, a group of Catholic laymen banded together (the *Bologna Group*). They laid the foundation of what would eventually become a national organization in opposition to the liberal establishment of the secular state. The ultraconservative, reactionary spirit of these men dominated all Catholic associations from the mid-sixties to the end of Pius IX's pontificate (1878).

[26] Louis Francois Veuillot (1813-1883) was a French influential writer and journalist; Henry Edward Manning (1808-1892) was Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster; Gaspard Mermillod (1824-1892) was bishop of Geneva [Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967) 14: 634; 9: 168-170 and 687f.].

Through the seventies the reactionary trend gained momentum. Withdrawal from Italian political life was part of its platform. In 1868 Pius IX had issued his Brief, *Non expedit*, thus confirming the policy of political non-participation by Catholics initiated in Turin by Father Giacomo Margotti's conservative Catholic newspaper, *L'Unità Cattolica*. In the political elections of 1874 the Pope declared participation by Italian Catholics to be "inopportune and illicit."

In 1871 the leadership of the Catholic Youth Association had called for "Italian Catholics" to unite. The first Congress was held in Venice in 1874, and the second in Florence in 1875, with a platform of non-participation in, and opposition to, Italian political life. Thus the Work of the Catholic Congresses and Committees (*Opera dei Congressi e dei Comitati Cattolici*) was born. (The Congresses were to be responsible for most of organized Catholic activity in Italy up to 1904–when they were suppressed by Pope Pius X, and the policy of political non-participation was reversed.)

When all attempts at reconciliation with the leftist liberal government failed, Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) continued the policy of Pius IX in this respect. During Leo's pontificate the Italian Catholic movement made steady gains in strength and numbers, so that it could move from the largely defensive position adopted during the second part of Pius IX's pontificate to ever more aggressive postures. Though still outside the political process and abstaining from participation in political elections, Catholics in the movement participated in "administrative" elections. Numerous Catholic leaders could be counted in influential administrative posts.

Don Bosco never really deviated from his conservative positions, but out of some peculiar instinct never participated in the organized Catholic movement (*Opera dei Congressi*).

Father Barberis' chronicle has an entry that reveals Don Bosco's strategy in the matter. Barberis writes:

> A while back our Father [Celestino] Durando was invited by the local Catholic associations to be their delegate at a general congress that is to address Catholic issues. Since the names of the delegates, and the congress itself, are given much publicity, Don Bosco has directed Father Durando to find some excuse and decline the invitation, which most people would regard as a great honor. Don Bosco explained, "We prefer to work under cover, and so act rather than talk. [...]"[27]

The Salesian Cooperators (which he described, as "a practical way of contributing to the moral and civil advancement of society") were launched at this time as Catholic force for the renewal of society, but with no political agenda (see later Vol. 6, Ch. 5).

[27] *ASC* A0000105, Barberis, *Autograph Chronicle*, March 16, 1876, Notebook V, 37, *FDBM* 839 C11.

3. Don Bosco and the Papacy

Don Bosco's devotion to the Pope was second nature to him from childhood both on account of the peasant Piedmontese culture in which he was reared and on account of the education received from his mother Margaret Occhiena Bosco. However, when we speak of Don Bosco's devotion to the Pope, the devotion that he bequeathed to his Salesians, we do not refer to his childhood but to a kind of second conversion achieved in his maturity. Historical, theological and ecclesiological forces had much to do with bringing about this conversion. This needs a word of explanation.

John Bosco's seminary education did not advance to any significant degree his understanding of the role of the papacy. As he later had occasion to reflect on his seminary experience, he realized that the emphases in seminary teaching were on speculative theological questions (such as predestination and the Last Things), rather than on Church history and ecclesiology. Likewise, seminary teaching in moral theology, pastoral practice and the spiritual life was tinged with a certain rigorism ultimately derived from Jansenism.

Jansenism was a rigorist and perfectionist response to a theological interpretation of St. Augustive's doctrine of predestination by the learned Dutch Bishop Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638). As cultivated in France by the Messieurs and the nuns of the convent of Port Royal, the doctrine affected various fields of applied theology, such as the moral, pastoral, sacramental and spiritual life. The result was a style of Christian life that was indeed fervent and dedicated but that was also uncompromisingly rigorist. This was Jansenism.

In its milder forms, but rigorist nonetheless, Jansenism spread outside France, and the diocesan seminary and the school of theology at the University of Turin came under its influence.

A second historic claim that had shaped the ecclesiology of the nineteenth century was Gallicanism. In its original setting in France this referred to the prerogatives acquired by the royal house for meritorious action in defense of the Church. It had two principal effects. First, it gave to the crown considerable powers in ecclesiastical matters (for example, in the appointment of bishops). Secondly, it gave the bishops and their conference a degree of independence from the pope. This was Gallicanism.

Gallican ecclesiology, spawned other claims of autonomy in varying degrees, from the mildly Gallican "jurisdictionalism" of the House of Savoy (Piedmont) to more rigid forms such as "Josephinism" (Austria) and especially Febronianism (Germany), the latter advocating the establishment of national churches under the authority of the State. Gallicanism and its derivative forms both in their political and in their ecclesiological aspects ranged themselves in varying degrees against papal centrality.

Against both tendencies, Jansenistic rigorism and Gallican nationalism, stood the Jesuits.

In moral and pastoral theology the Jesuits opposed the rigorism of Jansenism and were "probabilists'–that is, they solved moral cases (casuistry) and gave consequent pastoral advice by appealing to probable opinion favoring the penitent or advisee. For such a practice they were the object of caustic satirical attacks, among others, by Blaise Pascal, scientist and a prominent Jansenist Monsieur of Port Royal (*Lettres … a un provincial*) and by Vincenzo Gioberti (1801-1852), Italian priest, philosopher and politician (*Il Gesuita moderno*).

In ecclesiology the Jesuits opposed Gallicanism in all its forms and derivations, upholding the central role of the Pope, Vicar of Christ and visible head of the universal Church. This won them first suppression and expulsion from various countries and finally (incongruously) canonical suppression inflicted under duress by Pope Clement XIV (1773).

In Don Bosco's time, those who opposed Jansenist rigorism and Gallicanism and stood in the Jesuit tradition just described–that is, those who adopted probabilism in moral and pastoral practice and held to a Pope-centered ecclesiology–were referred to as "ultramontane." From a French standpoint this somewhat derogative term meant "beyond the mountains," referring to Rome and the Papacy.

This is the atmosphere that prevailed in the Pastoral Institute of Turin (*Convitto ecclesiastco*), when Don Bosco entered in 1841. The Pastoral Institute had been founded in the Jesuit tradition by Fathers Luigi Guala and Pio Brunone Lanteri in the early nineteenth century, for the Jesuits were active and had a following even during their suppression. The Pastoral Institute had been established for the purpose of offering young priests an opportunity to "finish" their priestly formation through the study of moral theology and pastoral practice and through acquisition of a strong attachment to the Pope in that tradition. Among the holy patrons of the Pastoral Institute were St. Charles Borromeo and St. Frances de Sales, both outstanding pastor-bishops of earlier times, and St. Alphonsus Liguori, the moral theologian who had perfected the anti-rigorist approach and had been recently canonized (1839).

At the pastoral Institute, living for three years under the guidance of Father Joseph Cafasso, the resident professor of moral and pastoral theology and a follower of St. Alphonsus, Don Bosco was able to shed whatever remnant of rigorism he still carried with him and "to learn to be a priest," as he put it. (He also discovered his vocation to work for young people at risk through the oratory.) More important for our understanding of Don Bosco's "devotion to the Pope" is the fresh understanding he gained of the Church and of the nature and function of the papacy. On both counts, just like his master and spiritual director (Father Cafasso), Don Bosco was thoroughly ultramontane and conservative.

The liberal revolution and the movement for the "liberation" and the unification

of Italy (*Risorgimento*) had the effect of strengthening Don Bosco commitment to the Church and to the Pope.

The liberal revolution entailed the gradual secularization of society–through depriving the Church of traditional privileges, through the suppression of religious orders and other ecclesiastical corporations and the confiscation of their properties, through the take-over of public education by the State, through freedom of the press and freedom of worship, etc.

The movement for the unification of Italy as a nation besides aiming at expelling the foreign power (Austria, and the Spanish Bourbons) also entailed the eventual forcible take-over of the States of the Church over which the Pope (Pius IX at the time) ruled as sovereign. A voluntary surrender of temporal power by the Pope was out of the question, for the Pope, and all conservative ultramontane Catholics with him, believed temporal power (the Papal States) to be necessary for the free exercise of the Pope's spiritual office as bishop of the universal Church.

The unification of Italy took place by stages through annexation of Italian regional states to Piedmont and the house of Savoy–1859-61 (most of Italy, including the larger portion of the Papal States); 1866 (Venice); 1870 (Rome, the final dispossession of Pope at the time of the First Vatican Council).

In all these respects Don Bosco stood with the Pope, no questions asked.

These socio-political developments were but an aspect of the larger intellectual revolution that had gripped Western Europe and that conservative Catholics were ill equipped to meet, or even to understand. The Christian faith, Christian theology, and Christian philosophy were under attack everywhere, especially in the universities.

The First Vatican Council (one might say) was called for the purpose of strengthening the Church in the face of the liberal onslaught. Strengthening the position of the papacy would be one way of achieving that end. Papal infallibility in the view of many, especially within the Roman Curia, also seemed to provide a bolster to the pope's authority, or at least a compensation for his losses and his diminishing prestige. Obviously, the supporters of papal infallibility appealed to theological no less than to socio-political reasons, but the council as an ecclesial event, and the declaration of papal infallibility in particular, were a great boost to morale and hopes of conservative Catholics, though they also polarized the factions existing within the Church, especially in French and German theological circles.

Don Bosco declared himself at once in support of personal papal infallibility and its definition. He was in Rome during the debate, and he is credited with persuading the Archbishop of Turin, Lorenzo Gastaldi, to vote for the definition. Other bishops from Piedmont as well as from Germany and France arranged to depart before the vote was taken. (The reason given was not that they were against the notion of infallibility but that they thought its definition in that form "inopportune.")

Such were the events that shaped Don Bosco's ecclesiology and view of the papacy.

The historical forces and circumstances that molded Don Bosco's view of the papacy and that determined his "attachment" to the Pope have long since been transcended. Likewise, the Second Vatican Council gave us a fresh view of the Church and the papacy. But Don Bosco also has bequeathed something that has not been transcended and is of enduring value. Don Bosco was no philosopher or theologian but was rather a popular historian and the author of popular works, such as the History of the Church, the History of Italy and the Lives of Early Popes. He was familiar with the historic role of the papacy and he took pains to emphasize it in his writings. "Standing with the Pope" became for him a historically based faith stance–a requirement of the Catholic tradition, of the faith itself.

He supported the definition of the Pope's personal infallibility for the same reason–not therefore for any political reason or on the strength of critical theological reflection, but out of a faith instinct by which he viewed the Pope as the "rock."

The tactics of the enemies of the Church made his commitment even firmer. Since people at large had but little knowledge of, or interest in dogma, the enemies' attacks were directed not against Christian doctrine (the Catholic religion), but against the Pope–not merely against the Pope's temporal power, but against the papacy as such. For radical revolutionaries like Giuseppe Mazzini, Giuseppe Garibaldi and their followers Pius IX was to be the last pope, and then the Church itself would collapse. But as the successor of Peter the pope was the "rock."

As the "rock" the Pope stood as the guarantor of faith for the Christian people as they sought certainty amid intellectual turmoil and a fulcrum in a time of crisis, precisely because of the historic position of the papacy. Such was the conviction that made Don Bosco "stick with the pope."

Chapter 3

SALESIAN CONSTITUTIONS: PROCESS OF APPROVAL–I (1858-1867)

Summary

I. Preliminaries to the Whole Survey
  1. Overview of the Whole Process of Approval (for Chapters 3, 4 [5] and 6)
  2. Sources and Literature
  3. Introduction to the Process of Approval
    Approval of Religious Constitutions in the Church's Practice
    Eight Stages of Development of Don Bosco's Constitutional Text Critically Established by Francesco Motto
II. Don Bosco's Constitutions in the Time of Exiled Archbishop Fransoni (1860-1862)
  1. Constitutional Text of 1860 (*Do*) Sent to Achbishop Fransoni
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III. Don Bosco's Constitutions in the time of the Vacancy of the Turin Diocese
  1. Don Bosco first application for approval of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (1864) Text of 1864 and *Decretum Laudis*
    Introduction: the Constitutional Text as Presented in 1864 (*Gb*)
    Don Bosco's 1864 Cover Letter Petitioning Pius IX for Approval of the Salesian Society and the Constitutions
    Don Bosco's Memorandum "*Cose da Notarsi*"– Comments on Some Points of the Constitutions Submitted in 1864
    Decree of Commendation of the Salesian Society (*Decretum laudis*), July 23, 1864
  2. The Thirteen Savini-Svegliati Observations of 1864 on Points of the Salesian Constitutions with Don Bosco's Response

Methodological Note: In the preceding Vol. 3, Ch. 9 we looked at Don Bosco's ideas and actions leading to the founding of the Salesian Society (1854-1859) and the drafting of the first constitutional texts (1858). In this and the following chapters we look at the whole process or *iter* of approval of the Salesian Society (1858-1874) and its constitutions.

1. Preliminaries to the Whole Survey

1. Overview of the Whole Process of Approval (in Chapters 3 (present chapter), 4, [5] and 6)

1. Introductory Matters
   (1) The Holy See's policy in approving religious congregations after the unification of Italy
   (2) Overview of stages of development of Don Bosco's constitutions: 8 stages (1858-1875) as identified by critical editor (Motto)

1860-1864

2. Archbishop Luigi Fransoni (in exile) and the Salesian Constitutions (1860)
   (1) Father Marcantonio Durando's critical observations
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   (1) Documents
   (2) Salesian Society awarded the *Decretum Laudis* (Decree of Commendation)
   (3) The 13 Savini-Svegliati Observations on the Constitutions and Don Bosco's response

1867-1871

4. Archbishop Alessandro Riccardi di Netro's objections and demands
   (1) Alessandro Riccardi di Netro's biographical sketch
   (2) New (Latin) draft of the constitutions and Father Marcantonio Durando's 1867 critical observations
   (3) Don Bosco's petition for approval in 1867 rejected
   (4) After new petition: Approval of the Salesian Society (1869), not of its constitutions

1872-1874

Year 1872

5. Archbishop Gastaldi, appointed to Turin, distances himself from Don Bosco.
   (1) Lorenzo Gastaldi Bishop of Saluzzo (1867-1871) and Archbishop of Turin (1871-1883): Biographical Sketch
   (2) Archbishop Gastaldi and Don Bosco: Initial estrangement

(3) Gastaldi's and Don Bosco's conflicting positions regarding the Salesian Society and its constitutions

Year 1873

6. Clash over the approval of the constitutions (1873-1874)
   (1) Gastaldi's conditions of support and presentation in Rome
   (2) Anonymous (Don Bosco's) letter against Gastaldi
   (3) Don Bosco's 1873 unsuccessful petition for definitive approval
   (4) The 38/28 Bianchi-Vitelleschi critical observations
   (5) Don Bosco's letter to Vitelleschi (August 5, 1873)
   (6) Don Bosco's response to the 28 Vitelleschi critical observations

Year 1874

7. Final Stage of the process of approval of the constitutions
   (1) Don Bosco's partial revision of the constitutions and the Historical Sketch (*Cenni storici*) of 1873-74
   (2) Don Bosco's second petition for approval with submission of partially revised constitutions (first of 1874)
   (3) Second and third revisions of the constitutions
   (4) Action by the commission of four cardinals meeting in Special Congregation: first of two sessions
   (5) Don Bosco *Memorandum* against Gastaldi (Summary by attorney Menghini)
   (6) Definitive revision by the cardinal of the Special Congregation (in a second session) and definitive approval of the Salesian Constitutions (April 3, 1874; Decree signed April 13, 1874)

2. Sources and Literature

Archival Documents on the Constitutions: *ASC* D472 (Process of Approval), *FDBM* 1889 C2 – 1893 E4; *ASC* D473 (Constitutional Texts), *FDBM* 1893 E5 – 1895 E11.

Giovanni Bosco, *Constituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales [1858]-1875*. Testi critici a cura di Francesco Motto. Roma: LAS, 1982. [Motto, *Cost. SDB*]

Eugenio Ceria, *Epistolario di S. Giovanni Bosco*, Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, vol. I (1955), II (1956). [*Ceria-Epistolario*].

Francesco Motto, Giovanni Bosco, Epistolario III (1869-1872), IV (1873-1875) (Roma: LAS, 1999) [*Motto-Epistolario*]

Giovanni Bosco, *Opere Edite*. Ristampa anastatica, ed. by Centro Studi Don Bosco, Vol. XXV (Roma: LAS, 1977). [*Opere Edite*]

Stella, *DB:LW*, 133-179.

Giovanni B. Lemoyne, *Documenti* XIII-XXIV, passim, *ASC* A062-A073: Documenti, *FDBM* 1018 C9-1081 E12; and XLV (Bonetti-Gastaldi), *FDBM* 1194 B12 - 1201 A9. [*Documenti*]

Giovanni B. Lemoyne, Angelo Amadei and Eugenio Ceria, *The Biographical Memoirs of St. John Bosco*, vol. I-XIX, tr. from the Italian and ed. by Diego Borgatello and others (New Rochelle, NY: Salesiana Publishers, 1965-2004). *EBM* [Italian: *IBM*].

The *Biographical Memoirs* (Lemoyne-Amadei) on the process of Approval:

[1864] *EBM* VI, 376-377; 425-426 (much documentation is omitted in *EBM*):

–(Feb.-Jul.) Steps taken by Don Bosco for the approbation of the Society;

–Constitutions sent to Rome. Grudging letter of commendation by the vicar general of the Turin archdiocese (*sede vacante*);

–First action taken in Rome on the text of the constitutions: the 13 Savini-Svegliati observations;

–Decree of Commendation (*Decretum laudis*) granted to the Institute (Salesian Society).

[1867] *EBM* VIII, 317-318:

–Don Bosco in Rome (Jan. 7-Mar. 2) presses for approbation of the Society and its constitutions and for privileges of exemption (at least that of issuing dimissorial letters).

[1868] *EBM* IX, 35-38, 53-55:

–Don Bosco gains approval of the Society (as a diocesan congregation by Bishop Pietro Ferrè of Casale, for which he wrote one of many historical summaries;

–Don Bosco gets further letters of commendation from bishops, including (with reservations!) one from recently appointed Archbishop Alessandro Riccardi of Turin.[1]

[1869] *EBM* IX, 230-231, 233, 237-239, 247-248:

(Feb. 19) Approbation of the Institute (Salesian Society) not of the constitutions.

Warning given that the constitutions should be modified in accordance with 1864 observations.

[1873-1874] *EBM* X (Amadei), 367-373:

–Don Bosco in Rome (Feb. 18-Mar. 4, 1873 and Dec. 30, 1873-April 14, 1874);

–Definitive approbation of the emended Salesian constitutions (Apr. 3, 1874; Decree signed: Apr. 13, 1874).

The *BM* tells the story of the process of approval in detail in Vol. X. (Ch. 7)–in *IBM* (661-1006) with ample documentation; in *EBM* (298-417) in more condensed fashion and with less documentation.

[1] *Note*: Emend statement of *EBM* IX, 53, that Don Bosco had obtained "the official approval of the ordinaries...." (He had obtained the Society's approval from the bishop of Casale (1868), and only letters of commendation from other diocesan bishops.)

Francis Desramaut, "Chronologie critique du différend entre don Bosco et l'archevêque de Turin Lorenzo Gastaldi," in *Cahiers salésiens.* Recherches et documents pour servir à l'histoire des salésiens de don Bosco dans les pays de langue française. Numéro spécial 6-7, avril-octobre 1982 (Lyon: SDB, 1982) – This work of Father Desramaut lists all the relevant documentation in critical chronological order, giving for each piece a summary of the contents and references. It is an indispensable work. No reference will be given to it, but it will be our constant guide.

F. Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps (1815-1888)* (Torino: SEI, 1996). [*DB en son temps*].

A. Lenti, "The Bosco-Gastaldi Conflict (1872-1882) Part I," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 4:2 (1993) 1-83.

Giuseppe Tuninetti, *Lorenzo Gastaldi 1815-1883* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme [Vol. II: *Arcivescovo di Torino (1871-1883)*], 1988), 259-270. [Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II]

Pietro Braido, "L'idea della Società Salesiana nel «Cenno istorico» di Don Bosco del 1873/74," in *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 6 (1987) 245-331 [Braido, *L'idea*]

The *Cenno istorico* referred to here is the Historical Summary on the Salesian Society authored by Don Bosco at a crucial point in the process of approval of the Salesian constitutions (1873/74). This document is also published in Pietro Braido, *Don Bosco per i giovani: L'«Oratorio», una «Congregazione degli Oratori»*. Documenti (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano, 9) (Roma: LAS, 1988), 81-146.

3. Introduction to the Process of Approval

Approval of Religious Constitutions in the Church's Practice

Rule and Constitutions

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decreed that religious life could be professed only under one of the three ancient approved rules: the Basilian, the Augustinian and the Benedictine. However, succeeding Popes interpreted the decree in a non-restrictive manner, and gave their approval to new orders and new rules. Thus, the rule of St. Francis of Assisi was approved in 1223, and it soon gained the status of the fourth great ancient rule.

Normally, the founders of religious orders in subsequent years took one of the ancient rules as a foundation, adapting it to their particular way of life and to the requirements of time and place through a set of special statutes or regulations. Hence the distinction arose between "rule" (i.e., the rule of life in accordance with the ancient models) and "constitutions" (i.e.,

statutes, regulations, directories, etc. in accordance with particular requirements).

With time, some religious orders were granted permission to govern themselves exclusively by the laws proper to themselves, their "constitutions."

In more recent times, the experience of the Clerks Regular (St. Jerome Emiliani) and the Jesuits ushered in the period of the "modern constitutions," that is, of the "modern" congregations (as distinct from ancient orders). This period is characterized by a wide-ranging transformation and proliferation of religious congregations, and hence of constitutions.

Reform of Religious Constitutions

The Holy See then acted to establish a common canonical pattern, so that these new constitutions gradually took on a common juridical form.

A new normalizing phase began with the revival and proliferation of religious life in the nineteenth century, after the setback of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. The same problem arose in a new form. Pius VII and Gregory XVI took steps in the direction of normalizing religious life and its constitutions; but it was under Pius IX that more comprehensive norms were instituted.

Up to 1860, the Holy See still allowed considerable freedom to religious congregations in establishing their constitutions. In 1863 the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars issued a new norm, the *Methodus* [see below], and although this directive did not have the force of law, it nonetheless established firm procedures by which all new religious congregation with simple vows were to be approved.[2]

The *Methodus* was followed by a number of directives from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, designed to clarify procedures and answer doubts. Pope Leo XIII's Constitution, *Conditae a Christo* (1900), followed by the Decree, *Normae secundum quas* (1901), concludes the normalizing period begun with the *Methodus*. By these norms, the new religious institutes were admitted to the "canonical religious state," although they had to wait till the publication of the Code of Canon Law in 1917 for full canonical status.

[2] This is the period (1864-1874) in which Don Bosco sought to have the Society and its constitutions approved. Perhaps Don Bosco did not fully appreciate the import of the "reform" put into effect by Rome at this time. Difficulties arose from his wanting a congregation that differed from the canonical model.

According to the *Methodus* (and subsequent norms), the process by which a new religious institute was approved comprised three stages:

(1) The first stage was an examination of the life and constitutions of the institute leading to the *Decretum laudis* (Decree of Commendation).This was granted [i] if an appropriate period of time had elapsed since the founding of the institute; [ii] if the institute had grown to sufficient size (expansion to different places); [iii] if there was evidence that the institute had borne good fruit among the Christian people; [iv] if the institute had the recommendation of the bishops of the dioceses in which its work was established.

The *decretum laudis* was not an approval but an act of commendation and encouragement. Together with it a number of *animadversiones* (observations) were given. These were directives aiming at "improving" the constitutional text submitted, that is, at bringing it into conformity with the law and practice of the Church.

(2) The second stage led to the *Decretum approbationis instituti* (Approbation of the Institute). This was granted after a sufficient time had elapsed from the *Decretum laudis*. It could be obtained upon submission of [i] new documentation on the work and success of the institute, [ii] a report on the state of the institute, [iii] a new constitutional text, revised in accordance with the observations given with the *Decretum laudis*, and [iv] a new set of testimonial letters by the bishops in whose dioceses the institute had works.

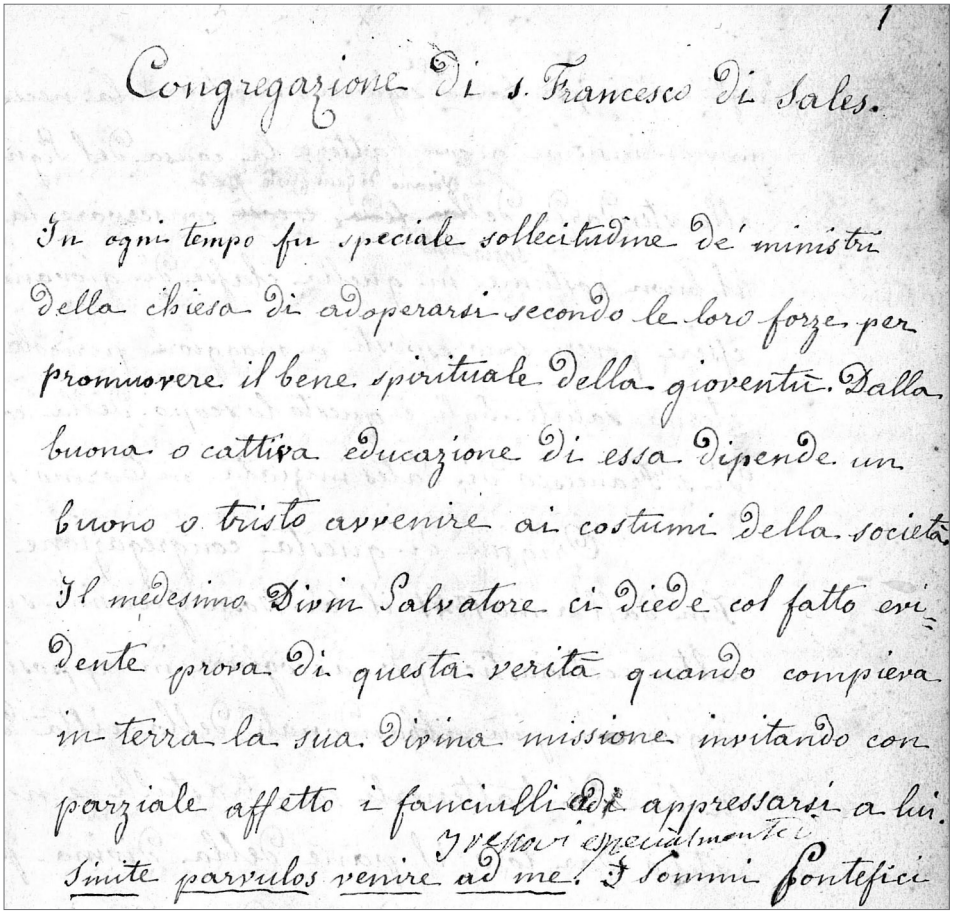
If necessary, new observations were handed down for a further revision of the constitutional text.

(3) The third stage led to the *Decretum approbationis constitutionum*. This was given [i] after all the observations had been complied with; [ii] after the stability and worth (effectiveness for religious life and apostolate) of the constitutions had again been ascertained. This required submission of a new set of documents (as above).

The approval could be *ad experimentum* (for a trial period, usually with further observations), or definitive.

It should be borne in mind that the most important testimonial letter required by the Sacred Congregation was that of the ordinary in whose diocese the institute had originally been established and had seen its first development, and where the mother house was located.

It should also be noted that no mention is made of "privileges of exemption" as part of the process of approbation. As a matter of fact, one of the chief reasons for enforcing a new discipline on religious congregations and their constitutions was the ease with which privileges of exemption from



Congregazione di s. Francesco di Sales.

In ogni tempo fu speciale sollecitudine de' ministri della Chiesa di adoperarsi secondo le loro forze per promuovere il bene spirituale della gioventù. Dalla buona o cattiva educazione di essa dipende un buono o tristo avvenire ai costumi della società. Il medesimo Divin Salvatore ci diede col fatto evidente prova di questa verità quando compiva in terra la sua divina missione invitando con parziale affetto i fanciulli ad appressarsi a lui. Sinite parvulos venire ad me. I Sommi Pontefici

7 – Manuscript draft of the Salesian Constitutions in the hand of Giovanni Boggero sent to exiled Archbishop Luigi Fransoni in 1860

ordinaries had been obtained, almost routinely. The correction of this kind of "laxity" became all the more urgent as the bishops' authority was weakened by the policies of liberal states. After 1860 under Pius IX, and more so under Leo XIII (from 1870), privileges of exemption (including especially the faculty to issue dimissorial letters for the ordination of candidates) were no longer granted routinely to approved clerical congregations. And certainly such a provision (for exemption) could not be included in the constitutions.

The Methodus–*Text and Contents*[3]

Whenever a petition is submitted for the approval of a [religious] institute, testimonial letters by the bishops of the dioceses in which houses [of the institute] are located must be submitted with it. The petition is then referred to the Bishop of the diocese in which the first foundation, or the motherhouse, is located. He is asked to report on the end, or purpose [of the institute], on [the circumstances of] its foundation, on the number of its houses, [on the number of its membership] brothers or sisters, on its means of support, and finally on its utility, its progress, and the like.[4]

If the institute is of recent foundation, has only one or two houses, and still lacks appropriate written constitutions, then a [simple] commendation is issued of the founder's or of the institute's end or purpose, depending on the circumstances.

After an appropriate lapse of time, if the institute has expanded sufficiently, if it has borne abundant fruits, and if it has the recommendation of the diocesan Ordinaries, then a Decree of Commendation [Decretum laudis] is granted. Exceptionally, a Decree of Approval may be given, especially if its constitutions are completed and reveal no serious defects in essential matters; although it is customary to put off such a Decree of Approval to a later time. In any case, observations on [points of] the constitutions are given [at this time].

The constitutions, on the other hand, are not approved before they have been tested through a suitable trial period, and only after they have been emended in accordance with the observations given. Generally speaking, the approval is given for a trial period, e. g., for three or five years. After this, unless obstacles remain, the definitive decree of approval of the constitutions is issued.

[3] *Methodus quae a Sacra Congregatione Episcoporum et Regularium servatur in approbandis novis institutis votorum simplicium ab A. Bizzarri Archiepiscopo philippen. secretario exposita* [Method by Which the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars Is Guided in Approving New Institutes with Simple Vows**,** Presented by [Giuseppe] A[ndrea] Bizzarri, Archbishop of Philippi, Secretary, in *Collectanea* [...] (Rome, 1863, 829-830; 2nd edition 1883) [Motto, *Testi critici*, 228].

[4] Sometimes it may be necessary to inquire about the doctrines that the members of the institute hold. Likewise [the institute's] directories and similar documents, even though only in manuscript form, must be submitted, to enable the Sacred Congregation to ascertain the spirit by which [the institute's] superiors and members are guided [Note by the *Methodus*].

In drafting the decrees of commendation or approval, the formats given below are employed. After a description of the [institute's] founding and purpose, of [its] vows, and of the men or women superiors or authority, the concluding formulas are as follows:

[Here five concluding formulas are given – Then:]

All these matters must at every step of the process be referred to the Supreme Pontiff. Furthermore, in an audience granted on September 22, 1854, His Holiness Pope Pius IX, ordained that all future petitions for the commendation and approval of any institute or of its constitutions be referred to the Supreme Pontiff before any action is taken by the Sacred Congregation. (See, Bruges [file], on the Institute of the Sisters of Christian Doctrine.)

To illustrate the manner in which the observations are customarily given, a few examples are provided separately.

[Signed]
A. Bizzarri, Archbishop of Philippi, Secretary

Eight Stages of Development of Don Bosco's Constitutional Text Critically Established by Francesco Motto

Giovanni Bosco, *Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales [1858]-1875*. Testi critici a cura di Francesco Motto S.D.B., Istituto Storico Salesiano, Roma. Fonti, Serie prima, 1 (Roma: LAS, 1982). [Motto, *Cost. SDB*] Besides the critical edition of original texts of Don Bosco's constitutions from the Central Salesian Archive, Motto provides introductory studies and appendices. The Don Bosco files of the Central Salesian Archive [*ASC*] are available in Microfiches [*FDBM*].

Francesco Motto has studied and classified all available archival texts of the constitutions. He has arranged the texts in chronological order, and has assigned to each of them a Roman (or Greek) uppercase letter (alphabetically). Further, he identified the writer by an added lowercase letter–for example: r = Rua, b = Bosco, o = Boggero. On the other hand, s (= *stampa* in Italian) designates a printed edition.

By a critical study of documents and their diplomatic relationship Motto was able to single out *eight drafts* as representing eight arrival points, or eight successive important stages, in the development of the text of the early constitutions, from 1858 to 1875.

The following is a summary of the eight stages of development of the text critically establish. Although a simplification is here given for ready reference, it may help to understand the complex process.

Stage I

(1858) [*Ar*] Ms. Rua, Italian – *ASC* D4720101, *FDBM* 1893 E5ff.

Earliest-known extant text, result of an "incubation" period and of Don Bosco's meetings with Minister Rattazzi and Pope Pius IX.

11 chapters (Preamble, Historical Introduction, Purpose, Form, Obedience, Poverty, Chastity, Internal Government, Rector Major, Other Superiors, Admission).

Stage II

(1860) [*Do*] Ms. Boggero, Italian – *ASC* D4720108, *FDBM* 1895 B10ff.

Text sent to Archbishop Fransoni in exile, signed by Don Bosco and 25 "Salesians".

4 new chapters (Practices of Piety, Habit, External Members, Profession Form).

Stage III

(1864) [*Gb*] Ms. Bosco, Italian – *ASC* D4720205, *FDBM* 1902 E1ff.

Text laboriously reworked by Don Bosco (1860-1864), submitted to Rome for the *Decretum Laudis* (1864) the first time; given the observations (Savini-Svegliati).

New articles (on Politics, Pope); 2 new chapters (Religious Government, Particular Houses).

Stage IV

(1867) [*Ls*] Printed, Latin – *ASC* D4720308, *FDBM* 1904 C11ff.

Text modified in accordance with some (not all) of the 13 observations of 1864; submitted in 1867 for the approval, but rejected.

After the same text was re-submitted in 1869 the Institute (Salesian Society) was approved, but the Constitutions were to be brought into compliance with the thirteen observations of 1864.

Stage V

(1873) [*Ns*] Printed, Latin – *ASC* D4720402, *FDBM* 1907 C9ff.

Text only slightly modified, rejected and given 38/28 observations (Bianchi-Vitelleschi).

Reprinted in 1873/74 in Rome, complying only with some of the observations.

Two new chapters (Novitiate, Studies); chapter on Poverty re-written, other modifications made.

Reprinted in 1874 in Rome: chapter-appendix on External Members removed.

Revised and emended by Special Congregation (4 cardinals), Preamble and Historical Introduction removed.

Approved as emended (cf. *Q* herewith below).

Stage VI (Approval)

(1874) [*Q*] Ms. Berto, Latin[5] – *ASC* D4730106, *FDBM* 1912 E2ff.

Approved as revised and emended by the Special Congregation by decree of April 11, 1874.

Calligraphic transcription by Berto in two exemplars (for Vatican and Salesian archives).

Sixteen chapters: Purpose, Form, Obedience, Poverty, Chastity, Religious Government, Internal Government, Rector Major, Other Superiors, Particular Houses, Admission, Studies, Practices of Piety, Novitiate, Habit and Profession Form).

After approval Don Bosco printed Latin and Italian editions for the Salesians as follows:

Stage VII

(1874) [*T*] Printed, Latin – *ASC* D4730202, *FDBM* 1916 C5ff.

"Official" Latin text printed by Don Bosco in Turin for the Salesians.

It differed from the approved Ms. text in style, and in places also in content (Don Bosco claiming authorization by Pius IX *vivae vocis oraculo*).

Stage VIII

(1875) [*V*] Printed, Italian – *ASC* D4730302, *FDBM* 1920 B2ff.

"Official" Italian text printed by Don Bosco in Turin for the Salesians, not a translation of the above, but differing both from the above and from the approved Ms. text (same authorization invoked).

[5] *Q* was given no lower case letter because it was a calligraphic manuscript as required by protocol.

2. Don Bosco's Constitutions in the Time of Exiled Archbishop Fransoni (1860-1862)

1. Constitutional Text of 1860 (Do) Sent to Achbishop Fransoni

As may be seen from the above Summary, the earliest known extant text of the Salesian Constitutions, a manuscript in the hand of Father Rua (*Ar*, in Italian), dates from late 1858. It was the result of an "incubation" period, during which Don Bosco consulted the constitutions of other religious congregations, and of meetings with Minister Urbano Rattazzi (1857) and with Pope Pius IX (earlier in 1858). From this text and from other attestations it emerges that a group of fifteen individuals, "pledged to observe these constitutions," had already coalesced around Don Bosco before Don Bosco journeyed to Rome for his audience with the Pope.

The Salesian Society was founded officially on December 18, 1859, when Don Bosco and eighteen other "associates" met as a community with a specific religious commitment, and elected officers.[6]

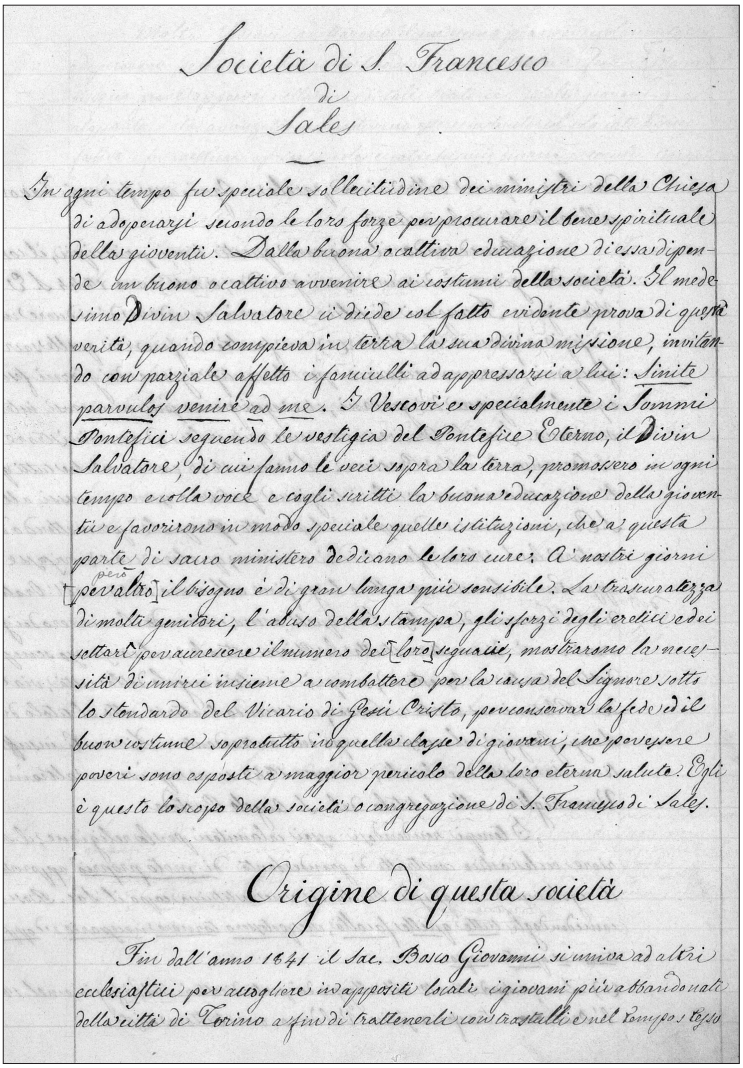
Don Bosco meanwhile had been revising and expanding the constitutions. In June 1860 he sent this reworked draft of the constitutions, autographed by himself and 25 "Salesians," some still in secondary studies (high school), to Archbishop Luigi Fransoni (in exile) for comments and approval.

This text (*Do*) included four new chapters for a total of 15: Preamble, Historical Introduction, Purpose, Form, Obedience, Poverty, Chastity, Internal Government, Rector Major, Other Superiors, Admission + Practices of Piety, Habit, External Members, Profession Form.

The Archbishop gave his encouragement, but otherwise he merely suggested some slight modification, for example with regard to the chapter on the vow of chastity, as may seen from a letter dated July 19, 1860 and addressed to Canon [Celestino] Fissore, Vicar General of the Turin archdiocese:

> Among the various papers you will also find a draft of regulations of Don Bosco's work. I have only one observation to make relating to Art. 2 of [the chapter on] the Vow of Chastity. The words, "Anyone who is not certain," sound much too strict and absolute. My suggestions is that the phrase be softened to read: "Anyone who on the basis of personal experience does not have a well founded hope of being able with God's help to keep this virtue in deed, etc.," or

[6] For details on the founding of the Society and the first development of the constitutions see the preceding Vol. 3, Ch. 9.



Società di S. Francesco
di
Sales

In ogni tempo fu speciale sollecitudine dei ministri della Chiesa di adoperarsi secondo le loro forze per procurare il bene spirituale della gioventù. Dalla buona o cattiva educazione di essa dipende un buono o cattivo avvenire ai costumi della società. Il medesimo Divin Salvatore ci diede col fatto evidente prova di questa verità, quando compiendo in terra la sua divina missione, invitando con parziale affetto i fanciulli ad appressarsi a lui: Sinite parvulos venire ad me. I Vescovi e specialmente i Sommi Pontefici seguendo le vestigia del Pontefice Eterno, il Divin Salvatore, di cui siamo le veci sopra la terra, promossero in ogni tempo e colla voce e cogli scritti la buona educazione della gioventù e favorirono in modo speciale quelle istituzioni, che a questa parte di sacro ministero dedicano le loro cure. A nostri giorni [più] pervaltro il bisogno è di gran lunga più sensibile. La trascuratezza di molti genitori, l'abuso della stampa, gli sforzi degli eretici e dei settari per aumentare il numero dei loro seguaci, mostrarono la necessità di unirci insieme a combattere per la causa del Signore sotto lo stendardo del Vicario di Gesù Cristo, per conservare la fede e il buon costume sopratutto in quella classe di giovani, che per essere poveri sono esposti a maggior pericolo della loro eterna salute. Egli è questo lo scopo della società o congregazione di S. Francesco di Sales.

Origine di questa società

Fin dall'anno 1841 il Sac. Bosco Giovanni si univa ad altri ecclesiastici per alloggiare in appositi locali i giovani più abbandonati della città di Torino a fine di trattenerli con catechismi e nel tempo [illegible]

7 – Manuscript draft of the Salesian Constitutions in the hand of Giovanni Boggero sent to exiled Archbishop Luigi Fransoni in 1860

some phrase to the same effect. For greater clarity the virtue in question should also be named expressly; as it is, the only occurrence of the term is in the title of the chapter.[7]

[7] Archbishop Fransoni to Vicar General Fissore, July 19, 1860, in *AAT* Lettere Fransoni, 227, in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 17, footnote 12.

However, he sent the text to Father Marcantonio Durando, Visitor or Provincial of the Vincentians in Turin, for evaluation and comments.

2. Durando's Observations of 1860[8]

Father Durando's critical observations of 1860 have not come down to us, but it is thought that they were similar, if not identical, to the critical remarks he later made in 1867, when (as will be explained below) he examined a revised text at the request of newly appointed Archbishop Alessandro Riccardi di Netro.

At first, in 1860, the Archbishop had expressed his satisfaction over the fact that Don Bosco had followed his suggestions, as he writes to his vicar on November 11, 1860: "I am very happy to hear that Don Bosco has accepted the suggestions made with regard to his regulations and that he is busy re-drafting them."[9] On October 23, 1861, however, in writing to Don Bosco directly after Father Durando's examination the Archbishop voiced a different view:

> Concerning the Society of St. Francis de Sales, I was informed that its rules have been returned to you with some important observations [by Fr. Durando], as, for example, "Upon whom is the Society to depend," so that you might emend and complete them. I seem to remember being told afterwards that you had made some concessions, but that there still remained many notable deficiencies requiring correction. Prudence requires that I look into this matter as soon as possible.[10]

[8] The Blessed Fr. Marco Antonio Durando (1801-1880) came from a well-to-do Turinese family. His two brothers distinguished themselves, one (Giovanni) as a general in the army, the other (Giacomo) as a general, writer and statesman. Having joined the Priests of the Mission (Vincentians), Marcantonio was ordained by Bishop Fransoni in 1824. From 1837 until his death he served as visitor (provincial) of the Vincentian Turin province. He was founder and director of several congregations and religious communities, and was a trusted counselor of Archbishop Fransoni before the latter's exile (1850). Subsequently, until the Archbishop's death, he was a member of the archdiocesan commission charged with assisting the vicar general in the government of the archdiocese. [For the relations between Don Bosco and Fr. Durando, cf. L. Chierotti, *Il P. Marcantonio Durando* (Sarzana, 1971) 387-398, in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 17, footnote 13; *Sussidi* 2, 262-263.]

[9] Archbishop Fransoni to Vicar General Fissore, November 11, 1860, in *AAT* Lettere Fransoni, 231, in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, p. 17, footnote 12.

[10] Archbishop Fransoni to Don Bosco, October 23, 1861. Letter published in its entirety in *EBM* VI, 618-619.

3. Don Bosco's Constitutions in the Time of the Vacancy of the Turin Diocese[11]

1. Don Bosco's first application for approval to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (1864)–Text of 1864 and Decretum Laudis

Introduction: the Constitutional Text as Presented in 1864 (Gb)

When Archbishop Fransoni died in 1862, Don Bosco was already engaged in a thorough revision of the constitutions, the outcome of which was the text of 1864, a manuscript in Don Bosco's hand (*Gb*). It represents the summit of the textual tradition in Italian.

It featured three new chapters for a total of seventeen, though it still lacked key chapters on formation (that is, on novitiate and studies). Don Bosco wrote some important new articles for this draft. Article 7 of the chapter on Purpose forbade political activity to the members. Article 4 of the chapter on Religious Government granted to the Rector Major the power to issue dimissorial letters for the ordination of Salesian priestly candidates. Both articles would eventually be ordered removed. Article 1 of the chapter on Religious Government established the pope as the supreme superior of the Society. Other articles underwent re-writing. The re-writing of Article 1 of the chapter on Purpose (to be discussed in Ch. 8) is of particular significance in this regard.

Don Bosco took great pains with this draft because he had decided to present the constitutions to the Roman Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for approval. For this purpose he had collected testimonial letters of support from several bishops, as required. But the all-important letter of commendation from the vicar of the (still vacant) archdiocese of Turin was only half-hearted.[12]

Don Bosco left no stone unturned. He made a strong plea for approval in

[11] The Archdiocese of Turin had been vacant since the death of Archbishop Fransoni in 1862. Archbishop Alessandro Riccardi was not appointed until 1867.

[12] Canon Giuseppe Zappata, Vicar General Capitular, issued the letter of commendation on Feb. 11, 1864. After briefly describing the work of the Oratory, he writes: "[I recommend Don Bosco and his work] so that he may obtain those favors which will give increase to the Oratory and its religious family and be the source of ever greater spiritual good to the city and diocese of Turin." [*IBM* VII, 619-620 (omitted in *EBM*).]

the cover letter addressed to the Pope and in a separate memorandum (*Cose da notarsi*) he explained and defended his positions.

The constitutions were examined for the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars by Father Angelo Savini (O.C.D.). His critical observations were handed down to Don Bosco in 13 points by the under-secretary of that Congregation, Mgr. Stanislao Svegliati. Accordingly, approval of the constitutions was denied, but a Decree of Commendation of the Institute (*Decretum laudis*) was granted–a small victory.

Don Bosco made a detailed response to the observations. He accepted some but remained firm on others. For instance, he removed the article forbidding political activity (though he never changed his mind in the matter), but retained the chapter on Externs and presented an elaborate argument in eight points in defense of the privilege of dimissorials.

For the text of the *petition* (cover letter), the *memorandum* (*Cose da notarsi*), the *Decree* and the *13 Savini-Svegliati Observations* with Don Bosco's *Response*, cf. Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 228-234; also *IBM* VII, 710-715 (omitted in *EBM*). Of these documents an English translation is given here below.

Don Bosco's 1864 Cover Letter Petitioning Pius IX for Approval of the Salesian Society and the Constitutions

Turin, February 12, 1864

Most Holy Father,

With the glory of God and the good of souls in view as my sole purpose and desire, I humbly come before Your Holiness and kneel to petition for the approbation of the Society of St. Francis de Sales. Much thought has gone into this undertaking and I have long desired to bring it to completion. In 1858 I had the good fortune of being granted an audience with Your Holiness. On that occasion, I spoke to Your Holiness of the efforts exerted by heretics and unbelievers to win over the people, poor and defenseless young people in particular. Your Holiness welcomed with joy the idea of a Society that would be devoted to the care of this portion at risk of the flock of Jesus Christ. *Your Holiness personally wished to lay down its basic premises* [*tracciarne le basi*], and I have done my best to follow these [guidelines] in drafting the present regulations [*piano di regolamento*].[13]

[13] For the two basic premises suggested by Pius IX to Don Bosco in 1858 (free citizen in

To the best of my poor power and ability, I have tried to implement Your Holiness' counsels. But I fear that in carrying out this work I may have departed, perhaps even in essential points, from the object intended. Consequently I am asking for the correction, rather than for the approbation, of these projected constitutions.

With this end in view, Your Holiness, or whoever Your Holiness may wish to delegate for the purpose, should feel free to correct, add, and strike in the measure that may be judged to redound to the greater glory of God. I shall not object in any way. Rather, I shall be available for any explanation that may be required or deemed useful. Even as of now, I wish to express my indebtedness to anyone who will be of assistance to me in bringing the statutes of this Society to [the desired] perfection, and in rendering them as stable and as conformable as possible to the standards of Our Holy Catholic Religion.

These statutes, of which a copy is submitted herewith, are grouped in 16 chapters, divided into brief articles. An explanation of a number of important points is provided in a separate paper.

The Bishops of Cuneo, of Acqui, of Mondovì, of Susa, of Casale, as well as the Capitular Vicar of this our Archdiocese, have been kind enough to write letters of commendation in support of this Society. Its members now number over seventy-five; and their only desire is to devote their life and substance for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

United in prayer, we await any decision that Your Holiness, as the Supreme Head of the Church, may [see fit to] render; and we kneel to beg Your Holiness' apostolic blessing, as a token of this hoped-for and signal favor.

As for me, I deem it the highest honor to kneel before Your Holiness and to profess myself,

The Church's and your Holiness' most humble, most indebted, most devoted Son,

Father John Bosco

relation to the State and regular religious in relation to the Church) see our earlier discussion in the preceding Vol. 3, Ch. 9.

Don Bosco's Memorandum "Cose da Notarsi"– *Comments on Some Points of the Constitutions Submitted in 1864*[14]

[Comments on Purpose]

The purpose of this Society, in so far as it concerns its members, is to offer them an opportunity to unite in spirit in order to work for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. We find inspiration in the words of St. Augustine: *Divinorum divinissimum est in lucrum animarum operari* [Of all divine works the most divine is to be engaged in winning souls].

Considered in its historical existence, [this Society] has for its purpose to continue what has been in effect for the past 20 years in the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales. One may truthfully say that these constitutions embody in an orderly fashion the discipline developed up to the present in the oratories for boys established in this city, the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales being the center. This was done in accordance with the counsel of the Supreme Head of the Church.

[Comment on failure to mention the pope]

In these regulations the Supreme Pontiff, and matters relating to him, receive little explicit mention. But one of the purposes of this Society remains that of upholding and defending the Pope's authority by all the means that circumstances of times, places, and persons put within our reach for prudent use. The reason for this failure is to be sought in the fact that [this Society] has been several times investigated by the civil authority; and the object of such house searches was to discover (so they hoped) any compromising evidence of a relationship with Rome. If these regulations had fallen into their hands and been found to contain damaging expressions, the Society would have been at grave risk.

[Comment on other constitutions consulted]

With regard to content, [at various points] of the rules I have consulted, and when appropriate also followed, the statutes of the Cavanis Institute of

[14] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 229. Don Bosco's original draft is in *ASC* D475 1864. Fr. Berto's calligraphic copy is in *ASCVVRR* T 9.1. It is edited with slight changes in *IBM* VII, 622f. (omitted in *EBM* VII, 376). This is a separate paper included with the docket containing the bishops' testimonial letters, copy of the Constitutions with the cover letter of petition of February 12, 1864 (above), submitted to Pius IX.

Venice, the Rosminian constitutions, the statutes of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. These religious corporations or societies enjoy the Church's approval. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 on the vows, on the other hand, were taken in their near entirety from the Redemptorist constitutions.[15] The formula of profession was adapted from that of the Jesuit rule.

[In defense of the provision that Salesian seminarians should be under the jurisdiction of the religious superior, not of the ordinary of the diocese]

Article 2 of Chapter 8 provides that [Salesian] seminarians be under the jurisdiction of the Superior General of the Society. [Here are some reasons:]

(1) This Society has a union of houses established in various dioceses.[16] [In such a situation,] [the superior] could not assign members as need demands if the ordinary is free to assign them to other tasks as he sees fit.

(2) In our states, religious orders have been suppressed by law; accordingly their members no longer enjoy any privilege of exemption from military service. Recourse then must be had to the bishops, who by the present law can request exemptions in the ratio of one cleric for every 20,000 inhabitants. Under these conditions it is imperative that [Salesian] candidates to the priesthood be freely moved from one house to another, [and from one diocese to another,] to make it possible for them to benefit from the exemption privilege held by the Ordinary of that diocese.

(3) A third reason has to do with formation for the [Salesian] sacred ministry. It is the purpose of the [Salesian] Society to work for young people. This is a sensitive and difficult ministry, for which training is possible only through experience and protracted study, in a setting where the candidate lives and works in contact with the young people whose care he is undertaking. This experience could not be acquired, and the necessary unity of spirit maintained, if the Superior General does not have full jurisdiction over the members of the Society.

[15] Actually these chapters, especially Ch. 5 on Obedience, owe more to the constitutions of the Cavanis brothers' Schools of Charity [F. Motto, "La figura del superiore salesiano [...]," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 2 (1983:1) 3-53 (p. 13ff.)].

[16] The formula, "union [or, communion] of houses in various dioceses," means, "houses in various dioceses united under a central authority." The Society was no longer restricted to the diocese of Turin.

Decree of Commendation of the Salesian Society (Decretum laudis)*, July 23, 1864*[17]

Moved by the pitiable condition of poor young people, Father John Bosco, a priest of the diocese of Turin, as far back as the year 1841, with the help of other priests began to gather those [young people] together, instruct them in the rudiments of the Catholic faith, and assist them with material help. From this [ministry] was born the pious Society named after St. Francis de Sales and consisting of priests, seminarians and laymen. The members profess the traditional simple vows of obedience, poverty and chastity, and are under the authority of a superior general known as Rector Major. Besides attending to their own sanctification, their main purpose is to work on behalf of poor young people especially by helping them both materially and spiritually. From the start the members of the pious congregation have sought to cultivate with great zeal and diligence whatever they thought would contribute to the advancement of such a purpose. Because of this [commitment] their labors, as is known to all, have brought the greatest benefits to Christian society, and many bishops have asked them into their own dioceses and have taken them, like the faithful and tireless workers that they are, as associates in the care of the Lord's vineyard. However, the afore-mentioned Father Bosco, who is both founder and Superior General of the pious Society, as well as his associates [rightly] feel that the founding would be incomplete if the society did not receive the confirmation of the Apostolic See. Therefore, with the commendation of many bishops, he has very recently most humbly petitioned our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX, to grant such confirmation, and [to that effect] he has presented Constitutions for approval. After giving careful attention to the above-mentioned letters of commendation from bishops, in an audience granted on July 1, 1964 to Monsignor the under-secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, His Holiness bestowed the highest praise and commendation on said Society as a congregation with simple vows [working] under the authority of a Superior General, but respecting the jurisdiction of diocesan Ordinaries in keeping with the Sacred Canons and the Apostolic Constitutions. It is therefore the intention of the present decree to praise and commend the pious Society–even while putting off the approval of the Constitutions to a more suitable time.

Moreover, His Holiness, taking special circumstances into consideration,

[17] *ASC* D518 *S. Cong. Rel.* (2) *Rescritti*, in Motto, *Const. SDB*, 231; also in *IBM* VII, 706-707 (omitted in *EBM* VII, 425).

has graciously granted, as it is also the intention of this decree so to do, that the present Superior General, or Rector Major, remain in office for life, although the constitutions provide that the Superior General of this pious Society should hold that office only for twelve years.

Rome, the secretariat of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, July 23, 1864

(for the seal)
A. Card. Quaglia, Prefect
Stanislaus Svegliati. Under-Secretary

2. The Thirteen Savini-Svegliati Observations of 1864 on Points of the Salesian Constitutions with Don Bosco's Response

Introductory Note

On July 1, 1864, Don Bosco from Turin, without appearing personally in Rome, submitted the text of the constitutions on which he had been working since 1858. This draft in Italian, designated *Gb* (Bosco) by Motto, represented a thoroughly re-worked form of the constitutions. By it Don Bosco was asking the Congregation of Bishops and regulars for approval both of the Congregation and of its constitutions, He was denied on both counts. The Salesian Society was merely awarded the *Decretum Laudis* (Decree of Commendation of the Institute). As for the constitutions, the Secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Archbishop Stanislaus Svegliati, gave Don Bosco thirteen critical observations, advising him to accept and incorporate them into the text of the constitutions.

Secretary Svegliati's observations were actually based on those made by Consultor Fr. Angelo Savini, O.C.D. who had examined the constitutional text for the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. They are usually referred to as the Thirteen Savini-Svegliati Observations.

Don Bosco's response was a *memorandum* written to accompany the new Latin text to be presented in Rome in 1867. In it he responds to each observation of 1864 by first citing it and then stating his acceptance or non-acceptance of it, with appropriate comments.

What follows is a translation of this Latin *memorandum* (critical observations and Don Bosco's response.)[18]

[18] The *memorandum* with the thirteen observations and Don Bosco's response is edited in *IBM* VII, 710-715 (omitted in *EBM*). When in 1867 Don Bosco was seeking approval of the

Don Bosco's Memorandum *Responding to the Thirteen Observations*

On July 1, 1864 His Holiness Pope Pius IX accepted our humble petition and deigned to laud and commend the Society of St. Francis de Sales in accordance with the prescription of Canon Law, putting off to a more suitable time the approval of its constitutions.

Furthermore, in view of particular situations, he kindly allowed Fr. John Bosco to serve in the office of Superior General for life, while at the same time ordaining that the future Superiors General of this same Society would stay in office for a twelve-year term only.

With the above-mentioned Decree [of Commendation] thirteen observations were given on the constitutions of this same Society. The present writer received both the Decree and the observations with profound gratitude. He immediately set about putting the suggestions received into practice, so as to learn of any difficulty that would arise and be ready to explain it.

After giving careful thought to everything that in his judgment would redound to the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, [Father John Bosco] believes that the observations given should be implemented in the following manner.

Observation 1: The Rector Major, or Superior General, shall remain in office for a period not exceeding 12 years, and may not be re-confirmed in that office without the Holy See's permission.

Response: This observation is accepted without any reservation.

Observation 2: It is advisable that the words of the Constitutions [art 7 of the chapter, 'Purpose of this Society'] by which the members are forbidden to take part in politics be removed.

Response: These words have been removed. This article was put in simply as a safeguard against possible harassment, should the Constitutions fall into the hands of certain lay people. Hence, in compliance with the observation the whole article has been removed.

Society with a re-drafted constitutional Latin text, he had incorporated the observations of 1864 only in part. At the time, as narrated below, he failed to obtain approval. (The Society was approved after a new try in 1869, but with the injunction that he should comply with all the critical observations received.)

Observation 3: The vows that are taken in an institute of this type are reserved to the Holy See. Hence, the clause empowering the Superior General to dispense from these vows should be removed from the constitutions.

Response: We accept unreservedly whatever is for the best and is apt to bind us more closely to the Supreme Head of the Church. The clause in question here concerns only triennial vows. We request that the Superior General, for practical reasons and for the sake of greater flexibility within the Congregation, be granted the power to dispense from triennial vows. This favor does not seem especially significant, since the Holy See easily and regularly grants simple confessors the power to dispense from temporary vows.

Observation 4: The Superior General does not have the power to issue dimissorial letters for the reception of holy orders by members of the Pious Institute. So let this clause also be removed from the Constitutions.

Response: If this demand were complied with, very grave difficulties would surely arise in practice. These are such as would perturb the orderly life of the Society and make it practically impossible–for the following reasons:

(1) [*Unity of government and administration*] – If the bishop had the power to take members from the Society and from their assigned posts and order them to take on other assignments in the Church [in his diocese], then unity of government and administration could hardly be preserved. The bishop could call an administrator away from a Salesian house, even though the latter is bound by the vow of obedience to his superior. (The vows, of course, are reserved to the Holy See.) Nor would the Superior General enjoy any longer the right to assign his subjects to direct certain houses, especially if these be located in a diocese different from that of the motherhouse. The ordinary, wishing to exercise his jurisdiction, as presumably he would, could order and assign one member, or several members, or the Superior General himself, to certain duties in the sacred ministry, or to parishes. What then?

(2) [*Unity of spirit*] – Nor [if the bishop had control of members] could the unity of spirit be preserved. For, a person who engages in the difficult sacred ministry on behalf of poor and abandoned young people must apply himself to special activities, studies and life style. But one cannot become proficient in such matters except through protracted practical experience, through which one learns what has to be done, avoided, or modified, and the ways and means to do so. All this cannot be put into effect, if the bishop can call the member away to other assignments, and the length of time in which the member is available to the Congregation remains uncertain.

(3) [*Unity of doctrine and discipline*] – Nor [if the bishop had control of the members] could unity of doctrine and discipline be preserved. For, the bishop would have to know about the life and conduct of one whom at the proper time he will have to promote to sacred orders. Each member, while engaged in his studies, would also have to attend classes, ceremonies and conferences scheduled in the seminary. But will the hours, the time, the place of the seminary be compatible with the duties and the matters that must be attended to daily in the Society? Furthermore, every professor and lecturer makes up his treatises as he sees fit, and changes or substitutes them at will; and when a professor is changed new and different textbooks are introduced. A similar problem arises with the ceremonies, conferences and sermons of the seminary, for they are designed to instruct seminarians for a life in the world, not religious for their religious life. Such complications would make unity in doctrine and discipline [in the Society] very difficult if not impossible.

(4) [*Conflict in obedience*] – Generally speaking, how can obedience due the bishop [who controls the member] be reconciled with obedience due to a religious Superior by virtue of vows that are reserved to the Holy See?

(5) [*Situation in particular dioceses*] – Another difficulty arises from particular situations in which a diocese may find itself. In our case for instance, the See [of Turin] has been vacant for over a year, and the Capitular Vicar is not empowered to grant dimissorial letters [for ordination of candidates], for this is prohibited by civil law. Hence, a candidate for ordination must have recourse to the Holy See in each case. This is very inconvenient and expensive, as we have learned from experience.

(6) [*Military service and exemption quotas*] – The Law of this country makes it possible for a bishop to obtain dispensations from military service for his seminarians in proportion to the number of inhabitants in his diocese. More often than not while in one diocese the number of seminarians asking for dispensation surpasses the allowable quota, in another diocese the quota can accommodate all applicants with room to spare. The difficulty as it affects the member could be surmounted by granting [the religious Superior] the faculty to issue dimissorial letters. Then the religious Superior could refer his candidates for orders to other bishops in whose dioceses houses are established or administered by the Congregation.

(7) [*International character of the Salesian Society*]– A special difficulty arises in the case of the Salesian Society, which draws its membership from all parts of the world. This would often make it necessary to request dimissorial let-

ters from remote places, the ordinary of which is either unknown or cannot easily be tracked down.

(8) [*Customary practice*]–Religious Orders and Congregations generally have enjoyed this privilege [of issuing dimissorial letters]. Among these are the *Oblates of the Blessed Virgin Mary* [Lanteri], who were granted the privilege with the Brief, *Etsi Dei Filius*, of Pope Leo XII of happy memory. The same may be said of the *Institute of Charity* [Rosmini], which was approved by Gregory XVI also of happy memory; and of the *Congregation of the Priests of the Mission* [Vincentians], which was approved on January 12, 1623 by Pope Urban VIII with the Bull, *Salvatoris Nostri*. Finally, Pope Pius IX himself (may God keep him unharmed forever) with the Brief, *Religiosas Familias*, of May 3, 1859 to the faculty originally granted [to the Vincentians] to issue dimissorial letters, added a new privilege. It reads: "Seminarians of the Congregation of the Mission who are endowed with the necessary qualities and have obtained dimissorial letters from their Superiors may freely and licitly receive holy orders from any bishop holding grace and communion with the Apostolic See. This may be done even outside the times established by canon law, provided due procedures are observed.

Therefore, because of the above reasons insofar as they apply to this Society and its particular character, we most humbly request that in the matter of dimissorial letters this Society be granted the same privilege which is enjoyed by Religious Houses, Congregations and Orders having community of houses.[19]

Observation 5: Permission must be obtained from the Holy See for the selling of property and the contracting of debts, in accordance with the prescriptions of canon law.

Response: This provision is not compatible with our constitutions, according to which it is the individual members, not the Society itself, that hold ownership. Accordingly, no situation can arise in which recourse to the Holy See is indicated. Furthermore, among us the *royal Exequatur* is required by law in all external transactions. Hence, papal Rescripts [empowering such transactions] would have to be submitted to the civil authorities. Our Society would then appear as a [religious] corporation, and would thereby automatically be subject to the provisions of the law, namely to the power of the State [and

[19] The expression "community of houses" means houses in different dioceses under the same superior.

liable to suppression as a religious corporation]. Therefore, we humbly beg that this demand not be enforced. In the event that the Superior or a member comes into possession of goods that conscience or the Church's norms regard as ecclesiastical goods accruing to the Society, then we humbly ask that the Superior General with his Council be granted the power to handle and expedite any required transaction. A like faculty was granted to the Congregation of the Schools of Charity [*sic*] approved by Gregory XVI of happy memory by the Brief of June 21, 1836, *Cum Christianae, etc.*[20]

Observation 6: The Rector Major, or Superior General, cannot properly be deposed at the members' will. A provision should be introduced that the approval of this Sacred Congregation [of Bishops and Regulars] is required for the deposition to go into effect.

Response: This requirement is accepted and complied with.

Observation 7: To establish new houses and to accept the direction of seminaries ordinary recourse should be had to the Holy See in each case.

Response: This requirement would greatly hamper negotiations. Furthermore, since papal Rescripts regarding external [corporate] transactions cannot be implemented without the royal Exequatur, the Society's administration and its very freedom would be jeopardized.

It seems that in establishing, or in accepting the administration of a house recourse to the local ordinary, as the constitutions lay down, is sufficient. This is the practice that has been followed up to the present; and it seems the most effective way of dealing with situations arising in connection with places, times and persons.

The provisions [of the constitutions] regarding the administration of immovable goods were taken almost literally from the constitutions of the *Institute of the Schools of Charity* [read: Rosmini's "*Institute of Charity*"].

Observation 8: It is desirable that the members devote more than one hour's time daily to vocal and mental prayer [jointly], and that they make a ten-day spiritual retreat every year.

Response: As this suggestion has the greater good of the Society in view, it is gladly accepted and written into the constitutions.

[20] Instead of "Congregation of the Schools of Charity" read "Institute of Charity." The "Schools of Charity" were an older Venetian foundation of the Cavanis brothers, approved by Pope Leo XII.

Observation 9: External persons may not be members of a pious institute through affiliation, so-called.

Response: Most religious congregations and orders have tertiaries. In our case, these are friends and benefactors who, while promoting the good of the Society in a special way, wish to lead a holier life and to observe the religious constitutions in the world in so far as it is possible to do so. Hence we humbly request that this chapter be approved, if not as a part of the text of the constitutions, at least as an appendix.[21]

Observation 10: In the Formula for Profession, the name of the Rector [Major], before whom profession of vows is made, should be added. Further, the words, "*to command me without reservation*," should be replaced with these other words, "*to command me in accordance with our constitutions*."

Response: Both suggestions are accepted and complied with.

Observation 11: Every three years the Rector Major, or Superior General, shall send a report on the state of the Institute to this Sacred Congregation. The report shall deal with the material and personal state of the Institute. This includes the number of houses and members, discipline, that is, the observance of the constitutions, and all matters regarding the Institute's financial administration.

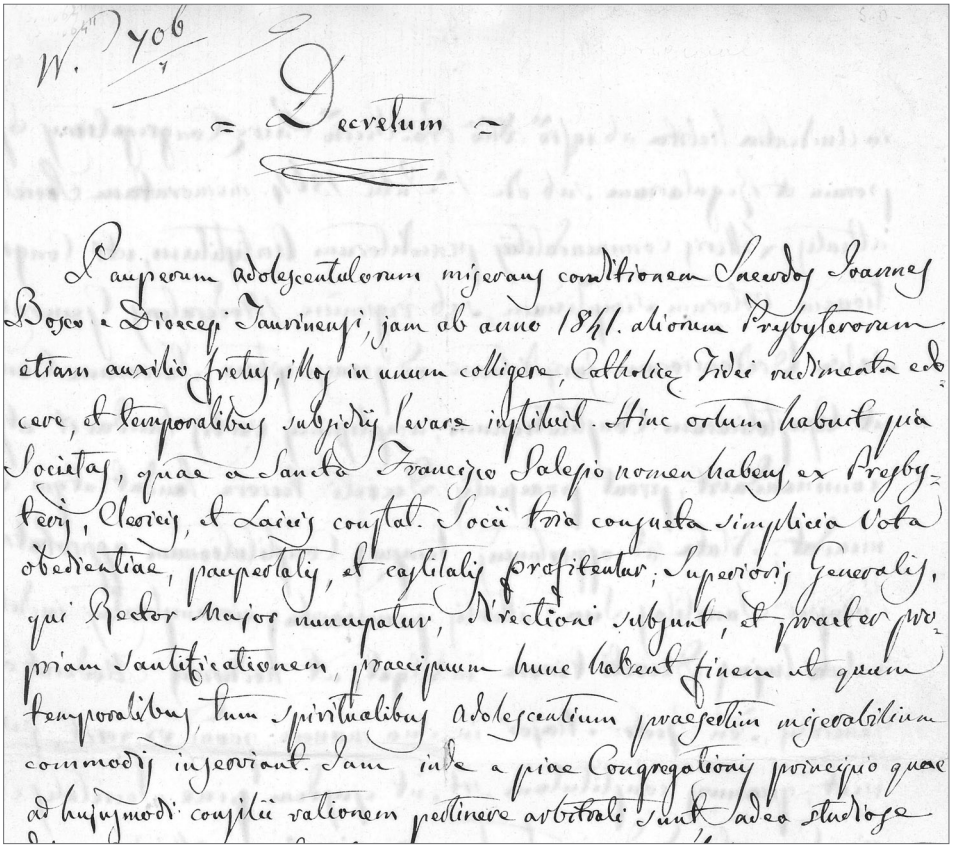
Response: Since it is the aim of this requirement to bind the whole body of the Society more closely with the Church's supreme authority, it is most gladly accepted and complied with.

Observation 12: As is customary with pious congregations of priests, the constitutions should be translated from the vernacular into Latin [for official approval].

Response: This requirement has already been complied with, as may be seen from the enclosed copy of the constitutions.[22]

[21] This observation and its response refer to the chapter (appendix) on external members, already discussed in the preceding Vol. 3, Ch. 8. Don Bosco first wrote the articles on external members in 1860 and had to remove them in 1873. In this response Don Bosco identifies the external members as the Cooperators.

[22] Don Bosco had produced Latin drafts, for apparently he knew of this "customary requirement." The first *printed* Latin text of the constitutions is dated from 1867. This was the text submitted to Rome in 1867. [Cf. Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 31ff.] It should be recalled that Don Bosco submitted this response to accompany the new text of the Constitutions of 1867, which failed to win approval precisely because it was found in non-compliance.



= Decretum =

Cum puerorum adolescentulorum miserandam conditionem Sacerdos Joannes Bosco e Dioecesi Taurinensi, jam ab anno 1841. alionum Presbyterorum etiam auxilio freetus, illos in unum colligere, Catholicae Fidei rudimenta edocere, et temporalibus subsidiis levare instituit. Hinc ortum habuit pia Societas, quae a Sancto Francisco Salesio nomen habens ex Presbyteris, Clericis, et Laicis constat. Socii tria conjuncta simplicia Vota obedientiae, paupertatis, et castitatis profitentur; Superiori, Generali, qui Rector Major nuncupatur, Directioni subsunt, et praeter propriam sanctificationem, praecipuum hunc habent finem ut quam temporalibus, tum spiritualibus adolescentium praesertim miserabilium commodis inserviant. Cum inde a pia Congregationis principio quae ad hujusmodi conjiciationem pertinere arbitrati sunt adeo studiose

8 – Decree of Commendation of the Salesian Society (*Decretum laudis*), July 23, 1864

Observation 13: To forestall scruples and anxiety, the words by which the commands of the Superior are said to bind under pain of sin must be deleted from the constitutions.[23]

Response: This has already been done. But since the words to be deleted are not specified, the kind Examiner may change or delete to the extent that he shall judge best in the Lord.

[23] This observation refers to the provision of Art 14 (last clause) of the chapter on Form [draft *Ar* of 1858 in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, p. 90]. Compare with "Conclusio" of the chapter on Profession [approved text *Q* of 1874 in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, p. 209].

Chapter 4

SALESIAN CONSTITUTIONS: PROCESS OF APPROVAL–II (1867-1871)

Summary

1. Alessandro Riccardi (1808-1870) Archbishop of Turin (1867-1870)
2. Archbishop Riccardi's Appraisal of the Situation at the Oratory and His Demands
3. Chronological Table of the Process of Approval in the Years 1867-1869
4. The Latin Text of 1867 Presented in Rome for Approval
5. Letters of Commendation
6. Fr. Durando's Report and Critical Observations of 1867
7. Archbishop Riccardi's Action with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars
8. Vatican Representative Tortone's Negative Report
9. Don Bosco's Petition Denied
10. Approval of the Society (not of its Constitutions)
11. Tenor of the Decree
12. Unfortunate Incidents

1. Alessandro Riccardi (1808-1870) Archbishop of Turin (1867-1870), Brief Biographical Sketch

Sussidi 2, 310 and G. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, *passim*, and Tuninetti's article ("La Partecipazione […]") cited in *Sussidi*.

Alessandro Ottaviano Riccardi dei Conti di Netro was born on May 23, 1808 at Biella (Piedmont, ca. 50 mi. NNE of Turin) of a noble family.

He attended, and received the doctorate from the School of Theology at the University of Turin, and was ordained in 1832. After ordination he took the post of Almoner at the royal Court until 1842.

On January 24, 1842 he was appointed bishop of Savona (Liguria) where he served for 25 years, until his transfer to Turin as Archbishop.

On February 22, 1867 he was named Archbishop of Turin. The see of Turin had been vacant since the death of Archbishop Fransoni in 1862, who had been an exile in Lyons since 1850 and had "governed" the archdiocese

through his vicars. Archbishop Riccardi made his entrance in the solemn traditional form, for he was "acceptable" not only to the house of Savoy, but also to the liberals.

Don Bosco was not acquainted with the new Archbishop, for he came to Turin and to the Pastoral Institute as a newly ordained priest in 1841 when Riccardi, though still serving at the court, was almost immediately due to leave Turin for his new appointment as bishop of Savona (1842).

But Don Bosco would soon make his acquaintance for two reasons. First, in 1867 he needed the Archbishop's support and a testimonial letter for the approval of the Society and its constitutions by Rome. As will be seen, Archbishop Riccardi wrote the testimonial letter, but he also expressed strong reservations in a letter addressed to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Second, the Archbishop demanded that all seminarians (Salesians included) should attend the diocesan seminary. The Archbishop, as part of his program of "reform," needed to put the seminary and the seminarians in order. The archdiocesan seminary had been closed since 1849 and the Oratory had functioned as a seminary where both diocesan and Salesian seminarians lived, worked and studied. Even when the diocesan seminary, after the death of exiled Archbishop Fransoni, was re-established in 1863 under Capitular Vicar Giuseppe Zappata, the seminarians' situation at the Oratory remained unclear. In 1866 Don Bosco wrote to the Rector of the seminary:

> There are [as many as] fifty seminarians living here [at the Oratory] or at [the Salesian school in] Lanzo. Their whole life is spent in assisting, in teaching catechism and classes to poor children, especially to those that attend the boys' oratories in this city.[1]

Little wonder then that both the Capitular Vicar, first, and then the Archbishop should demand that all seminarians should do their theological studies at the diocesan seminary.

Generally speaking Archbishop Riccardi wanted the Salesian Society to be under diocesan control, though not necessarily restricted to the diocese of Turin. But the pressures of the upcoming Vatican Council and his early death prevented him from enforcing these demands.

On June 29, 1867, on the occasion of celebrations for the eighteenth cen-

[1] Don Bosco to Seminary Rector Canon Alessandro Vogliotti, Turin, June 26, 1866, in Motto, *Epistolario* II, 264.

tenary of St. Peter's martyrdom, Pius IX announced the Vatican Council. It opened on Dec. 8, 1869, held its last session on September 1, and adjourned *sine die* on October 20, 1870, following on the occupation of Rome by the Italian army. Hence, the 3 years and 7 months of Riccardi's tenure as Archbishop of Turin were taken up mostly with preparations for the Council and with the Council itself, and to this must be added the Archbishop's poor health. As a result, in spite of his best efforts, the archdiocese had to wait for the appointment of Archbishop Gastaldi (1871) for its restoration from the long years of "neglect."

In April 1869 the Piedmontese bishops held meetings in preparation for the Council. The controversy on infallibility was already raging since the publication of a polemical article on the subject in the ultramontane Jesuit journal, *Civiltà Cattolica*. The Piedmontese bishops were divided on the question, and the Archbishop did not provide any leadership, because he himself was torn between his "pro-Gallican" concept of the need of strong episcopal authority at the local level, and what was taken to be "loyalty" to the Holy See. At the meetings he rather expressed himself in opposition to the definition of papal infallibility.

Archbishop Riccardi was forced to return to Turin from the Council by his recurring illness. In his pastoral letter of June 20, 1870, written before the definition he expressed himself somewhat ambivalently:

> If it were only a matter of the heart, brothers and dearest children, we would wish to see the Pope decorated with the definition of infallibility. But since the heart must bow to the truth that the Holy Spirit will reveal to the Council fathers, we shall abstain from expressing the hope that the outcome will correspond to our feelings of devotion.[2]

Bishop Gastaldi of Saluzzo and the editors of the Catholic daily *L'Unità Cattolica* interpreted these words as a declaration in support of infallibility. But even though the Archbishop was ready to accept a conciliar definition, he personally remained unconvinced. His statement, therefore, appeared to be merely a "death-bed profession of faith" made for benefit of his diocese.

Archbishop Riccardi died in Turin on October 16, 1870. He was buried in the family tomb in Turin's general cemetery, since the government for the first time in the archdiocese' history withheld the permit for a burial in the cathedral.

[2] *Sussidi* 2, 310 (from Tuninetti).

2. Archbishop Riccardi's Appraisal of the Situation at the Oratory and His Demands

Before Bishop Riccardi's appointment, the Turin archdiocese had been vacant since the death of Archbishop Fransoni in 1862, and since 1850 had been governed by its exiled Archbishop only "from afar." The Turin seminary had been closed at the time of the liberal revolution and remained closed until 1863. During this time Don Bosco's Oratory functioned as a seminary, and while making a significant contribution to the diocese Don Bosco had enjoyed considerable freedom of action. Many diocesan seminarians lived at Valdocco together with Don Bosco's own clerical students, and there was no clear distinction between the two categories. When the seminary was reestablished in 1863, all these young candidates to the priesthood attended seminary lectures only sparsely or not at all. When the capitular vicar and the seminary rector insisted on attendance, Don Bosco countered by submitting a plan for the establishment of a regular seminary program at Valdocco, which was rejected.

The new Archbishop's high priority upon his appointment was the strengthening of the seminary program and the formation of the clergy, and in that context he did not like what was going on at Valdocco. As part of his reform program, the new Archbishop demanded that all theological students should attend the diocesan seminary. Don Bosco, however, would not comply with this demand, even when in September 1867, the Archbishop notified Don Bosco that he would "no longer allow diocesan seminarians to teach or supervise boys in any boarding school;" and that he would henceforth "confer sacred orders only on candidates residing at the seminary." He added soothingly, "This directive may prove somewhat burdensome to you, but it will benefit the Church and your community as well."[3] Don Bosco suggested that the matter be submitted for arbitration to Rome (where Don Bosco had the patronage of Pope Pius IX and of the Secretary of State, Cardinal Giovanni Antonelli), a suggestion that the Archbishop rejected out of hand.

Don Bosco (and some of his biographers) clearly viewed the Archbishop's demands as unwarranted harassment. He later vented his feelings in a letter to Cardinal Filippo De Angelis:

> If I allow my clerical students to reside in the seminary, what will become of the spirit and discipline of our Society? Where will I find the one hundred and

[3] Archbishop Riccardi di Netro to Don Bosco, September 11, 1867, in *EBM* VIII, 406.

more instructors to take their place in as many catechism classes? Then, after spending five years in the seminary, will any of them ever wish to come back and shut himself in at the Oratory? [...] Can I, then, in good conscience send my clerical students to the diocesan seminary? I think not."

And he added a revealing comment: "Fortunately, I have for some time anticipated this move. Besides, all my clerical students who wish to join the Society, except a few, are from other dioceses."[4]

3. Chronological Table of the Process of Approval in the Years 1867-1869

The following chronology will facilitate the reader's understanding of the process that issued in the approval of the Salesian Society, though not of its constitutions (1867-1869).[5]

Date	Event
1867	
Jan 6	Don Bosco in Rome with Fr. J.B. Francesia, probably with constitutional text *Ls*
Jan 12	Papal audience
Jan 19	Papal audience: Don Bosco petitions Pius IX for approval of Society and constitutions
	Docket (*positio*) presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for approval of the Society, of the constitutions and of the privilege of dimissorials
Feb 5	A second Papal audience
Feb 16	Bishop Riccardi di Netro of Savona named Archbishop of Turin
Feb 22	In Rome Don Bosco takes steps for the approval of the Society
Mar 1	Canon Gastaldi named bishop of Saluzzo
Mar 27	Don Bosco is back in Turin triumphantly received at the Oratory
May 26	Archbishop Riccardi di Netro enters the See of Turin
July 11	Bishop Gastaldi's letter of commendation of the Society
	(Other letters of commendation received in Rome through 1868/69)
Jul-Aug?	Fr. Durando's critique of the constitutions
Sep 11	Archbishop Riccardi's letter to Don Bosco stating that henceforth he would ordain only those candidates who attended the diocesan seminary
1868	
March 7	Archbishop Riccardi's letter of commendation of the Society

[4] Don Bosco to Card. De Angelis, January 9, 1868, in Motto, *Epistolario* II, 479.

[5] Francis Desramaut, "Chronologie détaillée," in *Cahiers Salesiens, Etudes* IX, 13-129 (50-57).

Mar 14	Archbishop Riccardi's special confidential letter to Card. Quaglia (Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars) critical of the Salesian Congregation and its constitutions
May 25	Bishop Gastaldi's second letter of commendation
June 29	With Bull *Aeterni Patris* Pius IX convokes Vatican I for Dec 8, 1869
July 28	Secretary of Congregation of Bishops and Regulars Archbishop Svegliati, has Msgr. G. Tortone, Representative of the Holy See in Turin, investigate the Salesians
Aug 6	Msgr. Tortone's unfavorable report on the Oratory to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars
Sep 9	Don Bosco's letter to Card. De Angelis on Archbp Riccardi's demand that Don Bosco's clerical students should attend the diocesan seminary
Set 22	**Congregation of Bishops and Regulars denies Don Bosco's petition for approval**
Oct 2	Secretary Archbishop Svegliati officially notifies DB that his petition has been rejected
Nov	Don Bosco asks the gathered bishops of Turin's ecclesiastical province for a joint letter of commendation (which is denied)
1869	
Jan 8	Bishop Gastaldi's third letter to Card. Quaglia, Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, in support of the Salesian Society
Jan 15	Don Bosco in Rome again to plead for approval of the constitutions
Jan 23	Papal audience
Feb 7	Papal audience
Feb 19	**The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars decides to approve the Salesian Society (not its constitutions)** Pius IX grants to Don Bosco the **privilege of dimissorias** for candidates who have entered the Oratory at the age of 14 or younger
Mar 1	Congregation of Bishops and Regulars issues **official Decree** of approval of the Congregation (the constitutions are remanded to a later date and must first comply with the 1864 observations
Mar 6	Back in Turin (Mar 5) Don Bosco presents the Decree of approval to Archbishop Riccardi

In the light of this chronology the process may be briefly described.

4. The Latin Text of 1867 Presented in Rome for Approval

After receiving the Decree of Commendation with the 13 Savini-Svegliati Observations in 1864, Don Bosco with the help of Latin scholars developed a text in Latin (as required by Savini-Svegliati). This text is designated *Ls* by the critical editor.

In this text the chapters remained unchanged in number, but instances of revision and rewriting were numerous. Of the Savini-Svegliati observations,

however, only about one-half were complied with. This is shown by Don Bosco's response prepared in view of presenting the new petition for approval in 1867 (see preceding Chapter 3); he thought perhaps that the observations were negotiable. Nevertheless he resumed the process for the approval of the Society and the constitutions, and it is for this reason that Don Bosco journeyed to Rome at the beginning of 1867 (January 7). The process also entailed, among other things, collecting more testimonial letters of support from the bishops, an undertaking in which he was very active but not always successful.

It should be borne in mind that the approval was not the only business that brought Don Bosco to Rome; he was beginning to get involved with the appointment of bishops to vacant Sees, though the extent of his involvement at this time (1867) is a matter of debate. But it is in this capacity that he could propose the nomination of his friend, Lorenzo Gastaldi.

5. Letters of Commendation

Back in Turin (March 1, 1867) after a stay of nearly two months in Rome, during which Don Bosco renewed his petition for approval, Don Bosco continued to solicit letters of commendation from bishops–letters to be included in the docket (*positio*) presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

Lorenzo Gastaldi's response was completely favorable.[6] He was the newly appointed bishop of Saluzzo, and Don Bosco had played a role in his nomination. Between Don Bosco and Lorenzo Gastaldi there had existed over a long period of time, in fact practically from the beginnings of Don Bosco's oratory, mutual esteem, friendship, and factual collaboration.

Other letters of support were received in Rome through 1867 and 1868 from bishops and Archbishops in and outside Piedmont.[7]

Such show of support was especially welcome at a time when influential Piedmontese bishops opposed the approval on grounds, among others, of

[6] Bishop Gastaldi to Cardinal Quaglia, July 11, 1867, *IBM* IX, 876-877 (just mentioned in *EBM* VIII, 383).

[7] For example, from Piedmont the bishops of Alessandria, Casale, Mondovi, etc., wrote letters of commendation. From outside Piedmont: letters were received, for example, from Archbishop Card. Antonucci of Ancona (Marche), Bishop Macchi of Reggio Emilia, etc.

lack of proper intellectual formation, of religious discipline and of ecclesiastical spirit.

Bishop Lorenzo Renaldi of Pinerolo refused to lend his support and in a separate letter to the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Card. Quaglia, he set forth his reasons (June 6, 1868).

Bishop Luigi Moreno of Ivrea also withheld his support. Bishop Moreno's opposition to Don Bosco, and later to the Salesians, stemmed also from the struggle (1862-1867) over the ownership of the *Catholic Readings*. The two remained permanently estranged. In spite of this situation, Don Bosco asked the Bishop repeatedly for a letter of support, but received no reply.[8]

In November 1868 the episcopal conference of Turin's ecclesiastical province, meeting under the presidency of Archbishop Riccardi, summarily dismissed Don Bosco's request for a joint letter of commendation.[9]

6. Fr. Durando's Report and Critical Observations of 1867

Shortly after his entrance in May 1867, the Archbishop had received a copy of the new Salesian constitutions and could not help but notice some glaring deficiencies in them, notably the absence of provisions for a regular course of studies for Salesian priestly candidates and for a regular novitiate. In addition, a provision gave the superior general the power to issue dimissorial letters for ordination. The Archbishop then, as Archbishop Fransoni had done in 1860, called on Father Marcantonio Durando to examine the new constitutions. Father Marcantonio Durando wrote in his report:[10]

> A detailed study of each article of these rules would end up in a host of observations, since some articles are not exactly worded, others are deficient, and some are not even consistent with the purpose [of the Congregation]. But the

[8] Cf. Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco nella storia economica e sociale* (Roma: LAS, 1980), 347-368, esp. 366-368.

[9] *EBM* IX, 121-124; *IBM* IX, 419-424 (briefly in *EBM* IX, 192f.); *Ceria-Ep* I, 561f., 590-593. In his petition to the conference, Don Bosco stated that, contrary to what "someone" had reported to the Roman Congregation, clerical students belonging to the Salesian Society had been successful in their studies, but that he meant to correct any deficiency.

[10] For Durando's observations, cf. Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 235 (Document 9) and *EBM* VI, 421-422. Lemoyne believes these observations to be those of 1860. However, in the Secret Archive of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (*ASCVVRR*, T 9.1) they are attached to the docket (*positio*) presented by Don Bosco in 1867. The Ms. is undated and signed by C. Andrea Astengo, for Archbishop Riccardi.

following general remarks can be made:

1. The Congregation of St. Francis de Sales can, and may one day receive the Church's approval. However, since the laws of the State and the prevailing secular spirit are against anything resembling a religious corporation, it is unlikely that the Congregation will be recognized as one and given corporate status.

On the other hand, according to these regulations or constitutions, the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales does own buildings and liquid assets and goods. But how can the Congregation own anything if the State does not recognize its corporate existence? How and by what means can it retain its possessions? Everything is in the Rev. Don Bosco's name. But what will happen to these goods after the death of any heir Don Bosco may appoint, especially as the Rector Major is to be changed every twelve years? This most important point must be well understood and explained either in these same regulations or in a separate constitution.

2. The main aim – or at least one of the aims – of the Congregation is the intellectual and moral formation of young aspirants to the priesthood. But the extent of the ordinary's authority in their regard is insufficiently explained, since nothing is said of the relations that must necessarily exist between Rector and Ordinary in matters of admission or dismissal of pupils, and of reports that should be made on their progress, conduct, etc. Nor is anything said of school curriculum, or of the method and the plan of religious formation. The articles are vague, leave much to be desired, and give no assurance for the present, much less for the future.

3. The constitutions mention boarding schools for poor youths and priestly candidates, and one gets the impression, to judge by wording of these articles, that the two groups receive the same kind of education and live as one community. Yet it is most important that priestly candidates be by themselves, have their own spiritual directors, and live by rules befitting their calling and the decorum of the priestly state. What can we expect of priestly candidates who have neither [spiritual] direction nor rules of their own, and who live mixed with a crowd of poor, uneducated lads whose only ambition is to learn a trade or handicraft? This is not just an impression one gets from the rules but *it is a reality and a fact of life.*

4. Since the members of this Congregation are bound only by triennial vows, and taking perpetual vows an option, they cannot be ordained unless they have the required ecclesiastical dowry, since ordination *titulo paupertatis* or *mensae communis* is reserved for congregations having perpetual vows. It can therefore happen that many youngsters will enter the Congregation only to receive a free education, be ordained, and then leave to become a problem for bishops and perhaps a scandal to the people.

5. The success or, more exactly, the future of a congregation, no matter what its kind, depends on its beginnings. If now in fact there is no separation between

young priestly candidates and the others, if there are no fixed norms for each group, if the Congregation has no distinct novitiate and a separate program of studies, and specific norms and rules by which to form its aspirants in the spirit of the institute, we cannot hope that it will either last or succeed.

6.The articles on the vows are inadequate, particularly in the matter of poverty, where doubts are bound to arise.

As for the Congregation's government, the rights and duties of the Rector Major, local superiors, councilors, prefects, etc. are not at all clear. It is hard to grasp the harmony, unity, the interdependence [of roles], the manner of administration, etc. [This is so perhaps] because the manner of electing the Rector Major and of the other superiors is not sufficiently clear.

[Signed]
Father Marcantonio Durando, Visitor of the Mission

Biographer Lemoyne after transcribing Fr. Durando's observations (which he believes to be those of 1860) adds the following comment:

Obviously, Father Durando's report was not too favorable. He rejected the rules as a whole, whereas the Archbishop [Fransoni] had found fault with only one point. But that was because the saintly and learned Vincentian did not grasp Don Bosco's spirit, mind, and work. It was not a question of a religious order but of a congregation that had to have a special structure to fit the needs of the times. Pius IX had recognized this […].[11]

7. Archbishop Riccardi's Action with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars

In response to Don Bosco's request Archbishop Riccardi did submit a brief letter of commendation;[12] but separately, in a detailed presentation addressed to Cardinal Angelo Quaglia, Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, he set forth his objections. He made it clear that his testimonial letter had been written in support of Don Bosco's original work, not of the Congregation as described in the present constitutions, which (he was sure) Rome would drastically emend.

[11] *EBM* VI, 422. For Archbishop Fransoni's attitude toward the constitutions of 1860 see preceding Chapter 3.

[12] Archbishop Riccardi to Don Bosco, March 7, 1848, *IBM* IX, 95-96 (omitted in *EBM*).

Then he made a number of telling comments. The Society should not be involved in the formation of seminarians; the constitutions make no mention of a course of studies whether for priestly candidates or for laymen; seminarians not belonging to the Society should be under their bishop's authority; the constitutions contain no provision for a novitiate, etc. And he ended with a very negative assessment:

> What can a congregation achieve when it is composed of such disparate elements lacking unity of purpose? The Salesian school in Turin [the Oratory] is already a chaotic mixture of apprentices, students, laymen, seminarians, and priests. The chaos will only increase as the Congregation extends its sphere of action.[13]

At this juncture while the constitution were being examined and Don Bosco was awating the verdict, Bishop Gastaldi wrote a second letter of commendation and support.[14] But the Archbishop's extensive critique had already made its mark in Rome.

8. Vatican Representative Tortone's Negative Report

Impressed and concerned, on July 28 the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, through its secretary, Archbishop Stanislaus Svegliati, asked the representative of the Holy See in Turin, Mgr. Gaetano Tortone, to conduct an independent investigation. His report to Secretary Svegliati was quite negative. He wrote among other things:

> The primary aim of Don Bosco's institution [the education of young people] has had admirable and encouraging success. It appears, however, that the same cannot be said of the intellectual and ecclesiastical formation of the young clerical students who belong to his institute. […] Such mediocre intellectual achievement is not surprising when one bears in mind that Don Bosco entrusts to these same clerical students such responsibilities as teaching and supervising the boys. These duties take up the time that they should be devoting to their studies.

[13] Archbishop Riccardi to the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (Card. Quaglia), March 14, 1868, in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 236-237; *IBM* IX, 96-100 (abridged in *EBM* IX, 53-55).

[14] Bishop Gastaldi to Cardinal Quaglia, May 25, 1868, *IBM* IX, 237-239; *EBM* IX, 127-128.

As for their priestly formation, he saw nothing but "obstacles in the way of their acquiring that ecclesiastical spirit and that good breeding that are so important a prerequisite for the priestly life." He criticized the "odd mixture of people living together at the Oratory without any order or discipline." And with reference to the Salesian seminarians he concluded: "Our good Don Bosco [...] has little interest in forming them to a genuine ecclesiastical spirit and to a consciousness of the dignity of the life they wish to embrace."[15]

9. Don Bosco's Petition Denied

The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars met in formal session to consider Don Bosco's petition: (1) "for the approval of the Institute and its constitutions"; (2) "for the faculty to issue dimissorials for the ordination of candidates, also by reason of community life [*titulo mensae communis*] in the case of candidates for major orders; (3) and finally for the faculty to dispense from triennial vows [...]." Consultor Savini examined the constitutions, and in a seven-point report, dated September 22, 1868, found the constitutions defective. He recommended a longer waiting period.[16] Don Bosco's petition was turned down.

Secretary Svegliati, with a sensitive personal letter (October 2, 1868) notified Don Bosco of the decision and pointed out "two principal articles" that needed attention. The article empowering the Rector Major to issue dimissorial letters was to be removed, and articles providing for a regular course of studies in the seminary, as demanded by the ordinary [Bishop Riccardi], were to be added.[17]

10. Approval of the Society (not of its Constitutions)

After a short period of doubt, Don Bosco decided to make another attempt and left for Rome in January 1869 for what turned out to be a protracted stay (January 15-March 2). In the meantime letters of commendation had been received in Rome, which did much to offset the bad reports. Bishop Gastaldi of Saluzzo among others expressed his support of the Salesian Congregation without any reservation. He wrote to Cardinal Quaglia:

[15] G. Tortone to S. Svegliati, August 6, 1868 in *EBM* IX, 170-173.

[16] Savini's report is given in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 237-238; cf. *EBM* IX, 170, 174.

[17] Stanislao Svegliati to Don Bosco, October 2, 1868 in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 239.

> [...] From the very start Don Bosco began to train his own clerical students and priests, imbuing them with his own spirit. With their help he successfully ran his institutions. Now these same students and priests are giving shape to a Society that will perpetuate a work already so well established. The undersigned [Gastaldi] has witnessed the birth and growth of this Society, has known and knows each individual member, and cannot but praise it and express his desire that it be established on a permanent basis. To this end the official approval of the Holy See, without which it could never attain stability, is urgently needed. Father John Bosco has already submitted the rules of his nascent Society to the Holy See, together with a petition for the favors and exemptions that are necessary to all religious societies. [...] As in the past, this Society will without a doubt continue to promote the Christian education of youth, a most urgent need in our times.[18]

In Rome Don Bosco had two papal audiences (January 23 and February 7) in which (as it appears from the language of the Decree) he must have pleaded passionately for approval.

Perhaps even to Don Bosco's surprise, on February 19 the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars decided to approve the Society and on March 1, 1869 it issued the Decree of Approval.

Don Bosco left Rome almost immediately, was back in Turin by March 5, and the following day lost no time in presenting the Decree to Archbishop Riccardi.

11. Tenor of the Decree

But the Decree set certain limits and was carefully drafted as to language. After referring to the founder's "insistent petitions" (*enixe postulavit*), it stated that the Holy Father had approved the Society, but not its constitutions. "These must first be emended in such a way that all of the [thirteen Savini-Svegliati] critical observations given earlier [in 1864 and repeated 1867] are complied with–with the exception of the fourth." This observation dealt with the faculty to issue dimissorial letters. With regard to this matter, "His Holiness, graciously responding (*benigne annuens*) to Father John Bosco's entreaties (*supplicationibus*), gives him as Superior General of the said Salesian Congregation, the faculty of issuing dimissorial letters for the tonsure and for

[18] Bp. Gastaldi to Card. Quaglia, January 8, 1869, *IBM* IX, 479, edited in part in *EBM* IX, 220.

the ordination of [Salesian] candidates." But in this regard the Decree clearly stated that, "this faculty is valid for ten years only, and concerns only those candidates who prior to their fourteenth year of age were admitted, or will be admitted, to any house of the aforementioned Congregation, and who have joined, or will in due time join, the same [...]."[19]

The language and style of the Decree lead one to suspect that the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars wished to distance itself from such a concession, which was contrary to Roman practice and which was attributable only to Pius IX's wish to accede to Don Bosco's persistent requests. By this concession, Don Bosco, as far as his own seminarians were concerned, was evading the discipline established by the Archbishop, as he would later foil Archbishop Gastaldi's policy, in a matter to which both gave high priority– the formation and ordination of priests. They had to put a good face on a disagreeable situation, but neither of them ever accepted the idea of special privileges. Gastaldi in particular would do all in his power to obstruct their exercise or to limit their application. Don Bosco then would counter by seeking more favors in Rome. He was so thoroughly convinced of the goodness and rightness of his objectives that, when faced with opposition from his diocesan bishop, he tried to circumvent it by appealing directly to Rome (to Pope Pius IX particularly), or to some other bishop.[20]

In early August 1869, five months after the Decree, Don Bosco sought and obtained directly from Pius IX the additional privilege of issuing dimissorials for eleven Salesians that had entered *after* the age of fourteen.[21]

12. Unfortunate Incidents

Archbishop Riccardi's reaction, as far as is known, has not been recorded; but in relating the "Albera episode" from this period, Lemoyne reports the Archbishop's bitter words: "Don Bosco is a proud man. He refuses obedience to his bishop."[22]

More serious, and potentially disastrous, was the incident of Joseph Ca-

[19] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 239f.; *EBM* IX, 257 (text of the decree).

[20] Cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 261-262.

[21] Don Bosco to Pius IX [before August 13, 1869], Motto, *Epistolario* III, 122-124.

[22] *Documenti* XI, 302 in *ASC* A060: Cronachette, Lemoyne-Doc, *FDBM* 1,014 D7, edited with some freedom in *EBM* IX, 297-298; cf. Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps*, 739.

gliero's "illicit" ordination. Certainly, it greatly aggravated an already strained relationship. In early November 1869, Deacon Joseph Cagliero applied for, but was denied, ordination by the Archbishop when he refused, according to the *Biographical Memoirs*, "to sign a promise to leave the Oratory." The point is also made that he had not yet taken vows, though he apparently intended to do so. Rebuffed, he quickly made his religious profession, got assigned to the house of Mirabello in the diocese of Casale and, on November 14, was ordained by Bishop Pietro Maria Ferrè. By letter of November 26, the Archbishop notified Don Bosco of his displeasure, as well as of the canonical penalties incurred by all who had a part in that "totally illicit ordination." Don Bosco's reply can only be described as a feeble groping for a semblance of justification; but it was a humble and apologetic letter, which must have mollified the Archbishop somewhat.[23] In a second letter, dated December 8, 1869 from Rome, the Archbishop rejected all of Don Bosco's explanations, but he forgave "everything" and did not take any action against him. By that time the First Vatican Council had begun, and he was involved in other concerns.[24]

[23] Don Bosco to Archbishop Riccardi, November 28, 1869, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 159-161.

[24] The story, with letters exchanged, is reported by Lemoyne in *EBM* IX, 46-48 and 356-364 (in chapters entitled, "Unending Vexations"); cf. Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps*, 739-740.

Chapter 5

LORENZO GASTALDI (1815-1883): BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Summary

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   3. Pre-Episcopal Period in the Turin Archdiocese
II. Lorenzo Gastaldi Bishop of Saluzzo (1867-1871)
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   11. Archbishop Gastaldi's Death

Based on the critical biography by Giuseppe Tuninetti, *Lorenzo Gastaldi, 1815-1883* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2 Vols, 1983 and 1988); Vol. I: *Teologo, pubblicista, rosminiano, vescovo di Saluzzo (1815-1871)*; Vol. II: *Arcivescovo di Torino (1871-1883).*

1. Introduction

Before proceeding with the story of the approval of Don Bosco's constitutions, a story that stretches into the tenure of Lorenzo Gastaldi as Archbishop of Turin, a somewhat extended biographical sketch seems to be in order for an understanding of the man and his actions.

This biographical sketch surveys, in the first place, Lorenzo Gastaldi's pre-episcopal period and the period of his tenure as bishop of Saluzzo (1867-1871). Up to this point Gastaldi was a staunch collaborator of Don

Bosco and his work and supported the approval of the Salesian Society and its constitutions with no reservations.

Bishop Gastaldi's appointment as Archbishop of Turin (1871) brought him face to face with a situation that called for the all-demanding and courageous dedication of the pastor-reformer bishop. Hence, this biographical survey goes on the describe the inspiration and controverted course of Gastaldi's pastoral ministry as Archbishop of Turin–from his appointment to his death in 1883. The new situation dictated also the critical evaluation of former relationships. This is the context of the conflict between Don Bosco and the Archbishop over the approval of the Salesian constitutions in the years 1872-1874 (to be discussed in the next Ch. 6).[1]

Lorenzo Gastaldi, in many ways a controversial figure, stands out as one of the most distinguished bishops of nineteenth century Italy, and one whose influence extended beyond the archdiocese of Turin. His was a multifaceted personality, rich in natural and acquired endowments. He was a man of many interests and diversified involvement–a scholar, a patriot, a theologian, a man devoted to prayer and asceticism, a priest fired with zeal, a bishop driven by deep commitment to the Church. The flaws under which he labored that were the cause of much suffering to him and to others, should not blind us to the reality of his outstanding achievements. The protracted struggle with Don Bosco over the constitutions and a variety of other issues is certainly not the only thing for which he should be remembered.

2. Lorenzo Gastaldi's Early Life and Pre-episcopal Period (1815-1867)

Family, Education, and Priesthood

Lorenzo Gastaldi was born in Turin on March 18, 1815 (some five months before Don Bosco), as the monarchies were being "restored" by the Congress of Vienna, following upon the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was the eldest of the thirteen children born to Bartolomeo Gastaldi and Margherita Volpato. His parents, both originally from the Chieri area, were people of good family and considerable fortune.[2]

[1] The conflict between Don Bosco and Archbishop Gastaldi did not end with the approval of the Salesian Constitutions in 1874. It grew more bitter and destructive over the years 1875-1882 (to be discussed in Vol. 6, Chs. 6&7).

[2] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 12-16.

Lawrence received his first education and his first moral and religious guidance outside his family, from the Jesuits at the *Collegio del Carmine*, also called *Collegio dei Nobili*, which he attended as a day student.

His father, a successful attorney, would have liked his oldest son to study law and follow him in that profession. Lawrence, however, chose the priestly vocation. In 1829, at the age of 14, he received the clerical habit and started his studies at the University of Turin as a non-resident seminarian.[3] He was awarded the diploma in philosophy and liberal arts in 1831, and the doctorate in theology in 1836. He was ordained a priest by Archbishop Luigi Fransoni in 1837, and the following year he was admitted to the university's theological faculty. While still in theological studies, he had been voted to membership in the *Accademia Solariana*, one of several learned societies in the city, where scholars met to discuss the relevant religious, social, and political questions of the day.[4]

The teaching of dogmatic theology at the university was Thomistic at the time; that of moral theology was rigorist-probabiliorist (based principally on the works of Antonio Alasia); and that of canon law and ecclesiology, jurisdictionalist in orientation. Such was laureate Gastaldi's position in these fields, a stance which explains his enduring opposition to the Probabilism of Alphonsus de' Liguori, the Jesuits, the *Amicizie*, and the *Convitto Ecclesiastico*. It would also explain the fact that in his doctoral dissertation he defended the infallibility of the Church without reference to papal infallibility.[5]

[3] As dicussed in an earlier volume, the non-resident seminary (*chiericato esterno*) was an institution for the training of candidates to the priesthood that did not require residence at a seminary. It was popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in the dioceses of the Kingdom of Sardinia and throughout Italy. Many candidates availed themselves of it, especially in the city of Turin. The non-resident seminarians would live at home or in lodgings and attend lectures either at the seminary or at the university. They would belong to one of three "clerical communities" established at designated parishes in Turin, where they met as scheduled for prayer and where they would receive formation and direction. It is believed that this practice was responsible for the poor education and spiritual formation of the clergy in Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This was obviously not universally true, and certainly not in Gastaldi's case. Most of the Piedmontese bishops at the time had studied for the priesthood by attending the university as non-resident seminarians.

[4] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 16-23.

[5] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 23-36. For these terms and positions, see our earlier discussion is connection with the Pastoral Institute (*Convitto*) in Vol. 1, Chs 16 and 17; also Arthur Lenti, "The *Convitto Ecclesiastico*–Where One Learnt to be a Priest," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 3:1 (1992) 39-77, esp., 40-54, and notes 6, 7, and 10.

But it was not long before Father Gastaldi came under the influence of the philosopher-theologian Antonio Rosmini-Serbati, whose doctrines had a following also among some of the university professors. In the conflict between the Probabilism of St. Alphonsus de' Liguori and the prevalent Probabiliorism, Rosmini indicated a third ("conciliating") way. First, with respect to original sin, he distinguished between the sin (*peccatum*) and the fault (*culpa*). Secondly, with respect to the moral law, he made a distinction between the natural law and the positive law; he allowed a probabilist solution in cases of doubt within the field of the latter, not within the field of the former.

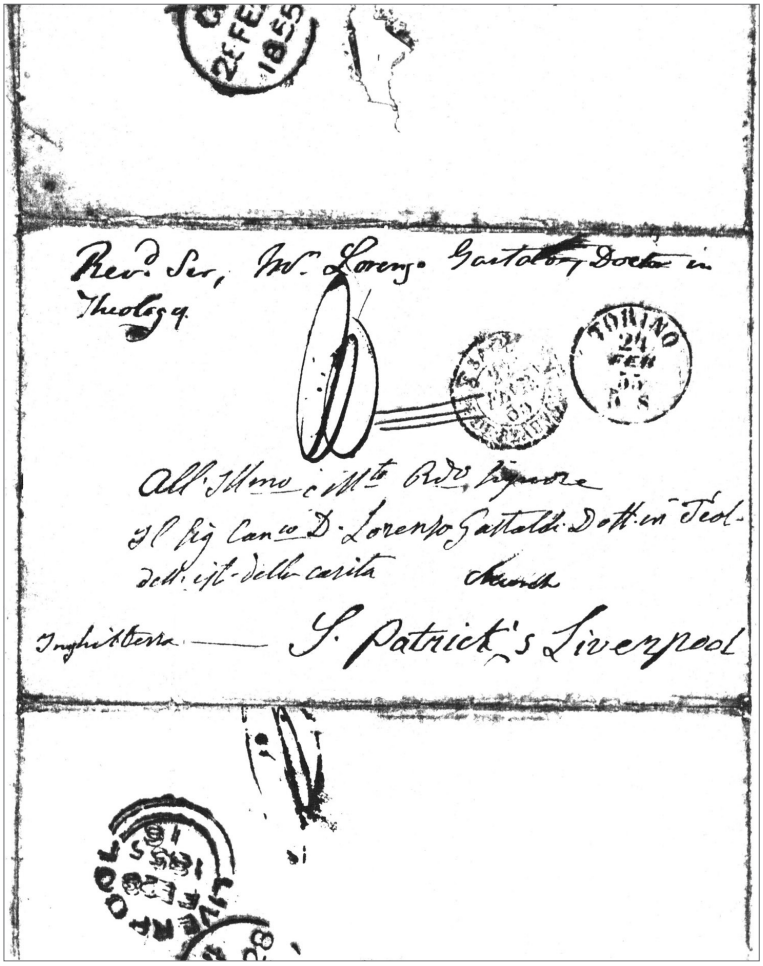
In 1841 Father Gastaldi (by this time a canon of the church of the Holy Trinity) took an active part in the Rosminian controversy, in defense of the philosopher when the latter was attacked for his *Treatise on Moral Conscience*. In 1842 he began to correspond with Rosmini, whose philosophy was exerting an increasing influence on him. He spoke of the light obtained from Rosmini's writings, and expressed the hope that the master's work would bring about a renewal in Catholic philosophy and theology–the desired effect being a deeper and more professional education of the clergy. This would always remain Gastaldi's overriding concern. By 1844 Father Gastaldi was discussing religious life with Rosmini, an option that the founder of the Institute of Charity encouraged.[6]

Then came the liberal revolution of 1848, and with it a plethora of liberal newspapers, increasingly anticlerical, and (in counterpart) a number of Catholic newspapers, at first generally conciliatory in orientation. Father Gastaldi, even while considering following a religious vocation, caught the patriotic spirit and espoused the neo-Guelf doctrine of the day, of which Rosmini (with Vincenzo Gioberti) was an ardent proponent.[7]

He was thus drawn into the political arena. From July 1848 to September 1849, aided by collaborators chiefly of Rosminian persuasion, he published a paper called *Il Conciliatore Torinese*, first as a biweekly, then as a triweekly. As principal contributor, Father Gastaldi wrote in defense of Rosmini's philosophical-theological system, and of his work, *Of the Five Wounds of the*

[6] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 37-52.

[7] "Guelf" and "Ghibelline" are medieval terms designating respectively partisans of the Pope and of the Holy Roman [German] Emperor in their long struggle. In the earliest period of the liberal revolution and of the unification of Italy, the term "neo-Guelf" was applied to a Catholic patriot who conceived of the unity of Italy as of a federation under the presidency of the pope.



9 – Don Bosco's letter (dated Turin, February 23, 1855)
to Father Lorenzo Gastaldi, S.T.D., in Liverpool at the time

Church.[8] In this connection, he argued for a new approach to the education and formation of the clergy. On a strictly political line, while defending the Pope's temporal power, he supported the monarchy, the new political institutions, and Italian independence. He expressed critical but balanced views on the laws establishing an a-confessional state and liberalizing education. But

[8] For this work of Rosmini see below.

the establishment of the Mazzinian Roman Republic that forced Pope Pius IX to flee the city swung Catholic sympathies away from the liberal cause, and therefore toward more conservative positions. Conservative Catholic dailies, such as *L'Armonia*, began to dominate Catholic public opinion, thus forcing Father Gastaldi's paper out of business.[9]

Gastaldi never quite left behind the political ideas of the period of the *Conciliatore*, even when at his most ultramontane (or so represented). But his venture into journalism and its subsequent failure signaled the onset of a period of reflection and study, in fact of retreat. During this time he continued his work on a new edition of Antonio Alasia's *Compendium of Moral Theology*, tempering this author's probabiliorist positions with "Rosminian corrections." It was also a period of intense personal questioning, vocational discernment, and "conversion." In 1850 he resigned from the chapter of canons; and after having considered and decided against joining the Jesuits, he joined Rosmini's Institute of Charity in 1851–in spite of the fact that "it enjoyed neither the pope's nor the bishops' wholehearted sympathy."[10]

In Rosmini's Institute of Charity and Missionary Activity in England

After completing his novitiate in the Institute of Charity at Stresa, where he was in close contact with Father Antonio Rosmini Serbati, its founder, Father Gastaldi was assigned to England in 1853.

Since 1835, the Rosminians had been actively engaged in parish ministry and preaching in that country. English society at the time was undergoing profound transformations, after the publication of Karl Marx' Communist Manifesto (1848), and with the onset of a new phase of the industrial revolution. Equally remarkable was the religious transformation in progress. Roman Catholics were making a good recovery thanks to the decree of "Emancipation" of 1829. The diocesan Catholic hierarchy was restored in 1850. The Oxford Movement was reaching its zenith, and a second great wave of conversions to Roman Catholicism was in effect. But even more telling, from the social and religious points of view, was the migratory movement from Ireland

[9] Tuninetti. *Gastaldi* I, 53-88.

[10] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 89-96. Gastaldi remained a lifelong admirer of the Jesuits for their learning and religious discipline, but was frankly critical of their support of Alphonsian Probabilism and of their opposition to Rosmini.

to large English cities in consequence of the great famine (1845-1852). This was the context in which Father Gastaldi began his work as teacher, preacher, and pastor. He taught moral theology and other disciplines at St. Mary's Rosminian Seminary, Rugby, till 1856, while studying English intensively. Fluency in the language soon enabled him to engage in the ministry of preaching, in which he excelled, and which took him as far as Ireland and Scotland. In 1858 he was appointed rector of St. David's mission at Cardiff, for a large Irish immigrant community. Here he built what still remains the largest Catholic Church in the area, St. Peter's. All the while, Father Gastaldi kept in touch with political developments in Italy, and had occasion to express in print his disappointment with the policies of the liberal state.[11]

But there were problems. Educated to a life of personal freedom and self-sufficiency, unaccustomed to community life, authoritarian in manner, seeing his ambition to get ahead in the ranks of the Institute frustrated, and hence finding religious life a struggle, Father Gastaldi suffered periods of deep personal crisis. In 1855, after Father Rosmini's death, he had asked to be released from his vows, but later changed his mind and decided to continue in the Institute. In 1856 and 1857 he was allowed to return to Turin for fairly extended periods, to attend to family affairs as the firstborn.[12] In 1862, after a dispute with his superior over the organization of the Cardiff mission and several failed attempts by a third party to effect a reconciliation, and for an accumulation of other reasons, including ill health, he returned to Turin permanently. There he was released from his vows "for reasons of health," and, severing his ties with the Institute (but not with Rosminianism), he returned to the archdiocese.[13]

The biographer points out that the conflict between Father Gastaldi and his superior relating to the administration of the Cardiff mission and its strategy was only the final episode of a deep on-going crisis in the subject himself. The root cause of the "final solution" lay chiefly in Gastaldi's inability to fully espouse, perhaps even to understand, the type of religious consecration demanded by Rosmini.[14] Tuninetti writes:

[11] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 97-110.

[12] The Gastaldi family's property was valued at well over half-a-million pre-revolutionary lire. At the father's death in 1843, the administration of the property devolved on to the first born, Lawrence, until its division in 1864 [Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 15].

[13] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 110-122.

[14] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 121.

> The converging causes may be summarized as follows: the uncertain quality of his religious commitment with regard to obedience and poverty and his basic inability to accept community life due to an individualistic and authoritarian character. Added to these reasons were Gastaldi's pride and underlying contradictions and ambiguities in his personality. Finally, the asperity of the Cardiff conflict and lack of tact on the superior's part brought things to a head.[15]

Pre-Episcopal Period in the Turin Archdiocese

Five Years of Activity as Preacher and Writer

Having regained his new post as canon of the collegiate church of St. Lawrence, during the next five years (before his appointment as bishop), Father Gastaldi devoted most of his time to his family and to family matters, as well as to preaching. For this ministry, chiefly in the form of missions and spiritual retreats, he was sought from near and far. His preaching was now characterized, to a greater degree than before, by simplicity and by a pervasive concern for depth and relevance.[16]

He also devoted time to writing. During and after the English period, Father Gastaldi made significant contributions to Don Bosco's *Catholic Readings*. While writing in the popular vein as required by editorial policy, he nonetheless exercised considerable restraint and critical judgment. The following works are worthy of note: *Catechetical Instruction on Marriage* (1855); *The Life of St. Jean Marie Vianney* (1863); *On the Authority of the Roman Pontiff* (1864); *The Life of Father Giovanni Ignazio Vola* (1865); the *History of the Holy Martyrs of Turin* (1866).

In the biographies of the Cure d'Ars and of Father Vola, Rosmini's influence is evident in his depiction of the priest primarily as the man of God, pursuing holiness through ascetical practice and the spiritual life. In this regard, at this time, one may note on Gastaldi's part an almost total disengagement from the social and political issues (in which he had earlier taken such great interest) and an increasing interest in the problems of the clergy.[17]

Again, under Rosminian influence, a development took place also in Gastaldi's ecclesiology, in an ultramontane direction. From the late fifties on, in

[15] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 122.
[16] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 123-124, 135-138.
[17] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 124-129.

letters and other writings, such as the just mentioned *On the Authority of the Roman Pontiff*, he expressly upheld the centrality of the papal magisterium and papal infallibility.[18]

Father Gastaldi and Don Bosco[19]

Besides contributing to the *Catholic Readings*, as noted above, Father Gastaldi, now reestablished in Turin, was keen on resuming his good relations with Don Bosco, for he had earlier been one of the priests who helped Don Bosco with the oratory at Valdocco. He had made himself available for confessions, the teaching of catechism and preaching, especially on Sunday afternoons.[20] In 1848, Canon Gastaldi had headed a committee that sought to unite, regulate, and give permanence to the oratory movement. Don Bosco insisted on his own independence, however, but the effort showed the canon's concern.[21] In spite of such failure, Canon Gastaldi continued to assist Don Bosco, even financially.

When the canon entered the Institute of Charity in 1853, he asked his mother to look after Don Bosco's boys as she would her own children. Margherita Gastaldi, as one of the "mothers," had been helping Don Bosco's mother Margaret at Valdocco since 1848. When Mamma Margaret died in 1856, Mrs. Gastaldi took over the leadership of the "mothers" and continued her charitable work till 1867, at which time she followed her son on his appointment as bishop of Saluzzo. A daughter and a niece of hers took her place and helped till 1877.[22]

Father Gastaldi had been generous with financial help on a number of occasions. When leaving for England in 1853, he made a secret will, leaving to the superior of the Oratory, in the event of his own death, the not inconspicuous sum of 70,000 lire. Throughout the Rosminian period Don Bosco was close to Father Gastaldi's family.

[18] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 129-132.

[19] It appears that Father Gastaldi and Don Bosco had first met in Chieri on February 17, 1841, across the examination table. On that occasion subdeacon John Bosco sought to bluff his way through a certain question posed by Father Gastaldi by creating a non-existent canon of the Council of Trent. The ruse did not succeed (cf. *EBM* I, 382).

[20] *EBM* III, 80.

[21] *EBM* III, 320f.

[22] *Memoirs of the Oratory*, 297; Cf. *EBM* II, 414; III, 178-179 (*his* sister, not her sister!); IV, 99.

During Father Gastaldi's furloughs of 1856 and 1857 (Dominic Savio had visions of the conversion of England at this time!), and after his definitive return from that mission in 1862, he intensified his activity on behalf of the Oratory to an even greater degree, especially through preaching. He preached the first spiritual retreat for Salesians at Trofarello in 1864. While the church of Mary Help of Christians was under construction, he made financial contributions. He spoke at the laying of the first stone in 1863; and in 1868 (as bishop of Saluzzo) he was the principal guest speaker during the solemn dedication octave.[23]

3. Lorenzo Gastaldi Bishop of Saluzzo (1867-1871)

The confrontation between the Italian government and the Holy See resulted in many diocesan vacancies. Turin had been vacant since the death of exiled Archbishop Luigi Fransoni in 1862; Saluzzo, since the death of Bishop Giovanni A. Gianotti in 1863. Vacancies began to be filled in 1867, and Don Bosco's contribution in this regard is to be noted. At Pius IX's request, Don Bosco submitted a list of names of Piedmontese priests for appointment as bishops, and Gastaldi's topped the list.[24]

The Man and the Priest

Father Gastaldi appeared well qualified for an episcopal career. His had been a life lived to the full amid the most varied experiences: scholarly endeavors, priestly ministry, religious controversy, political involvement, writing, the challenge of a major philosopher and theologian (Rosmini), religious life, the English mission–a series of successes, failures and crises. Moreover, as already noted, after his doctoral studies he had progressed to a personal

[23] *EBM* VII, 372, 394; VIII, 318; IX, 125-238. For all the above, cf. also Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 132-135.

[24] *EBM* VIII, 279; cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 145, note 2, and more recently and critically, Francesco Motto, "L'azione mediatrice di Don Bosco nella questione delle sedi vescovili vacanti dal 1858 alla morte di Pio IX (1878)," in *Don Bosco nella Chiesa a servizio dell'umanità. Studi e testimonianze* (ed. by Pietro Braido. Istituto Storico Salesiano, Roma, Studi 5. Roma: LAS, 1987 [251-328]), 283-299, esp. 291-294. [Hereafter, Motto, *L'azione*]. Cf. also Vol. 5, Ch. 4 of this series.

synthesis, uniting Piedmontese theology and Rosminian thought. It was the latter which was responsible for Gastaldi's modified Probabiliorism and for his progress toward Ultramontanism. Rosmini's ascetic and spiritual program as expounded in his *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, even if assimilated only in part, was responsible for shaping Gastaldi's spirituality. And Rosmini's *Of the Five Wounds of the Holy Church* helped him formulate a doctrine of the Church's present need, and a conception of the role of the bishop in the modern Church.

This is the background that conferred episcopal stature on Father Gastaldi. During the years of reflection, following his withdrawal from the Institute of Charity, his character and personality seemed to settle, solidify and come to maturity in preparation, as it were, for the episcopal ministry. He was indeed a worthy candidate. But reasons of personal friendship also were a strong motivation behind Don Bosco's decision to place Gastaldi's name on his list of nominees.

On March 27, 1867 Canon Gastaldi was named bishop of Saluzzo. He was ordained on June 2 in the church of St. Lawrence by the recently appointed Archbishop of Turin, Alessandro Ottaviano Riccardi dei Conti di Netro. On June 9 he entered his See.[25]

Gastaldi's Ministry as Bishop of Saluzzo

The Setting

Saluzzo, situated some thirty-five miles south of Turin, in the province of Cuneo, was at the time a city of some 16,000 inhabitants. The diocesan territory surrounding it, lying in the alpine foothills and valleys, sustained a population of some 140,000 people. They were largely engaged in agriculture, partly in sheep herding, and very little in industry. The area was poor, and the economy generally depressed, a depression made worse by the unstable conditions in Italy at the time. The priests directly engaged in care of souls in the 91 parishes numbered 138, and the people's religious practice was generally satisfactory though in great need of religious instruction.[26]

Bishop Gastaldi's greatest concern was the education and formation of the clergy. He wanted priests who were outstanding in holiness and learn-

[25] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 145-146.
[26] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 147-172.

ing, as well as attuned and equal to the challenges of the times. As bishop he could at last try to implement some of the ideas he had been fighting for through the spoken and written word for years.

Since the government had denied him use of the episcopal palace, due to difficulties with the granting of the *Exequatur*, he had chosen to reside at the seminary. This enabled him to supervise personally the seminary program and the forty-five seminarians.[27]

The Pastoral Visitation

Undoubtedly, in his episcopal ministry Gastaldi aimed at exemplifying the ideal of the reformer-pastor bishop, as he understood the role. Tireless in his priestly work, and in the spoken and written word, he sought to bring about a genuine reform among the clergy and a renewal in the Christian life of the faithful throughout the diocese.

The two most important acts of his episcopal ministry during his brief tenure at Saluzzo were the pastoral visitation of each parish in the diocese, carried out during the years 1868 and 1869, and his participation at the First Vatican Council during 1869-70.

The content and format of the pastoral visitation made it clear that genuine reform and renewal were the bishop's immediate priorities, as well as the goals that would characterize his future administration. But, in its pastoral style, the visitation also revealed his limitations. Though inspired by a spirit of priestly service, his efforts to achieve full unity and control and to strengthen ecclesiastical discipline bore the stamp of a centralizing tendency aggravated by an unyielding character. His very pastoral charity and spirituality seemed far removed for the realities of life in that backwater that was the diocese of Saluzzo. Likewise, his austere asceticism tended to alienate his clergy's sympathy.[28]

The First Vatican Council

The forthcoming Council, first announced by Pius IX on June 29, 1867 to bishops (Gastaldi among them) gathered in Rome for the celebration of the

[27] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 178-182. The *Exequatur* was a government permit that empowered the bishop to repossess diocesan assets and revenues. (The *Placet*, on the other hand, was a similar document issued to a pastor with respect to the parish to which he was appointed.)

[28] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 185-188.

eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, and publicly proclaimed on June 29, 1868, dominated Gastaldi's whole Saluzzo period. From its inception, the bishop engaged in intense personal reflection on the Council and on the roles of pope and bishops. He gave frequent expression to these concerns in his preaching and writing. This was followed by preparatory meetings of the clergy and by surveys among the people.

Bishop Gastaldi departed for Rome on November 16, and was an active participant in the work of the Council from its first session on December 8, 1869.

The Piedmontese bishops were deeply divided, especially over the question of infallibility. Generally speaking, these opposing stances reflected different conceptions of Church order and canon law–the ultramontane and the Gallican in their various shades and degrees.

It appears that Bishop Gastaldi at first suffered through a period of uncertainty, and then for some time maintained an "independent" posture in the matter. But on January 23 (1870), in a letter to Cardinal Filippo De Angelis he declared his support of papal infallibility and its definition. But he also expressed his reservations as to the manner in which it was presented in the schema. He explained that he found it difficult to conceive of an infallible papal magisterium in isolation, apart from the bishops.

It seems, as Lemoyne relates, that it was through Don Bosco's efforts that Bishop Gastaldi set aside these reservations; therefore when the question was debated in general congregation, he was the first of the Piedmontese bishops to speak in favor of infallibility (May 30, 1870).[29]

New Pastoral Goals and Illness

Throughout that spring Bishop Gastaldi had not been well. Consequently, after a spiritual retreat with the Jesuits in Rome and an audience with Pius IX, in which he received assurances that his services to the Church would not

[29] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 189-211; *EBM* IX, 382-384.

As mentioned above, Gastaldi had been a supporter of papal infallibility as such as early as 1858. He was also a supporter of its definition. His uncertainty (if he indeed suffered a period of uncertainty) concerned not whether the pope was or was not infallible, nor whether the definition was or was not opportune or timely, but rather the manner in which it was expressed (without meaningful reference to the bishops' magisterium). Tuninetti [*ibid.* 198] believes that Lemoyne's statements should be interpreted in this light.

go unrewarded, he quit Rome at the end of July. A number of bishops did the same, since by this time the work of the Council seemed to be winding down. Then came the Italian occupation of Rome (September 20, 1870) and the Council's hasty adjournment *sine die* (October 20, 1870).

This development had the effect of widening the rift dividing the Piedmontese bishops, as they met in congress in November, a division now aggravated also by disagreements over the question of participation in political elections.

In spite of such controversies and poor health, through the first half of 1871, Bishop Gastaldi turned his renewed, vigorous attention to the pastoral care of his diocese and to the reform and renewal program initiated with his pastoral visitation. For this purpose he announced a diocesan synod to be held in early July. The synod, however, never took place. He fell gravely ill (of an unspecified illness), and had to take a leave of absence on that account. After convalescing through the summer, in September he returned to his diocese only to learn that he had been nominated Archbishop of Turin, the appointment being officially confirmed on October 27 (1871).[30]

4. Lorenzo Gastaldi Archbishop of Turin (1871-1883)

Part II of Gastaldi's biographical sketch is based on Vol. II of Tuninetti's biography of Gastaldi. See also *Sussidi* 2, 276-285.

Appointment

Archbishop Riccardi di Netro of Turin died on October 16, 1870. There followed a vacancy of nearly a year, due to the "state of war" existing between the Holy See and the Italian government after the taking of Rome, and the final dispossession of the Pope. Many other dioceses were vacant at the time, for the conflict situation interfered with the free appointment of bishops. Nevertheless, in late summer of 1871, Pius IX began to set in motion the process of nominations and appointments. In September Don Bosco was asked to act as intermediary in a private capacity. He had meanwhile submitted to the Pope a list of eighteen nominees to fill vacant sees in Piedmont and Liguria, and had specifically recommended the transfer of Bishop Gastaldi

[30] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* I, 212-215.

10 – Lorenzo Gastaldi (1815-1883), Bishop of Saluzzo (1867-1870) and Archbishop of Turin (1871-1883)

from Saluzzo to Turin. He had also suggested the nomination of Salvatore Magnasco for Genoa and of Giuseppe M. Sciandra for Acqui. Don Bosco had his wish, and he immediately notified Bishop Gastaldi. The official bull of nomination was delivered on September 23.[31]

[31] Cf. *EBM* X, 198-200 (183, 186-191, 197-208 for various phases of the mediation), and critically, Francesco Motto, "L'azione mediatrice" 308-315. [Hereafter, Motto, *L'azione*] At this point, Don Bosco's mediation was concerned only with bishops' nominations. Later, between 1872 and 1874, Don Bosco was to be actively engaged in the matter of the *Exequaturs*. Cf. also Vol. 5, Ch. 4 of this series.

Archbishop Gastaldi entered the See of Turin on November 26, 1871. For political reasons his entrance was in a less solemn and public form than had been originally planned. It was also marred by hostile manifestations and the fear of personal abuse by the populace. The new Archbishop was the object of hostile attacks from the secular press, and was received ambivalently, even if civilly, by the local authorities. The Catholic press, the clergy and the Catholic laity, generally speaking, were loud in his praises; but dissenting voices were heard even in these quarters.[32] After all, he was a well known and, in many ways, controversial figure. He had been no passive spectator in the religious and political events of the past quarter century.

Facing a Difficult Situation

Other factors combined to make the new Archbishop's position more difficult. In the first place, the economic situation was none too promising. The Turin archdiocese lay partly in the Po valley, and took in the surrounding foothill and mountain country. Poverty reigned in the mountains, which accounts for the sustained migratory movement to the cities. In the valley and in the foothills, agriculture (the prevailing occupation, with a large number of small proprietors) provided a better living; but it was already experiencing serious depression due to the inflow of cheaper imports. Piedmontese cities, Turin in particular, had been growing along the two related tracks of urban expansion and industrial development. But, according to the 1862 census for Turin, of 204,715 inhabitants, only some 78,000 were engaged in industries or crafts–related to the military, railroad construction, wood products, and food processing. Unlike cities like Milan, perhaps also because of the transfer of the capital after the unification of Italy, Turin would have to wait for decades for its industrial promise to be fulfilled. But, although one may not yet speak of the existence of an "industrial proletariat," the 1870s were characterized by a society in the process of transformation.[33]

Secondly, the Church in the diocese of Turin was facing a critical situation. The archdiocesan structures, such as the Archbishop's household and chancery, the chapters, the seminaries, the theological faculty, were left with-

[32] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 15-25. For Don Bosco's participation in this event and his subsequent illness at Varazze see *EBM* X, 122-130.

[33] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 31-34.

out resources by the secularization laws. The operation of the parishes was largely guaranteed. But only pastors and teachers had sure incomes; most of the remaining clergy, including associate parish priests, lived from hand to mouth.[34]

As for the religious situation, the Church of Turin was suffering from the general regression caused by the revolutionary movement, even if circumstantial religious practice, together with private devotion, was still the norm. Regarding pastoral care, the Church's religious life throughout the diocese was in a state of neglect, with harmful results for both clergy and people. In this regard, one should bear in mind that Bishop Gastaldi was taking over an archdiocese that for twenty years had been deprived of its pastor. Archbishop Fransoni's period of exile (1850-1862) had been followed by five years of vacancy (1862-1867). Archbishop Riccardi di Netro's short term (1867-1870) had been taken up in part with the Vatican Council, and for the most part was marred by ill health.[35]

The Struggle for the Exequatur

Archbishop Gastaldi's initial activity in Turin was rendered even more difficult by an additional problem, which he would have liked to see resolved immediately, but with which, by force of circumstances, he had to contend for some years. As was the case with all the bishops nominated in 1871, Gastaldi was neither permitted to take possession of the archiepiscopal palace nor allowed to repossess assets and revenues. As earlier in Saluzzo, he was forced to establish a temporary residence at the seminary, where he acted as rector, and where he lived until May 1874 with the help of an allowance from the Holy See. This state of affairs both hampered his ministry and deprived him of needed resources.

The Law of Guarantees passed by the Italian parliament on May 13, 1871, after the taking of Rome and the expropriation of papal territory, did indeed concede to the pope the right to appoint bishops; but, in line with the government's jurisdictionalist policy, the Law continued to reserve to the state the granting of the *Exequatur* and of the *Placet*. These permits, the *Exequatur* in particular, were to be issued to the bishop only upon submission of the

[34] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 34-41.
[35] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 41-49.

bull of nomination. Such a provision was flatly rejected by the Holy See. By injunction from the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Giovanni Antonelli, bishops were forbidden to request the *Exequatur* or to make any act of submission to the State authority. They were to enter their see and immediately challenge the State by some official act. Not only did such a *modus operandi* give rise to situations of conflict; it also deprived the bishop of a rightful financial base.

It was on the occasion of the pope's first appointments after the Law of Guarantees (1871), that Minister Giovanni Lanza sought Don Bosco's private mediation. Lanza's purpose would have been that of obtaining favorable nominations. But Don Bosco was then "retained" by the Holy See as a private mediator in the matter of the *Exequaturs*. The idea was to negotiate a formula that would make it possible for a bishop to enter into possession of diocesan assets without the humiliating procedure of submitting the nomination bull to the government. He was active in the matter between 1872 and 1874 (the very years when he was seeking the definitive approval of the Salesian constitutions). The outcome of these negotiations was important to every bishop, including Archbishop Gastaldi. Don Bosco's effort, however, ended in failure in spite of the government's willingness to reach a compromise, chiefly (so it seems) because of Cardinal Antonelli's intransigence, but also (so Don Bosco believed, according to the Biographical Memoirs) due to the baleful influence of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck who opposed any concession to the Church.[36]

Eventually, however, a practical, unofficial *modus operandi* was developed by which individual bishops requested the *Exequatur* indirectly–to which procedure the Holy See acquiesced. It consisted in exhibiting the nomination bull for the inspection of "clergy and people" in the sacristy of the cathedral, and allowing a notary public to make a copy for the authorities (!). This is how Gastaldi (with the added support of the local authority), finally, in May 1874, obtained the *Exequatur*.[37]

[36] Cf., e.g. *EBM* X, 241.

[37] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 51-58. For a detailed description of Don Bosco's mediating activity see *EBM* X, 208-245, and more critically, Francesco Motto, "La Mediazione di don Bosco fra la Santa Sede e Governo per la concessione degli Exequatur ai vescovi d'Italia (1872-1874)," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 6:1 (1987) 3-79. Throughout this whole period (1872-1874), when Don Bosco was trying to bring about a rapprochement between the government and the Holy See in the matter of the *Exequatur*, Archbishop Gastaldi, while no doubt interested, and perhaps even appreciative of his efforts, maintained nonetheless a certain independence

Gastaldi the Reformer-Pastor Bishop

Archbishop Gastaldi did not wait for the *Exequatur* to fall in place. No sooner was he established, than he inaugurated his pastoral program, guided by the understanding he had gained of what the role and task of a bishop should be.

Rosminian Influence

Earlier we discussed Rosminian influence on Gastaldi, and the fact that Rosmini's work, *Of the Five Wounds of the Holy Church*, published in 1846, was decisive in shaping that understanding. These wounds, Rosmini argues, are a legacy of medieval feudalism, and the Church needs to reform so it can regain its earlier purity. The first wound, the "Wound in the Left Hand," stands for the lack of unity between clergy and people in public worship. This condition has been created not only by the use of a dead language in the Curch's liturgical services, but also by inadequate and incompetent preaching and teaching on the part of the clergy. The latter failure is a consequence of the second wound, the "Wound in the Right Hand," which is the insufficient education and formation of the clergy. Such deplorable state in the Church is perpetuated by the third wound, the great "Wound in the Side." It is the wound of division among the bishops, and of their separation from one another and from their priests and people. The principal contributing cause of division has been the nomination of bishops by the civil power. This is the fourth wound, the "Wound in the Right Foot." Because of such interference, all too often bishops proved to be nothing but schemers and politicians, engrossed in secular affairs, and generally more devoted to the pursuit of their own interests than to the care of their flock. Historically the claim by the civil power to appoint bishops is traceable to the feudal period. It was the time when land grants held by the Church were fiefs of an overlord. In that system the bishops on whom the fiefs were bestowed were regarded as vassals. And

both from Don Bosco and from Rome. The *Exequatur* was ultimately granted on a different basis than that sought by Rome through Don Bosco's mediation. During those very years, Don Bosco and the Archbishop were locked in a serious struggle over the approval of the Salesian Constitutions (a struggle which Gastaldi carried beyond the approval of 1874 into the years during which Don Bosco was seeking exemption privileges). This, the first significant confrontation, will be described in the next chapter.

this is the fifth wound, the "Wound in the Left Foot." Rosmini then brought his reflections to a close in an additional chapter, bearing the significant title, "On the Election of Bishops by Clergy and People."[38]

Archbishop Gastaldi then believed in the necessity of structural, as well as spiritual reforms in the church, especially with regard to the formation of the clergy. This went along necessarily with a new conception of the centrality of the role and function of the local bishop, for this is the emphasis of Rosmini's book. The latter point was decisive for Gastaldi's conception and exercise of episcopal authority. Such an idea received support from Gastaldi's university education, as well as (from a different perspective) from Roman policy, which, in view of the attacks mounted by the liberal state, sought to strengthen the bishops' authority.

Gastaldi's Conception of Episcopal Office

Gastaldi brought to his new and difficult task a high concept of the episcopal dignity. In his first pastoral letter as bishop of Saluzzo, he had described the bishop as "a new Moses," as "holding the perfection of the priesthood," and called to a kind of "holiness more perfect than that of religious with vows." Bishops were "the successors of the Apostles, to whom Christ said, 'He who hears you hears me'." [Lk 10:16] In his first (rather restrained) pastoral letter as Archbishop, he asked for prayers that he might be worthy of "this office of father, teacher, judge, and leader."

His statements at the Vatican Council were even more explicit. When speaking in support of papal infallibility, Gastaldi expressed his reservations with respect to the doctrine's formulation, precisely because of a failure to relate it to the bishops' magisterium. In his comments on the *schemata*, *De Ecclesia* and *De Romano Pontifice*, he spoke of the bishops as collaborators of the pope in matters of faith (what we now call "collegiality"), gathered in ecumenical council not just as advisers but as judges *jure divino* in decrees and

[38] Antonio Rosmini, *Of the Five Wounds of the Holy Church*, tr. & ed. with an introduction by H.P. Liddon (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1883), *passim*. Rosmini had first published the work anonymously in 1832. But with the accession of Pope Pius IX, who had the reputation of being a "liberal," he thought that reforms could take place in the Church, and thus published the book in his own name. However, such a critical assessment of the situation (at once social, political, and religious in character) inevitably incurred the Church's censure. The book, together with another work of Rosmini, *The Constitution According to Social Justice*, published in 1848, was condemned.

definitions, and as having teaching authority in their own dioceses.

In speaking on the *schemata*, *De Episcopis* and *De vita et honestate Clericorum*, he stressed the necessity of the pastoral visitation, and of diocesan and national synods. A bishop's pastoral activity, he emphasized, should be modeled on that of the great bishops of antiquity, with *salus animarum* as the top priority. St. Charles Borromeo could well serve as the model of the post-Tridentine pastor bishop.[39]

Gastaldi's Personality and Character

In all this, Rosminian influence (stemming especially from *The Five Wounds*) is evident. Such understandings, however, were processed in a very personal way. Without a doubt, Gastaldi was a person of deep faith, spirituality, and piety; he was austere in personal habits and demeanor. Gifted with a keen intelligence and a strong will, he was dynamic, aggressive, and zealous in the ministry to the point of self-sacrifice. But, though generally self-reliant, he was not free of self-doubt, uncertainty, and restlessness; there was in him a tendency to seek compensation in feverish activity. He was conscious of his own gifts and merits to the point of haughtiness; and he often reacted strongly when slighted. Most damaging of all, just as Gastaldi never really appropriated Rosmini's ideas of religious consecration and spirituality, so also in his conception of the Church, unlike Rosmini, he never quite transcended the rigidly clerical-hierarchical-institutional model. All such traits of character and formation could not but be reflected in his pastoral style, the chief quality of which was a relentless and unyielding pursuit of stated reform goals.

To sum up: a person of outstanding qualities and tragic flaws–this was the man whom Don Bosco had recommended for the archiepiscopal See of St. Maximus.

5. Gastaldi's Collaborators

As indicated above, the new Archbishop's pastoral program would have to face serious problems, especially as it related to the Church and the clergy. The better to achieve his goals, Gastaldi put together a team of able collaborators. He brought with him from Saluzzo a dynamic, if controversial, private

[39] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 26-29.

secretary in the person of Canon Tommaso Chiuso, who was to figure prominently and adversely in the Bosco-Gastaldi conflict.[40] The experienced Canon Giuseppe Zappata was named vicar general.[41] Once granted the *Exequatur* and having been established in his own residence in 1874, the Archbishop appointed Giuseppe Soldati rector of the seminary, a young priest whom he had learned to appreciate when in residence there.[42] Later Archbishop Gastaldi installed as a key figure in his administration a bright young canon lawyer and theologian, Emanuele Colomiatti, to serve as diocesan fiscal attorney. Colomiatti was to be deeply involved in the Bosco-Gastaldi conflict at its most critical stages; and later, by his adverse testimony and action, he was to prove a redoubtable opponent in Don Bosco's process of beatification.[43] Archbishop Gastaldi often had recourse to advisers outside his official team, usually men of high qualifications. Two of these were particularly influential as counselors in spiritual matters: Father Felice Carpignano, the Archbishop's

[40] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 59-62. Tommaso Chiuso (1846-1904), as personal secretary, was very close to the Archbishop, who successively named him to the metropolitan chapter of canons and then appointed him archdiocesan chancellor. In these capacities, he was deeply involved in the Bosco-Gastaldi controversy, and was accused of having been its evil genius. Archbishop Gastaldi made him his universal heir. Later, to offset debts incurred by speculation in the stock market, the canon became embroiled in mismanagement of church property he had in trust and in embezzlement of funds. He would later be brought to trial, suspended and defrocked by Gastaldi's second successor, Archbishop Davide Riccardi.

[41] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 62-63. Giuseppe Zappata (1796-1883) had already served as vicar in the previous administration, and had practically governed the diocese since Archbishop Fransoni's death in 1862. Both loyal and independent, he was one of Gastaldi's most trusted advisers.

[42] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 64-68. Giuseppe Maria Soldati (or Soldà, 1839-1886), doctor in theology and, like his Archbishop, an austere and demanding pedagogue, was the chief agent of Gastaldi's seminary reforms. He had held the office of vice-rector of the seminary (appointed by Canon Zappata in 1863). He then served as rector until 1884, when he was removed by Gastaldi's successor, Cardinal Gaetano Alimonda. Soldati's perception of the inferior quality of Salesian priestly formation made him, like his Archbishop, a very hostile participant in the struggle over the approval of the Salesian Constitutions.

[43] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 64. Emanuele Colomiatti (1846-1928), a doctor in theology from Turin and a doctor in canon law from Rome, a professor of canon and international law in Turin, joined the Gastaldi chancery in 1875, and was formally named fiscal attorney in 1882, on the death of the incumbent. The fiscal attorney or lawyer was a bishop's counsel and procurator in legal questions arising within the territory. In 1881-82, Colomiatti conducted the Archbishop's legal action against Don Bosco and Father John Bonetti before the Congregation of the Council.

confessor, and Father Marcantonio Durando, Vincentian visitor or provincial, his most trusted adviser.[44]

It should be emphasized that Gastaldi put together a team of collaborators endowed with both experience and competence, and all (perhaps with one exception) of high repute. He did not simply look for yes-men who would do his bidding. The same may be said of the canonical body of advisers that formed the cathedral chapter of canons. Its diversity and its independence virtually guaranteed unbiased advice.[45]

6. Reform of Clergy and Church Life: Synods

As mentioned earlier, up to this point Gastaldi had not been in a position to put his ideas into execution. As Archbishop of Turin at the age of 56, even though not in the best of health, he dared to hope for the span of time necessary to turn those understandings into the reality of needed reforms.

Assessment of Church Life

In his first Report to the Holy See on the state of the diocese, presented in 1874 but reflecting the experiences of the first three years in office, Archbishop Gastaldi described a real situation and expressed real concerns. Speaking of pastors, he found that, while most of them were good and zealous priests, a number of otherwise good priests lacked any kind of pastoral concern. Then there were those who led worldly lives and "seemed to have lost even their faith." He had suspended one of them, but regretted that bishops lacked the canonical tools to remove pastors as need demanded.

With respect to the diocesan clergy at large–he had silenced some otherwise gifted priests who were spreading doctrines at variance with papal teachings; he had ordered others to wear the ecclesiastical garb under pain of suspension; he had reprimanded some for not celebrating Mass correctly; he had

[44] Felice Carpignano (1810-1888) was a priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Marcantonio Durando (1801-1880), the austere visitor (provincial) of the Priests of the Mission of St. Vincent de Paul, was for nearly forty years a major influence in the church of Turin. As discussed in the preceding Ch. 4, at the request, first of Archbishop Fransoni in 1860, and later of Archbishop Riccardi di Netro in 1867, Father Durando examined the Salesian Constitution, recording his critical observations regarding their provisions and spirit.

[45] For all the above cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 59-77.

tried in various ways to correct priests addicted to drinking or guilty of sexual misconduct. Some were found to be incorrigible, claiming that they never had a vocation. Gastaldi stated that his efforts had evoked accusations of undue severity from the clergy and personal attacks in the press. But he was determined to move forward, after the example of St. Charles Borromeo.

Religious (especially if priests) driven from their religious houses by the laws of suppression were a serious social and religious problem. The root cause of their malaise was the poor quality of their early formation, particularly in their novitiate. He expressed the hope that the Holy See would require all candidates to the priesthood, including exempt religious, to be examined by their bishop before ordination, as the Council of Trent prescribed. [46]

In assessing the religious life of six classes of people, he found that the nobility, and the peasantry remained in different ways the most attached to their religion. Merchants and tradesmen had turned anticlerical, but still largely attended church. The educated intellectuals and the moneyed middle class engaged in business and finance had lapsed almost entirely. Likewise, applying different criteria–people educated before the liberal revolution of 1848 generally still practiced their faith. Those educated between 1848 and the unification of Italy (1861) had to a considerable extent abandoned its practice. But those educated in the sixties and seventies had generally lost their faith. This was especially true of university students.

Archbishop Gastaldi reached the conclusion that reform of the clergy and restoration of ecclesiastical discipline had to have priority. Only then could Christian life be made to flourish among the people, and could programs for education and renewal be undertaken. Moreover, his pastoral strategy included the development of a new type of parish priest. True, the archdiocese had in the recent past produced such saintly priests as Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo, Giuseppe Cafasso, Don Bosco, Leonardo Murialdo, Carlo Faà di Bruno, Federico Albert, and others. But these were charismatic persons who transcended the current seminary model. Now, by a kind of shock treatment, he meant to put into effect reform programs that would produce holy, learned, totally dedicated priests. This goal dictated his point of attack.[47]

[46] At this point, Gastaldi makes a critical reference to the Salesian novitiate and to Don Bosco's way of forming his Salesians. Throughout the process of approval of the Salesian Constitutions (1872-1874) Gastaldi stated his opposition on these and other grounds in the most forceful terms (see Ch. 6 below).

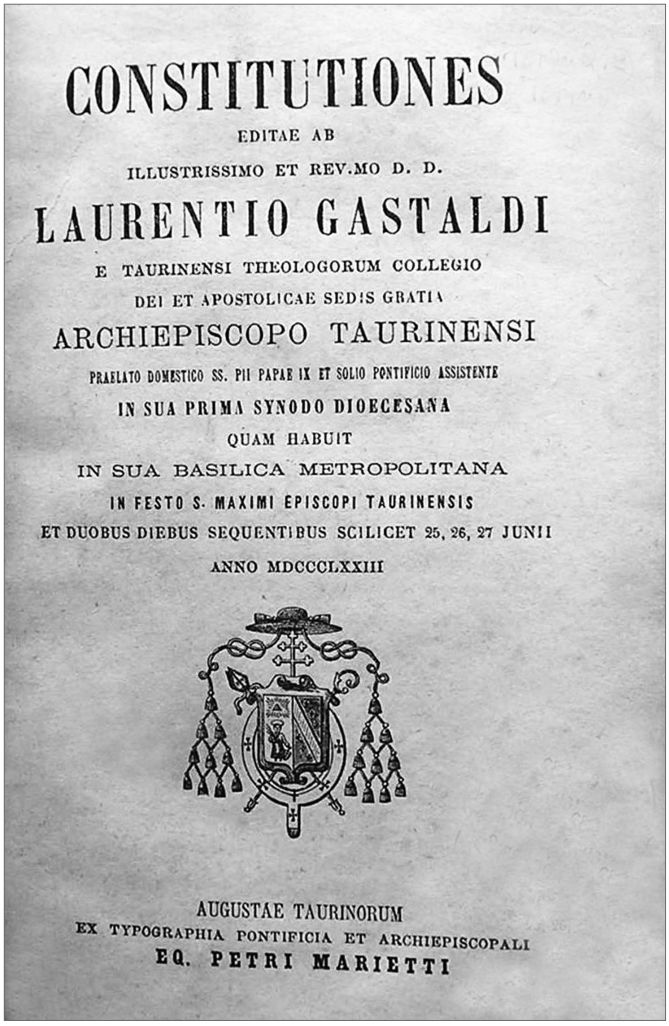
[47] For all the above, cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 79-85.

At Saluzzo Bishop Gastaldi had begun his term of office with an extended pastoral visitation, and only after the Vatican Council (at which he had upheld the necessity of episcopal councils and diocesan synods) did he turn his attention to a synod. Now, by contrast, he felt that diocesan synods would be the most effective instruments of reform and of government. The Archbishop then convoked the first diocesan synod for June 25-27, 1873. Although the Council of Trent had mandated such synods, none had been held in the archdiocese since 1788, and none in Piedmont since 1848. He convoked further synods in 1874 and 1875; and again (at three-year intervals) in 1878, and 1881. Other bishops in Piedmont followed Gastaldi's example. Gastaldi was convinced that after Church life and clergy discipline were put on a firm basis, a proper canonical visitation of the parishes could be undertaken with success. As it turned out, time ran out on him before he could complete such a visitation.

Synod of 1873

Among the Gastaldi synods, those of 1874 and 1878 were important; but that of 1873 was fundamental and pace setting. For this first synod, which was to serve also as a basis for future synods, the Archbishop drafted elaborate new statutes for the ordering and reform of all areas of Church life and discipline, to be discussed at the synod. He submitted them to a representative theological committee of fifteen, and to the cathedral chapter of canons for their comments and proposals. These two bodies generally sought to reduce the severity of the Archbishop's formulations–for example on such titles as: internal assent to the papal magisterium, with special reference to Pius IX's Encyclicals and the *Syllabus*; ecclesiastical censorship of publications by priests in the diocese; necessity of baptism and responsibility for children dying without it; absolution of sins reserved to the bishop; obligation on the part of the faithful to support seminary and clergy; the promise of obedience to the bishop made at ordination; etc. Only in some instances did Gastaldi accept their modifications. But one area of reform, and one in which he was determined from the start to effect a major change, dealt with the lifestyle, discipline and responsibilities of the clergy. On these issues he was adamant. After all, that was to be the real purpose of the synod.

Inevitably, the text of the statutes was leaked, and there followed a series of protests from various quarters of the clergy as well as vicious attacks on


CONSTITUTIONES
EDITAE AB
ILLUSTRISSIMO ET REV.MO D. D.
LAURENTIO GASTALDI
E TAURINENSI THEOLOGORUM COLLEGIO
DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA
ARCHIEPISCOPO TAURINENSI
PRAELATO DOMESTICO SS. PII PAPAE IX ET SOLIO PONTIFICIO ASSISTENTE
IN SUA PRIMA SYNODO DIOECESANA
QUAM HABUIT
IN SUA BASILICA METROPOLITANA
IN FESTO S. MAXIMI EPISCOPI TAURINENSIS
ET DUOBUS DIEBUS SEQUENTIBUS SCILICET 25, 26, 27 JUNII
ANNO MDCCCLXXIII
AUGUSTAE TAURINORUM
EX TYPOGRAPHIA PONTIFICIA ET ARCHIEPISCOPALI
EQ. PETRI MARIETTI

11 – Frontispiece of the published *Constitutiones* stemming from the first diocesan Synod convoked by Archbishop Lorenzo Gastaldi of Turin in 1873

the Archbishop by anticlerical newspapers in defense of the clergy (!). During the synod itself the reading of the statutes met with vociferous protests. After the synod, members of the clergy appealed to the Holy See; and on July 11, 1873, an anonymous brief was presented to the Congregation of the Council. The anonymous author not only decried the severity of the norms, calling for greater humanity and charity in regard both to the diocesan clergy

and to religious; he also attacked the Archbishop's basic pastoral policy at several points. A secret investigation by the Secretary of State through the Apostolic representative in Turin confirmed the substantial truth of the allegations. Hence, the Holy See then contacted Archbishop Gastaldi and issued a decree disqualifying some of the judges and examiners for being (as had been alleged, and as they were in reality) political "fellow travelers." The Archbishop in reply expressed his keen disappointment, rejected the decree as undermining his authority, and even spoke of resigning. But he acquiesced when the Rome yielded on the statutes themselves, which were already being printed.

This was Gastaldi's first clash with the Holy See. If, on the one hand, he was allowed to publish the synod's statutes, on the other, he suffered defeat in the matter of the judges and examiners, and more so in the fact that Rome's action implied disapproval of some of his pastoral policies. The synod, and the dialogue that preceded and accompanied it, also revealed that factions for or against the Archbishop's pastoral policy had been forming among the clergy.[48]

Synod of 1874

Opposition from among the clergy again reared its head in 1874. Relying on the Tridentine decrees and the example of St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop Gastaldi convoked a second synod for May 4, 1874. The purpose of this one-day meeting was to ascertain if the statutes of 1873 were being implemented.

Immediately the cathedral chapter of canons, to whom Gastaldi had sent the agenda and some additional articles, protested not having been given the statutes for review before publication. The canons then proceeded to examine each article, making substantial alterations, noting that the first synod had not been well received, and that the many penalties attached or threatened had been strongly resented.

The Archbishop, surprised and disappointed, countered by reaffirming the deliberations of the synod, and by publishing a revised list of judges and examiners (including some names vetoed by Rome!).

[48] For the above, cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 85-107.

Synod of 1878

The fourth synod (convoked for November 5, 1878) was noteworthy for the Archbishop's addresses and the important pastoral concerns expressed in them: the primacy of preaching, the necessity of festive oratories, the importance of unity between clergy and bishop. This synod also added articles to the statutes that dealt chiefly with theological conferences and preaching. (All priests, except pastors, had to submit to the Archbishop a sample sermon!) Gastaldi also presented revised lists of judges and examiners. Again, among the former he had named four who had been proscribed by Rome earlier; among the latter he had named Don Bosco.[49]

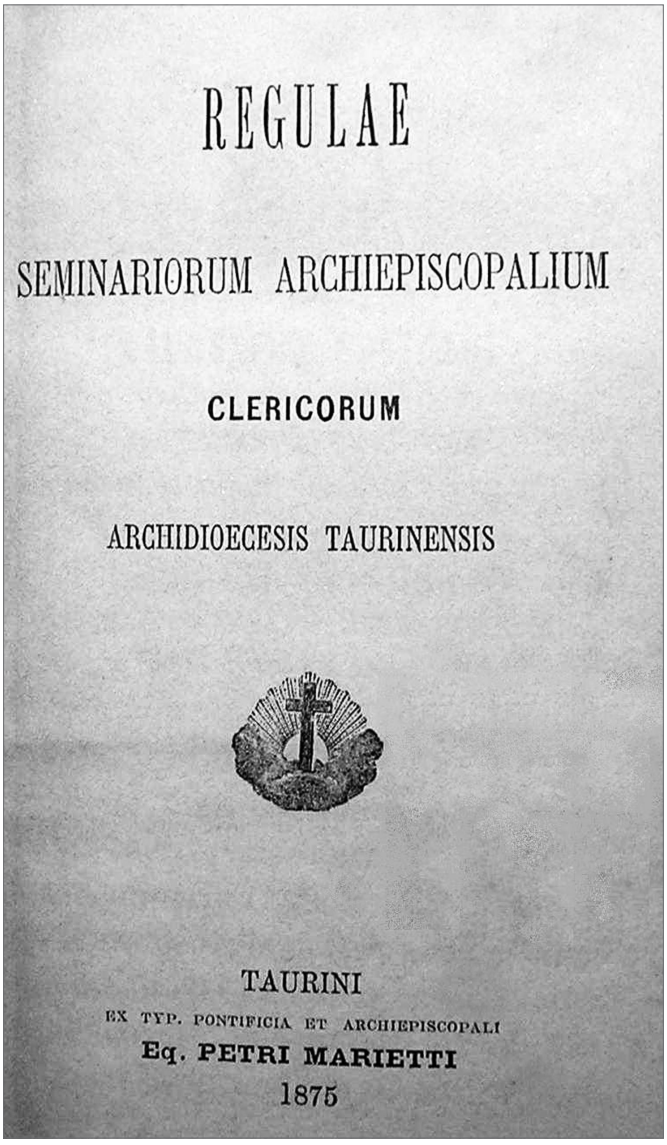
Liturgical Calendars

Every year, from 1872 to 1883 Archbishop Gastaldi published a liturgical calendar, which included a "Letter to the Clergy," as well as directives and decrees. It was the vehicle by which he instructed his priests, gave them directions for their pastoral activity, sought to control abuses and lack of discipline, and specified how the synodal statutes should be observed.

In conclusion, it can be said that through the synods and the liturgical calendars Archbishop Gastaldi asserted his concept of the bishop's role, and his right to act accordingly. He expressed his idea of what a priest should be like, and demonstrated compelling concern for priestly holiness and asceticism, and for a pastoral dedication expressing the essentially religious nature of the priestly vocation. A clerical, hierarchic ecclesiology (that of Trent and of Vatican I) supported Gastaldi's actions and pronouncements, as well as his frequent recourse to canon law, to Tridentine disciplinary norms, and to ecclesiastical sanctions. And remarkably, he made no attempt to address the transformations occurring in society and the need to develop appropriate pastoral strategies.[50]

[49] In his address, Archbishop Gastaldi referred to factions among the clergy, and particularly to Don Bosco's "insubordination." The conflict between the Archbishop and Don Bosco had progressively increased in hostility since 1874, and by 1878 a definitive breach between the two seemed inevitable. How then is one to explain the honor conferred on Don Bosco by the Archbishop? Was it a concession, an attempt at a rapprochement? Or was it simply recognition of merit, nobly overlooking personal disagreements?

[50] For all the above cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 79-114.


REGULAE

SEMINARIORUM ARCHIEPISCOPALIUM

CLERICORUM

ARCHIDIOECESIS TAURINENSIS

TAURINI

EX TYP. PONTIFICIA ET ARCHIEPISCOPALI

Eq. PETRI MARIETTI

1875

12 – Frontispiece of the Rules for Turin's Diocesan Seminary published by Archbishop Lorenzo Gastaldi in 1875

7. Reform of Structures for the Education and Formation of the Clergy

The School of Theology and the Theological Faculty

It is a matter of record that during the eighteenth and the nineteenth century Catholic culture, religious and ecclesiastical studies, and in particular the theological formation of the clergy, had been in steady decline in Italy, Piedmont included–a situation that was now aggravated by the secular laws passed after the liberal revolution (1848) and the unification of Italy (1861). School reforms, beginning with the Boncompagni Law of 1848, had removed the theological faculty at the University of Turin from the bishops' control. This action marked "the beginning of the end." The school of theology and its faculty were caught in a stranglehold, so to speak, and it became increasingly difficult to maintain enrollment and standards, whether academic or "Catholic." By decree of January 26, 1873, the government closed the school of theology altogether. The seminaries, on the other hand, did not offer graduate degrees in any branch of ecclesiastical study, and Archbishop Gastaldi regarded such lack as one of the chief causes for the insufficient education of the clergy. After all, most priests attended one of the diocesan seminaries.

The Archbishop was quick to take action and ask the Holy See for permission to transfer the school of theology to the seminary, with the power to grant the doctoral degree. By decree of February 24, 1874, the transfer was granted. The new statutes allowed the Archbishop to assemble a new faculty, and to place theological studies on a new and firmer basis.

The Archbishop had requested also the establishment of a faculty of canon law, but did not obtain it. However, the negotiations in the matter continued and came to a favorable conclusion in 1883, a month before the Archbishop's death.

To foster the study of Church history, in 1872 Archbishop Gastaldi had developed a plan for the establishment of an Academy. It became a reality on January 28, 1874 under the title of the Sub-Alpine Academy of Church History. In the list of the founding members we find also Don Bosco's name.[51]

[51] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 115-143. Archbishop Gastaldi asked Don Bosco to become a member of the Academy in December 1872. In the founding document of January 28, 1874, Don Bosco is listed third among the 10 founding members. According to the biographer, Don Bosco's diploma of appointment was signed on the same date, but "for some reason"

Reform of Diocesan Seminaries

Archbishop Gastaldi, like many of his brother bishops, had never attended a seminary, but had studied for the priesthood as a non-resident seminarian, living at home and attending the university. A number of factors converged in shaping his new understanding of the seminary and its role: his ultramontane conversion, his espousal of Rosmini's doctrine of the Five Wounds with regard to education and formation of the clergy, his experience at the First Vatican Council and, finally his recourse to the Council of Trent and to the example of St. Charles Borromeo for inspiration in his episcopal ministry. The experience of the first two synods conferred a sense of urgency on Gastaldi's plan for seminary reform.

At the time of Gastaldi's appointment, the archdiocese operated four seminaries. The Turin seminary alone offered the five-year theological course (as well as the doctoral program from 1874 on). The Chieri seminary alone offered the two-year course in philosophy, together with a five-year non-graduate theological program. Bra and Giaveno were junior seminaries. Of the four, the first and the last were most in need of reform both as to studies and discipline. Obviously the Turin theological seminary had to have priority.

For the first three years Archbishop Gastaldi had resided at the seminary, and had taken personal direction of it. Out of this experience, with the collaboration of Father Soldati, first vice-rector then rector, he drafted new statutes, which were published in September 1875. They were quickly adapted to the other seminaries, and they remained the *magna charta* of clergy formation in the Turin archdiocese until the Second Vatican Council. By these statutes the seminary, conceived as a religious house (*"ad instar domus religiosae"*), acquired a monastic character; it was a place of retreat in which the seminarian could pursue his intellectual and spiritual formation in depth, away from "the world." Priestly holiness and priestly learning were emphasized in the statutes

was not delivered till after the Archbishop's death in 1883. [*EBM* X, 376; Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 143]. It will be recalled that from 1872 to 1874 Don Bosco and the Archbishop were already at loggerheads over the approval of the Salesian Constitutions and related matters. Hence, one may wonder about the significance of the Archbishop's action. Again, was this a conciliatory gesture, or recognition of merit? Church history was a predilection of Don Bosco; he had authored a survey of Church history (1845) and had written a series of lives of the popes. But he could not be regarded as a scholar in the field.

as the all-important goals of the seminary. The virtues inculcated were: faith, hope, charity, humility, obedience, chastity, modesty, devotion, temperance and mortification. The program of studies was expanded and made more demanding. The seminary syllabus also acquired a Rosminian orientation both in philosophy and in theology, which fact drew a reprimand from the Roman congregation.[52] To encourage good priestly vocations, scholarships and grants-in-aid were given to many poor students. Summer residences in the hill country with hermitages were provided for each seminary.[53]

Reform of the Convitto Ecclesiastico *and of the Teaching of Moral Theology*[54]

The *Convitto Ecclesiastico* (Pastoral Institute for Priests) was founded by Father Luigi Guala (with Father Pio Brunone Lanteri) and flourished under the founder and even more so under Father Joseph Cafasso. The orientation of the teaching of moral theology and pastoral practice at the *Convitto* was thoroughly Alphonsian, that is to say, [equi-]probabilist. This alone would set it at variance with the teaching of the school of theology at the university and at the diocesan seminaries. It would also set it at variance with the Archbishop's personal convictions, even after his Rosminian and ultramontane conversion. But he decided to look into the affairs of the Pastoral Institute for a further reason. Back in the early fifties, Father Cafasso had named Father Giovanni Battista Bertagna as his assistant lecturer in moral theology. After Father Cafasso's death in 1860, Father Bertagna had become the *Convitto*'s principal lecturer, though not its rector.[55]

[52] Father Antonio Rosmini Serbati was *persona non grata* in Rome, and his orthodoxy was suspect, at a time when Thomistic philosophy and theology were experiencing an official revival.

[53] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 145-163. The Archbishop's concern for a deeper intellectual and spiritual priestly formation explains his objections to the way in which Don Bosco formed his priests. It also explains his demands: that Salesian candidates should attend the seminary and be examined by the bishop before ordination, and that the Salesian Constitutions should provide specifically for a regular novitiate and a regular course of studies. The severity of the Gastaldi-Soldati seminary also explains why a seminarian would wish to "defect" to Don Bosco and do "his studies" at the Oratory, a situation that angered and frightened the Archbishop [Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 270, note 50].

[54] For the story, orientation, character and "men" of the Pastoral Institute (which Don Bosco attended in 1841-1844) see the earlier Vol. 1, Chs 16 and 17.

[55] Giovanni Battista Bertagna (1828-1905), a native of Castelnuovo, attended the semi-

But it was in 1873 that the Pastoral Institute and Father Bertagna came under Archbishop Gastaldi's critical scrutiny. His quarrel was not only with the kind of moral theology that was being taught, but also and particularly with Father Bertagna. The accusation leveled at Father Bertagna was that his course of moral theology had deteriorated into dry casuistry. Whether this was true or not is debatable. The Archbishop may or may not have given credence to the rumors; but in any case, the accusations of laxity that circulated and had come to his attention had to be investigated. The investigation dragged on for over two years, and left behind a considerable amount of documentation, chiefly in the form of letters from the Archbishop. In these statements, Gastaldi emphasized the bishop's magisterium–his right to exercise it in the fields of moral theology and pastoral practice, and to choose, from among those opinions that are free of censure, that which he deems most conducive to the spiritual good of his flock.

In September 1876 Father Bertagna was relieved of all duties at the Pastoral Institute. He obeyed without a protest and retired quietly to his hometown of Castelnuovo. The event was given little publicity in the press, but it had the effect of widening the rift already dividing the clergy. A period of crisis followed which led to the closing of the Pastoral Institute for the years 1878-1882, amid protests and recriminations.

But the Pastoral Institute and what it stood for had become a fact of life in the Archdiocese, especially among the younger clergy, many of whom had attended the two-year course in moral and pastoral theology there. The person that made the resurgence of that institution possible, in such a way that the Archbishop's fears were allayed while the Cafasso tradition was carried forward, was Father Giuseppe Allamano.[56]

nary in Turin, earned his doctorate in theology at the university in 1850, and was ordained in 1851. He then enrolled in the *Convitto*, where he eventually succeeded Father Cafasso in the chair of moral theology, though not in the rectorate. With a reputation of taking Probabilism to extremes, he was dismissed by Archbishop Gastaldi. He subsequently accepted the appointment of professor of moral theology and vicar general in the diocese of Asti. In 1884, after Archbishop Gastaldi's death, he was named auxiliary bishop of Turin under Cardinal Gaetano Alimonda. Dismissed by Cardinal Alimonda's successor, Archbishop Davide Riccardi, he was later named to the post of Vicar General by Cardinal Agostino Richelmy. An early helper of Don Bosco at the Oratory, he remained his lifelong friend and presided at his funeral.

[56] [Blessed] Giuseppe Allamano (1851-1926), was Father Cafasso's nephew, and like him and Father Bertagna a native of Castelnuovo. He attended Don Bosco's Oratory, entered the

Father Allamano enjoyed the Archbishop's trust; and as rector of the church of the *Consolata*, in 1882, he negotiated with the Archbishop the re-opening of the Pastoral Institute. But Tuninetti writes:

> [Archbishop Gastaldi] had been displeased with Dr. Bertagna's teaching [...], but perhaps he was also unhappy with the whole Guala-Cafasso orientation [of the Pastoral Institute]. In other words, he had reservations about that very tradition, and his preferred option would have been for a continuance of the Piedmontese [moral] theology of the kind that had found expression in his own edition of the Alasia-Stuardi [probabiliorist] compendium [...] He may therefore have believed that his man Allamano would be the agent of the reform–perhaps not the reform he himself yearned for, but (as the six-year crisis had brought home to him) of the only reform that was concretely possible under the circumstances.[57]

8. Archbishop Gastaldi's Pastoral Activity among the People

The emphasis on clergy reform, with priority given to synods, and the fact that the Archbishop did not immediately undertake a pastoral visitation, may have conveyed the impression that the people themselves were not at the center of his concern. This was not the case. While pressing forward with clergy reform, which he considered basic and essential, he was also engaged in energetic pastoral action.

As mentioned earlier, for what concerned religious life and Catholic practice, the situation in the diocese was ambivalent. The real problems, however, arose from blatant anticlericalism in the press and in the literature. It was a pervasive, underground anti-religious movement, the danger of which was

seminary in Turin, and was ordained in 1873. After studying moral theology under Father Bertagna at the *Convitto* (1873-1875), he was hand picked by Archbishop Gastaldi to serve as spiritual director and vice-rector of the seminary (1876-1880). Known for his spirituality, his learning and his loyalty, he remained ever after a trusted collaborator of the Archbishop, without ever sacrificing his freedom and his personal convictions. He was successively named associate professor in the School of Theology (which the Archbishop had transferred from the university to the seminary), rector of the church of the *Consolata*, and rector of the 'new' *Convitto* in 1882. He went on to found the Institute of the *Consolata* for Foreign Missions (1901) and the Missionary Sisters of the *Consolata* (1910), and was without a doubt one of the most influential personalities in the Church of Turin, especially under Card. Richelmy (1897-1923).

[57] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 183. For all the above, see the earlier Vol. 1, Chs 16 and 17.

certainly felt, but against which there seemed to be no defense. The resulting sense of powerlessness explains the pessimism and the apocalyptic tone of Roman documents and of pastoral letters, Archbishop Gastaldi's included.[58] Nonetheless, the Archbishop acted on several fronts.

New Parishes

Urban development to the north and to the south of the city of Turin made new parishes necessary. Even though the steadily dwindling offerings of the faithful were now the only resource for such projects, during his tenure Archbishop Gastaldi built three new parish churches, and initiated a fourth: they were the parishes of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Secundus in the southern district; [59] and St. Joachim (in honor of Pope Leo XIII) in the northern district of *Borgo Dora*, near Valdocco. He had a fourth parish church on the drawing boards, the Holy Guardian Angels on the southwest side; but he died before actual construction could begin. The Archbishop made a sizable financial contribution toward these projects out of his own share of the family estate.[60]

Preaching and Religious Instruction

Archbishop Gastaldi was personally and tirelessly engaged in the ministry of preaching–at the seminary, at various churches, in spiritual retreats and missions. The synod of 1873 emphasized the central role of preaching in priestly ministry and the duty incumbent upon all in care of souls. He placed preaching under strict disciplinary rules, and organized liturgical and occasional preaching in the churches throughout the city.

Catechetical instruction was another important matter treated and legislated in the Synods and implemented in new and better ways in the parishes. For this purpose, Archbishop Gastaldi published an expanded and updated edition of the catechism then in use. In this edition, theological updating is

[58] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 185-192.

[59] In 1871 Don Bosco undertook to build the church of St. Secundus, first planned in 1867, at the request of Canon Zappata. He withdrew in 1872 because of restrictions imposed by the city authorities [Cf. *EBM* X, 89, 171].

[60] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 192-194.

seen in such areas as the nature and order of the Church, and frequent Communion. Other initiatives of a catechetical nature were the promotion of festive oratories in parishes and catechetical instruction of children in schools as allowed under the law.[61]

Doctrinal Teaching

During his eleven-and-a-half-year tenure, Archbishop Gastaldi addressed 47 pastoral letters to his people. Although they do not exhibit a systematic pastoral approach yet together with the letters to the clergy published in the yearly Liturgical Calendar, they constitute a remarkable body of teaching. Topics most frequently addressed are: the Church and the papacy (to counter the mounting anticlerical offensive); the clergy and the seminary; Christian education; prayer and the sacraments, especially Holy Communion, and devotion to Our Lady. Of great interest are his controversial letters on the death of King Victor Emmanuel II (1878) and on the failed assassination attempt on King Humbert I (1878). Of doctrinal importance, and no less controversial, is his pastoral letter on the papal encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879).[62]

[61] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 194-203. The ordinance issued in 1870 by Minister Cesare Correnti made religious instruction available in State schools only if parents requested it for their child. Don Bosco, in his own *Memoirs* notes the infrequent reception of Communion in his day and lauds the Archbishop: "This defect of piety was corrected when, through an order of Archbishop Gastaldi, things were arranged so as to permit daily Communion, provided one is prepared" [*MO-En*, 132].

[62] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 207-209. The two letters of 1878 evince greater sympathy for the royal house of Savoy and for the political order it represented than the Vatican authorities could countenance. Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* called for a renewal of philosophical thought on the basis of Thomism, and for sound, traditional doctrinal teaching in the seminaries–this, to counter liberalism and secularism. The encyclical was followed by a series of actions in the same direction that included the condemnation (in 1887) of propositions extracted from the works of Rosmini [*New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967) VIII, 648-649]. In his comments on the encyclical, as earlier in his *Monitum* (published in the Liturgical Calendar of 1876), Archbishop Gastaldi defended Rosmini's orthodoxy. He was thus drawn into the fierce polemic surrounding Rosmini that had flared up again in the context of the Thomistic philosophical renewal. Repeatedly the Roman authorities expressed their disapproval of his Rosminian persuasion, but the Archbishop "stuck to his guns." [For an extended treatment cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 307-329.] The Bosco-Gastaldi conflict reached its climax at the time of Rosmini's condemnation and ensuing debate (1879-1881), with the publication in late seventies of the anonymous pamphlets against the Archbishop, two of which attacked him

Pastoral Visitation

Catholic tradition, and canon law itself after Trent, saw the pastoral visitation as a privileged moment of pastoral activity in the diocese. Through it the bishop met, addressed, and took the pulse of the people in the parishes, and on that basis he might convoke synods and develop pastoral policies. Therefore, as at Saluzzo, so in Turin, it should have had priority. The Archbishop, however, as we saw, followed a different course of action. He began by addressing the clergy, rather than the people. He chose to institute his reforms and to govern through synods and statutes. He had come to Turin with a preprogrammed pastoral policy. After all, except for the period of his Rosminian years, he had been active in Turin all his life! But there was a deeper reason for this inversion. At the Vatican Council he had been vocal in defending the necessity of regional councils and synods; and probably his clerical-hierarchic view of the Church had a lot to do with such an approach. Hence, once established in Turin, unable to hold a regional council (because the ecumenical council was still "in session"[63]), he began by holding a synod.

In his visits *ad limina*, Archbishop Gastaldi defended his *modus operandi*. But he finally decided to undertake a pastoral visitation in 1880. Although he was thorough and conscientious, the sense of urgency had gone out of it. He died before he could complete it.

9. The Social Question and the Catholic Lay Movement

At the time of Lawrence Gastaldi's appointment as Archbishop of Turin, Catholics were becoming increasingly more aware of the labor question. The Archbishop too showed both awareness of, and sensitivity to, labor problems. His pastoral letter of 1873 appears to have been the first official instance of an Italian bishop's addressing the problem. This was to be expected, since Turinese Catholics were ahead of most other groups in Italy in that respect. But his perception of the problem and the solutions envisaged were quite restricted. Not only was his attitude basically negative and defensive, but also he vastly underestimated the nature, the newness and the magnitude

for his Rosminian leanings. The Archbishop and his chancery erroneously held Don Bosco responsible for them.

[63] The taking of Rome by Italy occurred while the Vatican Council was in session, but a month later it was adjourned *sine die*; therefore officially it was still "in session."

of the problem. Thus, the solutions that he proposed, namely, the reviving of medieval guilds and social welfare through charitable works, would have been totally inadequate. These inadequacies, which were also those of the Catholic workers unions at the time, appear serious indeed when one looks at what was being said and done at the time by bishops and Catholic laity in France, Belgium, England, Austria, Switzerland, and especially in Germany. Limitations notwithstanding, Archbishop Gastaldi has the merit of not having overlooked the problem. Although he showed little sympathy for the incipient Catholic workers' movement typified in the *Opera dei Congressi*,[64] his interest greatly encouraged other initiatives on behalf of workers, such as the Catholic Workers Union founded by Father Leonardo Murialdo in association with some Catholic laymen.[65]

10. Archbishop Gastaldi's Relations to Religious

The Napoleonic law of 1802; the Rattazzi Law of 1855 (preceded by the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1848); and the general laws of 1866 and 1867 practically wiped out religious orders and congregations in Piedmont first, then in the rest of Italy. In the seventies there was a gradual return, and Archbishop Gastaldi himself was instrumental in re-establishing religious in their former houses and churches. Meanwhile, surprisingly, numerous new congregations were founded in spite of the suppression laws.[66] Of the new congregations

[64] With the taking of Rome, the "intransigent" Catholic element (the avowed defenders of the right of the papacy against the "usurping" Italian State) and the advocates of political abstentionism, prevailed over Catholic moderates, who favored some accommodation with the State. The "intransigents" acquired an effective organizational instrument in the *Opera dei Congressi* (Associated Workers Unions), founded in 1875. It stood as a counterpart to the growing labor movement and in opposition to incipient organized socialism in Italy. Especially from 1885 on, it promoted a range of economic and social welfare activities, mainly in the north and central rural areas [*Encyclopedia Britannica* (Macropedia, 1987) XXII, 233; cf. also Vol. 5, Ch. 7 of this series].

[65] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 215-243. Father Leonardo Murialdo (1828-1900), a collaborator of Don Bosco in the work of the oratory, took over the direction of the *Collegio degli artigianelli* in 1865, and founded the Society of Saint Joseph in 1873. Unlike Don Bosco, Father Murialdo (among others) was active in the Catholic labor movement, and was a pioneer in this apostolate.

[66] In Piedmont, seven congregations of men, and forty of women were founded; in Turin alone five and nineteen, respectively. During the Gastaldi years, the following congregations were founded: the Society of St. Joseph (1873, by Father Leonard Murialdo); the Sisters of

the one that was experiencing the greatest expansion and vitality was the Salesian Society of Don Bosco, founded in 1859, and approved in 1869 and 1874 with definitive approval of its constitutions. Religious were not widely engaged in the care of souls, in parishes and the like. They were instead deeply involved in the education of the young; and this is particularly true of the Salesian Society and of the Society of St. Joseph.[67] Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, Archbishop Gastaldi did not downgrade religious life. As the synod statutes of 1873 show, he exalted the way of the evangelical counsels, especially consecrated virginity. He called for unity between diocesan and regular clergy, but also required the latter not to interfere in parish life. It may be said that, on the one hand, he had a deeper theological appreciation of religious life than most bishops of his day; and on the other, that he was more rigorous in his demands and more severe in applying disciplinary sanctions. This attitude toward religious is to be explained less from his personal authoritarian character than from his concept of episcopal function and authority, that is, his ecclesiology. The paragraph on religious included in his Report *ad limina* of 1874 provides a handy reference. In this document, he first gave a critical assessment of the Salesian formation program. Then he expressed the hope that the Vatican Council, once reconvened, would reform the present formation practice of religious congregations as to novitiate, and as to humanistic, philosophical, and theological studies, to be completed *before* ordination. He further saw the role of the bishop as a participant in the discernment process regarding the vocation and worthiness of candidates for perpetual vows, and again as one who investigates and examines candidates before conferring ordination.

Such a doctrine of the bishop's function with regard to religious obviously would have reflected on his concept of religious exemption. Again for an understanding of his position with regard to "exemption privileges," one must keep this ecclesiology in mind.[68]

Archbishop Gastaldi's encounters with the Jesuits were largely of a doc-

Our Lady of Sorrows (1875, by Father Roberto Murialdo); the Little Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1875, by Anna Michelotti); the Daughters of St. Joseph (1875, by Father Clemente Marchisio); the Sisters Minims of Our Lady of Suffrage (1881, by Father Francesco Faà di Bruno). [Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 247].

[67] In his Report *ad limina* of 1879, Gastaldi speaks of 2,000 young people educated by the Christian Brothers, and of 800 and 200 in the care of the Salesians and Josephites respectively [*ASC* A1080506: Franchetti, *FDBM* 697 A4].

[68] For all the above, cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 245-249, 254-257.

trinal nature, arising from the fact that Italian (especially Roman) Jesuits were Rosmini's principal opponents. Otherwise, as noted above, he admired their spirituality and discipline.

On the other hand, the various clashes between the Archbishop and recent religious founders and their institutes in the archdiocese are to be seen in the light of the Archbishop's ecclesiology. We mention only a few instances that seem particularly significant: his clashes with Sister Marie-Louise-Angélique Clarac, with Father Francesco Faà di Bruno, and (the most serious) with Don Bosco in the context of the approval of the Salesian constitutions.

Marie-Louise-Angélique Clarac[69]

By the time of Archbishop Gastaldi's appointment, Sister Clarac had already left the community of the Daughters of Charity to engage in a more

[69] Marie Louise-Angélique Clarac (1817-1887) joined the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in France. She volunteered for the mission in Algiers, was recalled because of grave illness, and was reassigned to Turin in 1853. Appointed Servant (superior) of a community, she immediately began to broaden its work of charity, acquiring with Don Bosco's advice, a new base of operation (with a public chapel, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart). Thus the "institute" gradually set itself apart from the Daughters of Charity, and enjoyed the protection of Archbishop Riccardi di Netro. The Salesians ministered to them as chaplains. Following an order to return to France, Sister Clarac conferred with Don Bosco about leaving the Daughters of Charity in order pursue her work of charity in Turin, and at his suggestion she applied to Bishop Moreno of Ivrea, the dean of the Piedmontese bishops (the see of Turin was still vacant after the death of Archbishop Riccardi di Netro). Bishop Moreno advised her to leave her community and join (temporarily) the Sisters of Mary Immaculate at Ivrea under his patronage. In May 1871 she and four sisters resigned from the Daughters of Charity. Her woes began with the appointment of Archbishop Gastaldi in October 1871, when she was excommunicated and the chapel placed under interdict. But the institute grew in number and foundations. Archbishop Gastaldi's successor, Cardinal Gaetano Alimonda, restored her and her institute, thenceforth known as the Daughters of Charity of St. Mary. The cause for her beatification was introduced in Rome in 1941. Through the sixties Don Bosco maintained a close relationship with Sister Clarac and supported her work. It is believed that he had given some thought to establishing his women's congregation in association with her. [Cf. also Vol. 5, Ch. 5 of this series.] By the late sixties, however, he had opted for the Mornese group. After her reinstatement, the Salesian Father Angelo Savio (about to leave for the mission of Ecuador) re-dedicated the public chapel of the motherhouse with a spiritual retreat, and Don Bosco awarded Sister Clarac the certificate of Salesian Cooperator. Sister Clarac has been vindicated as a true and legitimate representative of the work of St. Vincent de Paul for the poor. She was also deeply imbued with the spirit of charity and de-

diversified apostolate. Pressed by her former community, the Archbishop ordered Sister Clarac and companions to lay aside the habit of the Daughters of Charity, or have the public chapel placed under interdict. Rather than remove the habit, she had the chaplain remove the Blessed Sacrament and closed down the chapel. On April 13, 1872 Archbishop Gastaldi notified her that she was no longer a religious of any sort. A little later she was excommunicated by the Archbishop and given a public reprimand in the church of SS. Peter and Paul.

Not permitted to speak to the Archbishop in person, Sister Clarac, between 1872 and 1875, pleaded her case with him in numerous letters. She made the point that the Daughters' habit was not a religious habit blessed by the Church, but that she was ready to modify it; that she was not guilty of disobedience, and had done nothing to deserve being deprived of the sacraments; that the interdict placed her girls in spiritual danger from the Waldensian activities in the area; that she was willing even to rejoin the community of the Daughters of Charity. Repeatedly she begged the Archbishop to allow her to receive the sacraments, and to reopen the chapel. Following Archbishop Gastaldi's recourse to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, between 1873 and 1875 Sister Clarac pleaded her case with that Congregation and with individual cardinals; and on April 10, 1874 with Pius IX himself.

The Roman Congregation allowed Clarac's argument that the habit of the Daughters of Charity was not a religious habit; but it also recognized the Archbishop's right to forbid anyone to wear it who was not a Daughter of Charity. As to the Archbishop's right to inflict canonical penalties on the sister for her disobedience, the Congregation in its session (according to a biographer cited by Tuninetti) sided with the Archbishop, but in its official response to him merely advised prudence. Archbishop Gastaldi did not relent, and Sister Clarac was not restored to communion during his lifetime.[70]

votion stemming from St. Francis de Sales. There was close spiritual and educational affinity between Don Bosco and Sister Clarac. This above all is what brought Don Bosco and Sister Clarac into close association, rather than the fact that both were under Archbishop Gastaldi's censures. The Salesian Father Luigi Fiora, postulator of the cause for her beatification, states that Sister Clarac and Don Bosco were kindred spirits. The spiritual daughter of St. Vincent de Paul, acknowledged "the St. Vincent de Paul of the nineteenth century," as being "by right the founder of her oratory" [Commemorative centenary brochure, *Maria Luigia Clarac. Il coraggio dell'amore, Nel centenario della morte* (*Moncalieri 1887, Torino 1987*)].

[70] Tuninetti [*Gastaldi* II, 250] states that, in spite of the prohibition, sympathetic priests (Salesians?) administered the sacraments to her.

In conclusion, Tuninetti writes: "True, the Archbishop was excessively severe in inflicting the interdict at once; but neither can one excuse the stubbornness with which the sister refused to lay aside the bonnet that she regarded as a sign of fidelity to the Vincentian spirit."[71]

Francesco Faà di Bruno[72]

By the time of Gastaldi's appointment, F. Faà di Bruno, a highly educated Catholic layman and university professor had initiated a number of charitable works on behalf of working women in Turin. A regular contributor to the Catholic press, and a leader in the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul and other associations–he was regarded as one of the most distinguished Catholic laymen in the city. At the beginning of 1876, with encouragement from Don Bosco and Bishop Moreno, he decided to become a priest. He wished his ordination to coincide with the dedication of the church of Our Lady of Suffrage (an event planned for November 1), for he desired to offer his first Mass there. On such short notice, he submitted a petition to the Pope directly; he was then advised to apply to his Archbishop.

As Tuninetti (relying on a biographer favorable to Gastaldi) relates the episode, the Archbishop agreed, though on condition that Faà take the clerical habit immediately and enter the seminary. This would allow the candidate ten months of intense preparation in a seminary environment, a reasonable request in Gastaldi's view. Because of his commitment to the university, Faà di Bruno could not immediately enter the seminary; hence, when five months had gone by, the Archbishop set a later ordination date, some time in the spring of 1877. At this point, still aiming at the earlier date, Faà di Bruno was invited to go to Rome for his preparation. The Archbishop did not object, but reserved to himself the right to issue the dimissorial letters as circumstances

[71] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 251.

[72] [Blessed] Francesco Faà di Bruno (1825-1888) was a man of noble birth. A graduate of the military academy, he served as a captain in the Second War for Italian Independence (1859-1860). With a degree in mathematics from the Sorbonne University in Paris, he was professor of calculus at the University of Turin. In 1876 he decided to become a priest, and his ordination was engineered to take place without Archbishop Gastaldi's consent. He was subsequently "pardoned" by the Archbishop and incardinated into the archdiocese. After Gastaldi's death, he founded the Sisters Minims of Our Lady of Suffrage at the church of that name [Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 206, 239-241, 243, 251].

demanded. Since Faà was legally domiciled at Alessandria, at the urging of "friends," he applied to Bishop Pietro Giocondo Salvaj (of Alessandria) for the dimissorials, which were granted. At the same time, testimonials of all kinds in support of an early date for his ordination and first Mass, to coincide with the dedication of the church of Our Lady of Suffrage, were received in Rome. He himself (with encouragement from Pius IX himself) did everything he could to help his own cause in Rome. The Archbishop, however, stood firm on the later spring date. Faà di Bruno was disposed to return to Turin and abide by the Archbishop's decision. But his supporters thwarted Gastaldi's plan and engineered Faà di Bruno's ordination in Rome on the desired date, November 1, 1876, for the diocese of Alessandria.

Tuninetti comments:

> The Archbishop's reasonable demands were rebuffed as unjustified by a coalition which included the Piedmontese Bishops Moreno and Salvaj, (who acted without due regard), Don Bosco (whose habit it was to ask of the Pope what he could not obtain from his Archbishop), the prelates of the Roman and Vatican chanceries (who regarded Gastaldi's demands as unduly severe), and Pius IX himself, who in matters that concerned the diocese of Turin was more inclined to listen to Don Bosco than to its Archbishop.[73]

Archbishop Gastaldi thereby suffered a humiliating defeat. But, aware perhaps of Faà di Bruno's guilessness, he followed a moderate course of action in his regard. Toward the end of 1877, he allowed the good priest to be incardinated into the Turin diocese and to continue his work of charity from the church of Our Lady of Suffrage.[74]

In the context of Archbishop Gastaldi's relationship with religious founders we should deal here with his relationship with Don Bosco. But because of its complexity and importance the subject is dealt with in the next chapter, the conflict over the approval of the Salesian constitutions.

11. Archbishop Gastaldi's Death

Lawrence Gastaldi had never spared himself in anything he did or undertook. His was a life of sustained study and feverish activity. It was also a

[73] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 253-254.

[74] For all the above, cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 251-254.

life of strife and travail. Contrary to what one may be led to believe, he was never a very strong man physically. He was small in stature, and subject to frequent ailments. He had taken ill before the close of the First Vatican Council, after which he was forced to take a long leave of absence from the diocese of Saluzzo. He had not been a well man since his accession to Turin in 1871. Moreover, the frequent situations of conflict in which he was involved, within the Archdiocese and with Rome, were not only morally and psychically damaging, but also physically debilitating. His ten-year-long conflict with Don Bosco, which exposed him to relentless battering by the press, divided his priests, and compromised him with Rome, was especially detrimental. The last and most bitter episode of the conflict, the clash over the anonymous defamatory pamphlets of 1878-1879, dealt him the final blow.[75] His health deteriorated rapidly during the summer of 1882 after the settlement enforced by Pope Leo XIII, a year in which he suffered frequent hemorrhages.

During Holy Week of 1883, he insisted on presiding at all the solemn liturgical services. But at 7:30 on Easter Sunday morning, March 25, 1883, his secretary, Canon Chiuso, found him unconscious in his apartment. He had suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and an apoplectic stroke. He died shortly thereafter, at 9:55, at the age of 68. He had been Archbishop of Turin for eleven years and five months.[76]

[75] Further phases of the Bosco-Gastaldi conflict after the approval of the Constitutions (1875-1882) are discussed in Vol. 6. Chs 6 and 7.

[76] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 341-342.

Chapter 6

SALESIAN CONSTITUTIONS: PROCESS OF APPROVAL–III (1872-1874)

Summary

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IV. Summary of Results Obtained

V. Closing Comment

Appendices: 1. Archbishop Salvatore Vitelleschi's Twenty-Eight Observations on the Salesian Constitutions (July 26, 1873); 2. Don Bosco's Response to Archbishop Vitelleschi's Twenty-Eight Observations; 3. Comment on Significant Issues Relating to the Salesian Society; 4. Historical Summary (*Cenno Istorico*) of 1873-1874

1. Year 1872: Lawrence Gastaldi and Don Bosco Initial Estrangement And Mounting Opposition

Archbishop Gastaldi's confrontation with Don Bosco (which spanned the decade 1872-1882) was much more serious in its effects, because of its length and intensity, than was the case with Sister Clarac and Faà di Bruno mentioned in the preceding Chapter 5. The first phase of the conflict spanned the years 1872-1874, and the confrontation was over the definitive approval of the Salesian constitutions. This first phase of the conflict forms the object of the present chapter. To enable us better to understand the nature of the confrontation we have given earlier a fairly extended biographical sketch of Lawrence Gastaldi as Archbishop of Turin. In it we also stressed those features that might illuminate his thought and action in relation to Don Bosco. We now move on to a description of the first phase of the "hostilities," from the first signs of trouble in early 1872 through to the contested approval of the Salesian Constitutions in 1874.

1. Lawrence Gastaldi Archbishop of Turin–Difficult Beginnings

During the last year of Archbishop Riccardi's tenure and the first of Archbishop Gastaldi (nominated September 1871), momentous events followed hard one upon the other. The First Vatican Council and the debates on its controversial schemata culminated in the definition of papal infallibility. The taking of Rome by the Italian army in September 1870, at the outbreak of the Franco-German War (1870-1871), led to the Council's indefinite adjournment. The transfer of the Italian capital from Florence to Rome and the entrance of King Victor Emmanuel II (July 2, 1871) left Pope Pius IX to agonize over the choice either of "escaping" into exile or remaining as a "prisoner in the Vatican."[1]

Archbishop Riccardi had been forced to leave Rome and the Council in April because of illness, and died not much later on October 16, 1870. Now again, as in 1867, at Pope Pius IX's request, Don Bosco drew up his list of candidates for vacant episcopal sees. Thus he found himself in a position to

[1] In Salesian history 1872 is the year in which Don Bosco, with Mary Mazzarello and with the help of Father Domenico Pestarino, founded the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (February 1872). This occurred while Don Bosco was confined to his sick bed in Varazze.

further the nomination to the See of Turin (which obviously he had most at heart) of a longtime friend, benefactor and supporter, Bishop Gastaldi of Saluzzo.[2] The nomination came through in September 1871 after a vacancy of nearly one year. On November 26, the Archbishop made his disputed and difficult official entrance into his diocese, and Don Bosco shared the anxiety and excitement of that moment.[3]

Don Bosco must have looked on the entrance of Archbishop Gastaldi as the sure pledge of patronage where he needed it most, for he must have confidently entertained the hope that ecclesiastical policy in Turin would permanently change in his favor. He was to be bitterly disappointed, and he would live to regret the "not quite high-minded" proposal he had made to Pius IX.

After his return to Turin (February 1872) from Varazze, where he had been confined to bed with a serious and protracted illness, Don Bosco became aware of a change of attitude in the Archbishop. It was not initially a change from friend to foe, but rather a "distancing" that grew progressively more pronounced.

The reasons for this situation are complex. To begin with, the incessant battering and vicious attacks by the anticlerical press had something to do with it.[4] These newspapers habitually presented the two in tandem and spoke of the Archbishop as a creature of Don Bosco. Shortly after Gastaldi's entrance, the most popular "serious" daily in Turin, the anticlerical *La Gazzetta del Popolo* [The People's Gazette], had this to say:

> It matters little whether the name of the Archbishop of Turin be Don Bosco or Don Margotti, and that their lackey's name is Gastaldi. What do we care? [...] Gastaldi indeed relies on Don Bosco for his supply of wood, out of which priestly puppets are manufactured. Don Bosco's seminarians and tonsured boys may troop up and down Turin's streets looking like Lenten ghosts and smelling like rotten truffles, but educated people are amused [...]. [5]

[2] *EBM* X, 200-201. For details and documentation, cf. Motto, *L'azione*, 307-315. Cf. also Vol. 5, Ch. 4 of this series.

[3] *EBM* X, 123-125.

[4] Archbishop Riccardi had largely been spared by the anticlerical press because of his position at the Vatican Council and for his conciliating policy; but, as new appointments were in the offing, a vicious campaign was mounted against all likely candidates, especially against rumored nominees for the See of Turin. When Gastaldi's appointment became known he became the target of the most personal and vile attacks, and the populace was suborned to interfere with his entrance [Motto, *L'azione*, 313, n. 173].

[5] *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, November 2, 1872, n. 306, 2, cited by Giuseppe Tuninetti,

And the weekly satirical sheet, *Il Fischietto* [The Whistle], under the heading, "Bishop Gastaldi's Biography," wrote:

> Don Bosco, the famous holy bigot, knew that Gastaldi was merchandise for sale, that he could use him to further his own schemes. He submitted his name to God's Vicar, the not-yet-infallible Pius IX, for nomination as bishop of Saluzzo, and it was done. [...] But in the recent reshuffling of bishops, Don Bosco transferred him from the Church of Saluzzo, where no tears were shed at his departure, to the Church of Turin.[6]

2. Archbishop Gastaldi and Don Bosco–Initial Estrangement

One, then, can readily understand Gastaldi's need to distance himself from Don Bosco. Perhaps, Don Bosco's very familiarity made such distancing advisable. Gastaldi was conscious enough of his own merit, for he had "served the Church well," not only by upholding papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council, but by his record as an outstanding bishop. In his inaugural discourse he emphasized the fact that he was now Archbishop of Turin not by the will of men, but by the action of the Holy Spirit.[7] Surely he must have recognized his indebtedness to Don Bosco, but he probably resented being reminded of it. Don Bosco, however, had immediately put himself forward. With the Pope's permission he was the first to notify the Archbishop-elect by telegram of his promotion.[8] He did not hesitate to offer him advice, and in an informally written note he even made the suggestion that Father Giovanni Battista Bertagna, "a pious, learned, practical, and well-to-do person" be appointed Vice-Vicar of the archdiocese.[9] Perhaps the Archbishop's new

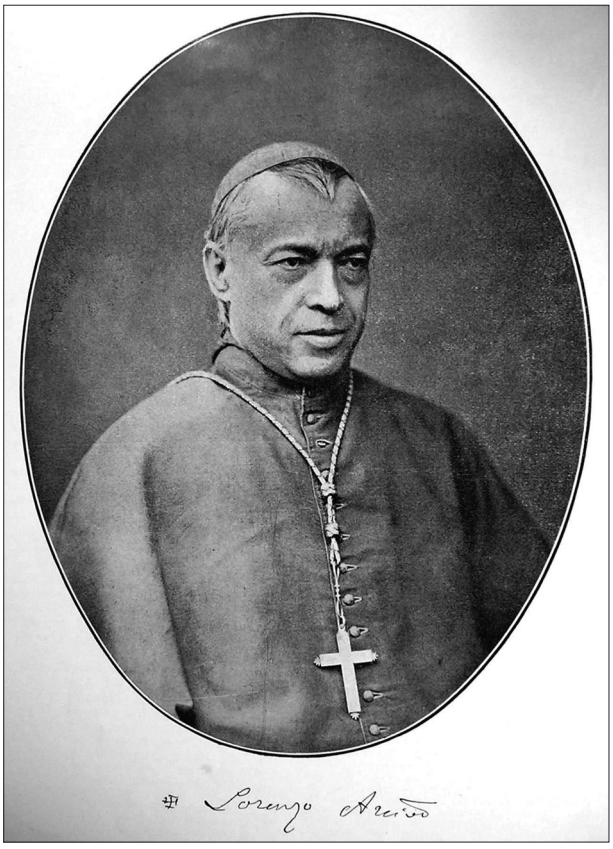
"L'immagine di don Bosco nella stampa torinese (e italiana) del suo tempo," in *Don Bosco nella storia della cultura popolare*, ed. by Francesco Traniello (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1987) [209-251], 219 [Herafter, Tuninetti, *L'immagine*]. Father Giacomo Margotti was the powerful editor of the archconservative Catholic newspaper, *L'Unità Cattolica.* "Relies on Don Bosco for his supply of wood," play on words (Bosco-wood), refers to the fact that throughout the period when the diocesan seminary was closed (1848-1863), and even thereafter, the Oratory functioned as a seminary that "manufactured priestly puppets."

[6] *Il Fischietto*, September 14, 1872, n. 111, in Tuninetti, *L'immagine*, 225.

[7] *EBM* X, 124-125.

[8] *EBM* X, 200-201.

[9] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, [beginning of November 1871], in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 383-384; *EBM* X, 123. The suggestion that Father Bertagna should be promoted must have seemed preposterous. Not only would Gastaldi not appoint Bertagna Vice-Vicar but in 1876 he would dismiss him from the chair of moral theology at the Pastoral Institute.



13 – Portrait of Archbishop Lorenzo Gastaldi
published with the memorial address delivered at the funeral service (1883)

situation and new role demanded that their relationship be placed on a different footing. Furthermore, advancing from the relatively unimportant post of bishop in a provincial town to the archdiocesan See of St. Maximus, he was taking on responsibilities so demanding as to make everything else, even friendship, appear secondary. True, even under such circumstances the expression of friendship is always possible, but only insofar as it is compatible with the new relationships that have come into being.

Finally, there was (I believe) a more cogent reason. It appears that in his new role Gastaldi found his identity as the reformer-pastor bishop he had always felt called to be. And, most importantly, he was inheriting an ecclesiastical policy relating to the training and formation of clergy, secular and regular,

which, though not of his own making, responded to his deepest conviction and was consonant with canonical tradition.

During his pre-episcopal period and his tenure as bishop of Saluzzo Lorenzo Gastaldi had been one of Don Bosco's best friends and supporter. Moreover he no doubt acknowledged the debt he owed to Don Bosco for his appointments. But with his appointment to Turin his attitude began to change, and the signs were unmistakable.

On February 17, the Archbishop attended the service held at the Oratory in thanksgiving for Don Bosco's recovery from the Varazze illness; but he ignored the invitation to stay for the reception that followed.

In March or April 1872, the troublesome question of ordinations surfaced again and it dragged on through the following months, as will be seen below.[10] This drew from Don Bosco a remark that expressed not only his disappointment but also his perception of the change: "What can we do? The Archbishop wants to be the head of our Congregation. That is too much. However, we shall see."[11]

And yet, right at this time, Archbishop Gastaldi pressed Don Bosco into taking over and staffing the diocesan school at Valsalice that was running the risk of closure. Actually the proposal had been made in 1869 and Don Bosco had discussed it with his councilors, who voted against it because it was a school for the rich. But after considerable hesitation, Don Bosco accepted the Archbishop's proposal in June 1872. The offer would tend to show that Gastaldi's regard for Don Bosco and his work had not changed, even though, by accepting Don Bosco would be doing the Archbishop a favor. Moreover, one is struck by the fact that the correspondence betrays no animus on either side and shows willingness on the Archbishop's part to accept Don Bosco's terms.[12]

[10] *IBM* XVI, 82-102. This information is contained in comments on the conflict made by Ceria after recording Gastaldi's death.

[11] *EBM* X, 155. For this episode the biographer quotes an "eyewitness" report by Canon Giovanni Battista Anfossi. It should be noted that Anfossi, a diocesan priest and an alumnus of the Oratory, a few years later would be playing a role in the conflict against the Archbishop.

[12] *EBM* X, 168-170 (Archbishop Gastaldi's letter to Don Bosco of April 23, 1872) and Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, March 22, 1872 in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 410-411. In June 1872 Don Bosco accepted to operate the school officially. He leased the premises from the Christian Brothers for five years, up to 1877. In 1879 he bought the property. In 1887 he decided to turn Valsalice into a *Seminary for the Foreign Missions*, in reality a minor seminary for

3. Restarting the Process of Approval of the Salesian Constitutions

Don Bosco had been confined to a sick bed in the Salesian school of Varazze in Liguria for a month and a half and, although not fully recovered, after mid-February 1872 was eager to return to normal activity. Two things in particular called for his attention: the negotiations with the government on behalf of vacant diocesan Sees, in which he was involved in a private capacity, and the process of approval of the constitutions, which had stalled.

In August (1872) Cardinal Giuseppe Berardi, undersecretary of state, speaking for the Holy Father, advised Don Bosco to pursue the matter of the definitive approval of the Society and its constitutions.[13] Hence Don Bosco again began to solicit letters of commendation from bishops, and again turned his attention to the text of the constitutions. This latter effort resulted in the revised Latin text that he would present for approval in 1873 (*Ns*, to be discussed below) and in the assembling of the documents for the new *positio* or docket to be presented in Rome.

4. Gastaldi's "Declaration of Intent:" Letter of October 24, 1872

Just while the process of approval of the Salesian Constitutions was being set in motion again, Archbishop Gastaldi's position was hardening, and his letter of October 24, 1872 to Don Bosco amounted to a "declaration of intent." The letter began with an elaborate reference to his past benefactions and support of Don Bosco and the Salesian Society. Then, (1) referring to the privilege authorizing Don Bosco "to issue dimissorial letters for candidates who had entered the Oratory prior to their fourteenth year," he demanded that documentary proof of the fact be submitted in each case; (2) he directed that all Salesians who sought ordination should present themselves to him at least forty days in advance with affidavits regarding personal data, formation, studies, and religious profession status; (3) he likewise directed that Salesian candidates seeking ordination should take examinations each time in two appropriate theological treatises at the chancery; (4) he added that he might also have demanded that Salesian clerical students attend classes in the diocesan

the Salesian Society [Details in E. Pederzani and R. Roccia, *Don Bosco a Valsalice. Un contributo per il centenario* (Torino, 1987)].

[13] Cardinal Berardi to Don Bosco, August 27, 1872, *IBM* X, 673 (omitted in *EBM* X, 303).

seminary (as an instruction of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars of March 3, 1869 prescribed), but he hoped that the outcome of such examinations would render this further measure unnecessary. For these demands he appealed both to the Council of Trent and to the *Pontificale Romanum*, which prescribed that "religious should not be ordained without the bishop's diligent scrutiny."[14]

The immediate effect of the Archbishop's letter of October 24 was to aggravate the conflict situation that the matter of dimissorial letters for ordination had already created. Archbishop Gastaldi was not the first to object to this privilege, but to the Salesians his demands in the matter now appeared vexatious, and his policy overt harassment, so much so that years later, at the height of the conflict, the letter would be cited by Don Bosco as the first in a long series of abusive acts of power by the Archbishop against the Salesian Society.[15]

To make matters worse, on November 8 the Archbishop rejected a list of Salesian candidates for Holy Orders personally delivered to him in Don Bosco's name by Father John Cagliero, a refusal accompanied by the threat of recourse to Rome.[16]

Don Bosco's response to the Archbishop's action was a letter written on November 9 out of deepest distress. "So grieved as to be unable to find rest or relief," he begged the Archbishop for an explanation.[17]

The Archbishop, replied on the same day and, after admonishing Don

[14] Archbishop Gastaldi to Don Bosco, October 24, 1872, *EBM* X, 304. Some time earlier, beginning with the issue of June 24 (1872), the scandal sheet, *Il Ficcanaso* (The Meddler), had begun to run installments of a scurrilous "novel" entitled "Don Broschi." It described a seminary wherein disorder and ribaldry reigned supreme, and wherein pupils and teachers, their leader (Don Broschi) in particular, were crooked-minded hypocrites one and all [*IBM* X, 460 (omitted in *EBM* X, 211)] The Archbishop's letter would not have been prompted by such a trashy publication, but even such grossly false allegations would increase his concern.

[15] Don Bosco accused the Archbishop of such abuse in a memorandum addressed to the cardinals of the Congregation of the Council entitled, *Esposizione del sacerdote Giovanni Bosco agli eminentissimi cardinali della Sacra Congregazione del Concilio* (Sanpierdarena, 1881) 8, in *Opere Edite* XXXII, 56.

[16] This information is supplied by Father Ceria commenting on the conflict after Gastaldi's death in 1883. [*EBM* XVI, 60].

[17] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, November 9, 1872 in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 488-490, from: *Novissima Positio super virtutibus. Appendix documentorum* 1926, 19-21 (Process of beatification); edited in part in *EBM* 60-61.

Bosco to seek to do the will of God and not be perturbed, he restated (albeit in a gentler tone) his position stressing what he regarded as his right and his duty:

> While acknowledging that religious orders should rightly be exempt from episcopal authority to the extent required for their preservation and successful growth, I am nevertheless averse to unnecessary exemptions, particularly when they are harmful. Such in my opinion is the exemption that would prevent bishops from carefully examining candidates for ordination, while the Council of Trent and the *Pontificale Romanum* expressly order bishops to do so. Unfortunately little by little abuses, which now claim the status of privileges, gained a foothold in this matter. [...] It is high time that we adhere scrupulously to the wise prescriptions of the fathers of the Council of Trent.

And stiffening his demands, he went on to point out what he regarded as yet another failure, namely, the defective religious formation among Salesians due to the lack of a proper ascetical novitiate. He made this requirement a prerequisite for his support.

> If there is no such novitiate, or if it does not resemble at least to a great extent that of the Society of Jesus, your Congregation will lack stability. [...] All too often complaints are made that [Salesians] lack virtue, especially humility. [...] This could be remedied by a good novitiate, which I do not think the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales has as yet. *I shall therefore be unable to support this Congregation in its quest for approval by the Holy See, except on the basis of a clear, prior, and mutual understanding that such a novitiate will be established.* [18]

5. Comment: Contrasting Understandings of the Parties

In spite of their authoritarian ring, Archbishop Gastaldi's demands should be understood as expressing a genuine concern for the proper preparation of candidates for ordination, as well as his strongly felt responsibility in the matter. His statement with regard to exemption of religious should be noted: he was not against limited necessary exemption of religious; but he was against unnecessary and harmful privileges, among them (in his view) the privilege of issuing dimissorial letters.[19]

[18] Archbishop Gastaldi to Don Bosco, November 9, 1872, *EBM* X, 305-306 (italics mine).

[19] Tuninetti [*Gastaldi* II, 261-262] notes that Archbishop Gastaldi seems to have been op-

Don Bosco instead believed traditional privileges of exemption to be necessary for the proper functioning of religious congregations. Consequently he had written that provision into the constitutions and had defended it against objections from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in 1864 and 1867.

With respect to religious formation and novitiate he believed in the rightness of his position, and he set forth his reasons to the Archbishop by letter of November 23 (1872). He wrote that, prior to the Society's approval in 1869, he had explained Salesian formation practices to Pius IX's complete satisfaction. True, the Salesian Society's official documents (because of the suppression laws!) did not provide for a formal novitiate, but there had always been a novitiate in actual practice. He also disputed the Archbishop's claim that Salesians did not possess the necessary religious virtues. If that were the case, how explain the fact that the Archbishop had until recently spoken of the Oratory as a house of piety and virtue?[20]

From the above exchanges it emerges that in the confrontation over the Society's definitive approval the Archbishop regarded religious formation and novitiate, and priestly formation and ordinations as the two substantive issues.

With respect to the first point, the disagreement rested on different conceptions of the Salesian Congregation, and therefore of its novitiate. In the seventies Gastaldi could not regard the Society as anything but a traditional Tridentine religious congregation (and essentially such it turned out to be). Therefore its novitiate (in his view) should be a closed ascetical one patterned on that of the Jesuits. Don Bosco, on the other hand, only gradually came to accept that model, and in the seventies he was still struggling to salvage some ideas he had developed with a different model in mind. At first (so it seems) he had wanted not a traditional congregation, but one that would be more pliable and suitable to youth apostolate. Its novitiate would naturally have to be compatible with this model. As Pietro Stella remarks:

> The Salesian Society had initially been conceived as a generic association partaking both of the nature of a religious congregation with simple vows and the nature of a pious union. It was envisioned as a moral person with civil rights.

posed not only to the granting of specific special privileges to religious, but also to the very practice of granting privileges. On the other hand, he was strongly in favor of religious life as such, and was very appreciative of the work of religious congregations.

[20] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, November 23, 1872, Motto, *Epistolario* III, 493-495; *EBM* X, 307-308.

> Instead, under pressure from diocesan authorities in Turin and from the canonical system then in force in Rome, it was pushed in the direction of the classical Tridentine congregations, with the three simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and the obligation to lead the common life. It then gradually found its place within the ecclesiastical organization as a clerical, exempt congregation.[21]

Seeking now the definitive approval of the constitutions of a basically Tridentine congregation, Don Bosco was still fighting to salvage earlier forms, such as civil rights, a less formal system of formation, power over the religious vows and power to issue dimissorial letters for the ordination of candidates. Recourse to Rome (and to the Pope personally) for privileges and concessions appeared not only necessary but also "natural" to Don Bosco. It went hand in hand with an ultramontane ecclesiology in which the centrality of the Pope loomed so large that the local ordinary's role paled by comparison.

As Christmas 1872 drew near, another cause of conflict arose on the very point of a papal concession. In his Christmas pastoral letter, the Archbishop had forbidden the celebration of three consecutive Masses on Christmas *night*, a practice obtaining in a number of religious communities.[22] Don Bosco, however, had obtained the privilege of three midnight Masses for his houses in perpetuity from Pius IX, and so notified the Archbishop. The latter replied ("courteously but curtly") that he meant to correct an abuse and to emphasize the established liturgical celebrations at midnight, at dawn and during day. Obviously Gastaldi looked upon such concessions with disfavor; but, after an exchange of letters, he allowed Don Bosco the *private* celebration (*januis clausis*) of three midnight Masses. Don Bosco immediately notified confreres, benefactors and friends that the main doors would remain locked, but that they could enter by a side door (!).[23] Later, reviewing the Archbishop's hostile behavior over the years, Don Bosco would speak of this action as vexatious; and the comment he makes is revealing: "The Archbishop thinks he is more Catholic than the pope."[24]

[21] Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco: Life and Work* (2nd rev. ed., tr. by John Drury. New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Publications, 1985), 170-171 (also 154-155).

[22] Letter in *ASC* A1110504: Gastaldi, *Lettere pastorali*, 30-11-72, *FDBM* 616 A7-B3.

[23] At first the Archbishop allowed one Mass on Christmas night to be said *januis clausis* [Archbishop Gastaldi to Don Bosco, December 19, 1872]. He then relented and allowed three Masses to be said consecutively also *januis clausis* [Letter of December 21, 1872]. The story is reported with related correspondence in *IBM* X, 689-691 and more briefly in *EBM* X, 309-310.

[24] "*Sembra all'Arcivescovo che egli conosca meglio lo spirito della Chiesa che non il Papa*," in G. Bosco,

2. Year 1873: Clash over the Approval of the Constitutions[25]

As the year 1872 came to an end, Don Bosco was in the process of gathering the documents to submit to Rome together with his petition for the approval of the constitutions. He therefore took steps to obtain the necessary letter of commendation from Archbishop Gastaldi.

1. Gastaldi's Conditions for His Support

On December 23, 1872 Don Bosco submitted to the Archbishop the galley proofs of a pamphlet entitled, Brief Historical Notice on the Salesian Society with Some Decrees Pertaining thereto,[26] a historical sketch intended for distribution and presentation in Rome. In the cover letter Don Bosco referred to the new draft of the constitutions (which the Archbishop was supposed to have seen), and then went on to ask blithely if it were not opportune to present in print, as part of the Brief Historical Notice, also the Archbishop's letter of commendation, so that each member of the Roman

Esposizione 1881, 9, *Opere Edite* XXXII, 37.

[25] For a survey of this complicated history, cf. *IBM* X, 661-1006, with abundant documentation, and *EBM* X, 298-417, with much of the documentation omitted. The documentation (in *IBM* X) is reliably transcribed from Lemoyne's *Documenti*, and from other archival sources. Obviously the Salesian biographical tradition is invariably on Don Bosco's side and makes no attempt to understand Gastaldi's point of view.

[26] *De Societate S. Francisci Salesii Brevis notitia et nonnulla decreta ad eandem spectantia*, in *Opere Edite* XXV, p. 103-121, and partially in IBM X, 890-893 (omitted in EBM, except for the short quote in X, 311). This is the last-but-one of a long list of historical summaries of the origins and development of his work that Don Bosco produced over the years, chiefly for the purpose of obtaining commendations or approval from Church authorities. Here is the list: *Presentation* to Canon Zappata of 1863; *Brief Notice* (*Breve notizia*) of 1864; *Society of St. Francis de Sales* for Archbishop Riccardi, 1867; *Historical Summary* (*Cenno storico*) for Bishop Ferrè of Casale, 1868; *Brief Notice and Decrees* (*Notizia brevis [...] et nonnulla decreta*) of 1868; *My Purpose* (*Nella persuasione [...]*) to the bishops of the ecclesiastical Province of Turin, 1869; *State of the Society* (*Stato religioso-materiale [...]*) of 1870; *Pious Society of St. Francis de Sales* of 1873; the present *Brief Historical Notice* of 1873; *Historical Summary* (*Cenno istorico*) of 1874; *Summary* (*Riassunto [...]*) of 1874–the last three specifically prepared for the definitive approval. For details and references, cf. Braido, *L'idea*, 255f. In these remarkable documents, Don Bosco gives varying descriptions of the beginnings of his work and its development (the usual point of reference for the beginning being 1841), and then presents the current state of the Society with an "effective" mixture of truth and fiction.

Congregation would have access to it.[27] The Brief Historical Notice itself consisted of the usual historical survey, presenting the Society as existing well before its approval in 1869 and as awarded various ecclesiastical "decrees" at certain points of its historical journey. But its closing paragraph must have taken the Archbishop by surprise. For, after mentioning commendations and support from twenty-four bishops and three cardinals, Don Bosco added:

> Lastly, our most gracious Archbishop, eager to add yet another token of his favor to the many and ample ones heretofore granted, has commended the Salesian Society in the most lavish terms [...]. And now our Archbishop, the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Turin, and other bishops as well, jointly appeal for the definitive approval of the Salesian Society.[28]

Was Don Bosco, though aware of the Archbishop views, trying to put him before a *fait accompli*, thus forcing (so to speak) Gastaldi's and his suffragan bishops' hand? Gastaldi, however, was not to be trifled with. He had already set his course, a course that he would consistently follow to the end. He would indeed write the required letter of commendation, but only on *certain definite conditions*.

The Archbishop immediately set about enlisting the support of other bishops through a letter dated January 11, 1873, in which he clearly stated his conditions. Don Bosco received a copy of the letter from Bishop Pietro Giuseppe De Gaudenzi of Vigevano, a good friend of his, and thus learned of the Archbishop's demands. Subsequently, when on February 17 he visited the Archbishop before leaving for Rome, the latter personally notified him of his commendation and attached conditions. In summary, Archbishop Gastaldi demanded (1) that Salesian candidates be perpetually professed before being admitted to ordination; (2) that a more serious novitiate be established on the Jesuit model; (3) that Salesian candidates for ordination submit to an examination by the bishop in accordance with the prescriptions of the Council of Trent and the *Pontificale Romanum*; (4) that the bishop have the right of inspecting Salesian churches and oratories, to ascertain compliance with church laws.

[27] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, December 23, 1872, Motto, *Epistolario* III, 499. If Gastaldi had "already seen the galley proofs of the constitutions," it could not have been the text of 1873 to be presented in Rome for approval.

[28] *Brevis notitia* in *Opere Edite* XXV, 121 (quoted in *EBM* X, 311). In the letter Don Bosco writes, "If your Excellency wishes me to print your letter of commendation in the *Brevis Notitia* for easier reading, please have it sent to me."

Archbishop Salvatore Magnasco of Genoa, who was otherwise supportive, had similar reservations.[29] On the other hand, Don Bosco had the commendation and support of the Piedmontese Bishops Pietro Maria Ferrè of Casale, Giovanni Battista Cerruti of Savona, Pietro Giuseppe De Gaudenzi of Vigevano, Anacleto Pietro Siboni of Albenga, and (most emphatically) Emiliano Manacorda of Fossano. The latter's commendation countered Gastaldi's objections at every point.[30]

2. Gastaldi's Brief Presented in Rome: Objections and Demands

There followed a first volley, a veritable barrage of letters and memorandums through which the Archbishop made his objections to the Salesian Constitutions known in Rome. These documents, written at various points during the process are cited together here for a more complete understanding of his position. They may be listed as follows:

1. "Memorandum *Quum admodum*" addressed to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (February 10, 1873). After lavish encomiums of the Society, Gastaldi made the following demands: (1) That the Salesian Constitutions be submitted to the ordinary; (2) that the Salesian Congregation institute a novitiate modeled on that of the Jesuits; (3) that perpetual profession be made a requirement for ordination for all Salesian candidates; (4) that Salesian candidates submit to an examination by the bishop before ordination; (5) that the ordinary have the right to inspect the churches and oratories of the Salesian Congregation; (6) that exemption from the ordinary's jurisdiction be kept at a minimum.[31]

2. "Letter to Cardinal Prospero Caterini," Prefect of the Congregation of the Council (February 19, 1873). Here Gastaldi stressed the following points, among others: (1) necessity of a proper novitiate; (2) necessity of a regular course of studies; (3) necessity of perpetual vows before ordination.[32]

3. "*First* letter to Cardinal Giuseppe Andrea Bizzarri," Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (April 20, 1873). Gastaldi's criticism of

[29] *IBM* X, 933-934, Appendix V, No. 12 (text omitted in *EBM*, mere mention made at X, 318).

[30] All the letters are given in the Docket (*Positio*) and transcribed in *IBM* X, 927-934 (omitted in *EBM*).

[31] *IBM* X, 927-928; *EBM* X, 314-315.

[32] *EBM* X, 315-316.

Don Bosco was extensive, more explicit, and certainly more damaging. He contended (1) that the lack of a novitiate affected adversely the formation of Salesian seminarians; (2) that the failure to take perpetual vows before ordination made it easier for those who had joined for financial reasons to leave the Society; (3) that Don Bosco accepted seminarians dismissed from the diocesan seminary and sent them to teach in schools located in other dioceses; (4) that Salesian clerical students lacked a philosophical formation because they were engaged full time in teaching and assistance; (5) that Don Bosco had obtained dispensation for his clerical students from attending classes at the diocesan seminary, an obligation that the Holy See itself had imposed–and more.

Hence in order to guarantee the permanence of the Salesian Congregation even after Don Bosco's death, the Archbishop made the following suggestions: (1) that the constitutions be submitted for approval to the Archbishop of Turin and to the bishops in whose territory Salesian houses had been established; (2) that Don Bosco not be permitted to present for ordination candidates who had joined after their sixteenth year of age; (3) that perpetual profession be required of Salesian candidates before ordination to the subdiaconate; (4) that Salesian clerical students be required to attend classes in the seminary of their diocese for at least four years; (5) that Salesian candidates before ordination submit to a "careful examination" by the bishop, after submitting proof of compliance with the above requirements.[33]

Don Bosco learned of this, the most damaging of Archbishop Gastaldi's briefs, when in Rome for the final petition, in March 1874. It was then that in a memorandum addressed to the four cardinals of the Special Congregation (March 29 and 30), he tried to refute Gastaldi's allegations and objections. For instance, he rejected Gastaldi's demand for a formal novitiate for three reasons:

[33] *EBM* X, 323-327. Some of Gastaldi's demands were clearly reasonable, even though Don Bosco probably thought that none of them were. Others, however, were not. They were an attempt by the Archbishop to bring the Salesian Society under his control, though one cannot conclude from this that he wanted to make it a diocesan congregation. After all the Salesian Society had been approved by Rome in 1869. But, on the one hand, at this time the Society had neither achieved the status of a *clerical* congregation nor that of an *exempt* congregation; and on the other, Gastaldi was speaking and acting out of a very special concept of an ordinary's authority and responsibility.

> This was possible in other days, but not in our country at this time, because it would destroy the Salesian Congregation. Were the civil authorities to know of the existence of a novitiate, they would abolish it immediately and disperse the novices. Secondly, this kind of novitiate would not be consonant with the Salesian Constitutions, for these are crafted to suit the active life of the members and prescribe only those practices which are essential for forming and maintaining the spirit of a good priest. Moreover, thirdly, such a novitiate would not be suitable for us because the novices would not be able to practice the constitutions in a manner consistent with the purpose of our Congregation.[34]

(4) "*Second* letter to Cardinal Bizzarri" (July 27, 1873). Gastaldi wanted to know whether the Salesian Society was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction. He repeated the question for emphasis: *"Is it, or is it not?"* Then he went on to explain his objections to privileges, or special concessions. [35]

The reply of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars came on August 8, 1873 (after Don Bosco's first petition for definitive approval had been rejected) in these terms: "A congregation with simple vows is not exempt from the ordinary's jurisdiction, except to the extent defined in approved constitutions and by privileges specifically granted. The Salesian Constitutions are just now under consideration. Then the cardinal added: "Nevertheless one cannot conceal the fact that the Rev. Bosco has obtained from His Holiness more than one personal privilege regarding dimissorial letters [...]."[36]

Such special privileges obtained by Don Bosco from Pius IX personally were precisely what Archbishop Gastaldi found unacceptable. And it is likely that the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, which was the competent authority in such matters, agreed with him and found such a situation embarrassing.

(5) "*Third* letter to Cardinal Bizzarri" (January 9, 1874). Knowing that the Salesian Constitutions were being examined in Rome, Gastaldi, "out of a sense of responsibility," wished again to express his concern about the poor quality of religious and intellectual formation among the Salesians. He complained about a number of deplorable cases of poorly formed Salesian seminarians, and cited the lack of a proper novitiate as the root cause. He wrote:

[34] *EBM* X, 364-366; Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 268-270. For the "second trial" (he generally avoided the term "novitiate") Don Bosco regarded one year spent in a Salesian house, with involvement in the works of the Society, as appropriate and sufficient for Salesian formation [Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 196, 192-193].

[35] *IBM* X, 729 (briefly in *EBM* X, 336).

[36] *IBM* X, 730; *EBM* X, 336 (translation, not clear).

> I deem it my solemn duty to acquaint [the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars] with the need of making a novitiate of two years' duration mandatory in the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales. Young [Salesian] seminarians should be trained not to *command* (as is all too frequently the case through their being appointed teachers in the schools of the Congregation), but to *obey*, as in the traditional novitiates of other religious congregations, especially that of the Society of Jesus. The Rev. Don Bosco has a special gift for training young lay people, but he does not seem to possess the same talent in training young seminarians.[37]

Archbishop Salvatore Nobili Vitelleschi, secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, showed this letter to Don Bosco in Rome in February 1874, after the latter's second petition for definitive approval. For a rebuttal of the allegations, Don Bosco had recourse to a stratagem. He composed a letter and arranged for it to be sent to himself in Rome anonymously (in the handwriting of Father Giovanni Anfossi!). As will be mentioned below, he showed it to his friend and patron, Cardinal Berardi, who was only too happy to make use of it.[38]

3. Trials and Tribulations of the Approval: The First Unsuccessful Presentation in 1873

After the foregoing description of Archbishop Gastaldi demands as expressed in his briefs filed with the Holy See, we return to the story of the approval of the Salesian constitutions.

Don Bosco went to Rome to present his petitions for the definitive approval of the constitutions *twice*, in early 1873 and early 1874–the first time without success.

[37] *EBM* X, 348-350.

[38] *EBM* 350-352; *IBM* X, 759-760. Biographer Amadei describes the ruse of this "anonymous" letter, the original of which in Don Bosco's hand is found in *ASC*. Knowing as we do that Don Bosco himself wrote it, we find this document somewhat disconcerting. The "anonymous writer" accused Gastaldi of "seeking to destroy the Society's good name with infamous allegations" ("*studia coprirla tutta di nera infamia*"), and of "treating the members of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars as so many ignorant children" ("*supponendo che [...] siano altrettanti bambini e che sappiano nemmeno un po' di latino*"). He added: "It was Don Bosco who raised him [Gastaldi] from the dust, gave him a job and a name, printed his books, and worked hard to get him the position he now holds. [...] He fears that Don Bosco's priests might outdo those of his diocese, all the more so since his own seminarians want to leave and join Don Bosco [at the Oratory], where they are better treated (*dove si sta meglio*)." (Some diocesan seminarians did "transfer" to the Oratory.)

Accompanied by his new scrupulous and humorless secretary, the twenty-four-year old Father Gioacchino Berto, he arrived in Rome on February 19, 1873. Of all the letters received in Rome from various bishops to be included in the Docket (*Positio*), a number of which expressed reservations, Gastaldi's represented the chief obstacle, and Gastaldi, therefore, appeared as the principal adversary. It seems that Archbishop Magnasco's reservations, and those of other bishops, real as they were, represented less of a menace. In any case, Don Bosco quickly found that his Archbishop's complaints had already been registered in Rome, and had in fact already made their mark.

Undaunted, however, he pressed forward, and the docket or *positio* was assembled. Besides the *Brief Historical Notice* and the letters of commendation, this file contained two important documents: the new text of the constitutions and the *Declaratio*. In this latter document Don Bosco attempted to explain his acceptance or non-acceptance of the Savini-Svegliati *Critical Observations* of 1864 (enjoined again in 1869) and other specific features of the Salesian Constitutions.[39] The new text (the printed Latin text of 1873, *Ns*) was the end product of a painstaking revision of the earlier text of 1867 (*Ls*); but, in defiance of the warning given with the approval of the Society in 1869, it had not been brought into complete accord with the *Critical Observations* of 1864.[40]

In spite of this, on March 1, he petitioned the Holy Father for approval and presented the docket or *positio*. In the cover letter Don Bosco wrote: "Two things above all are now needed to complete the work [of stabilizing our Society]: the definitive approval of the constitutions and the full authorization to issue dimissorial letters."[41]

Don Bosco was detained in Rome for over a month, involved in feverish activity relating not only to the approval but also to the urgent matter of the *Exequaturs* (for bishops to enter into possession of diocesan assets). On the subject of these complicated and delicate negotiations, he had several exchanges with Archbishop Gastaldi, who, like many others was still deprived of the benefices, but who was meanwhile acting in a more private capacity in

[39] *De Regulis Societatis Salesianae aliqua declaratio* [An explanatory statement about the constitutions of the Salesian Society], *IBM* X, 893-894 (omitted in *EBM*), critically edited in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 248.

[40] For the critical text of these constitutions cf. Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 18-19 and 59ff.; the work of revision is described in *IBM* X, 674-682 (omitted in *EBM* X, 303).

[41] *EBM* X, 317.

the matter. Don Bosco could finally leave the city on March 22, and on March 30, he was back in Turin awaiting the verdict, so to speak.

4. Further Incidents in a Deteriorating Situation

Meanwhile, even while the Salesian Constitutions were being examined in Rome, the Archbishop expected Don Bosco to abide by his requirements for all that concerned an ordinary's power over priestly candidates and ordinations. Don Bosco's least failure to meet the Archbishop's demands added to the friction, and incidents occurred to sharpen the very issues that were already in contention.

The first group of incidents related to the ordination of Salesian candidates. As reported, on one occasion when Father (later Bishop) John Cagliero, who was in charge of Salesian candidates, presented the list, the Archbishop angrily threw it on the floor.[42] This occurred some time in March. The *Biographical Memoirs* give no reason for such an outburst, but one suspects that the reasons were the very same that prompted the Archbishop to press his demands a little later.

Deacons Luigi Lasagna and Giovanni Baccino (future missionaries) were to be urgently ordained (outside the diocese), and the Archbishop, as he had made abundantly clear before, demanded statements regarding the time of their entrance into the Society, their religious profession, and their having taken examinations at the chancery. The two Salesians did take their examinations for orders at the chancery, and the Archbishop's secretary notified Don Bosco of their promotion.[43] A similar incident occurred on August 22, 1873, when the Archbishop demanded proof of subdeacon (and future missionary) Domenico Milanesio's perpetual profession before ordaining him *titulo mensae communis*.[44]

A second situation of conflict was created by Don Bosco's acceptance of "ostracized" diocesan seminarians into Salesian houses. Some time in March

[42] *EBM* X, 320.

[43] *EBM* X, 321-323. As noted above, the Archbishop had set these conditions for ordination earlier. At this point the *Biographical Memoirs* comment on the Archbishop's vexatious demands.

[44] *EBM* X, 340. Perpetual profession would also be made a requirement by Rome for ordination *titulo mensae communis* (on the basis of common life) when the Salesian Constitutions came up for the definitive approval.

the Archbishop had suspended *a divinis* a canon of the *Duomo* of Chieri. Don Bosco defended him and then received him into the Salesian house of Alassio.[45]

Much more serious was the Borelli-Rocca affair in early May. Don Bosco had received these two seminarians (Paolo Maria Borelli, or Borel, and Angelo Rocca) into Salesian houses (Varazze and Lanzo, respectively) after they had left, or been dismissed from, the seminary. The Archbishop, through his secretary, Canon Tommaso Chiuso, asked for an explanation. Don Bosco's reply was not found satisfactory, so he immediately notified Don Bosco that he would not ordain any Salesian candidate so long as those two remained in a Salesian house.[46] Don Bosco's reply to the Archbishop, dated May 14 from Borgo San Martino, after "a three-day spiritual retreat," was such as to strain further their relationship. Perhaps Don Bosco had forgotten that he was dealing with a prelate who ruled by synod and decree, a reformer bishop who did not hesitate to use the *a divinis* suspension as a disciplinary measure, and who, above all, regarded all matters pertaining to clerical formation and ordination as non-negotiable. Believing himself in the right, Don Bosco defended his admittance of the two ex-seminarians on humanitarian grounds, adding that permission repeatedly asked in similar cases had been rejected. He also disputed the Archbishop's right to refuse ordination to Salesian candidates if they were not unworthy. He stressed the Salesian Society's meritorious service to the archdiocese (to which "since 1848 it has supplied no less than two-thirds of its clergy"). Finally, he recalled his meritorious service to the Archbishop personally–recently, by preventing the publication of derogatory articles against him, and earlier by submitting against not a few objections Gastaldi's nomination as bishop and then as Archbishop. The manner in which he introduced this last and very sensitive point is quite remarkable:

> Certain documents pilfered from government files (by whom it is not known) are circulating in Turin. From these papers one may learn that Canon Gastaldi owes his appointment as bishop of Saluzzo to Don Bosco's mediation; and likewise that it was through Don Bosco's mediation that he was made Archbishop of Turin. These papers also recall the difficulties that had to be overcome in the matter, and give the reasons why I championed your cause [...].[47]

[45] *EBM* X, 320-321.

[46] *EBM* X, 328.

[47] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, May 14, 1873, Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 96-98; *EBM* X, 329-331.

One finds such a letter, apparently not free of resentment rather disconcerting. Archbishop Gastaldi regarded such a "lecture" from one of "his priests" as inexcusable insolence, as he himself had occasion to tell the Pope some two years later. Writing to Pius IX on April 12, 1875 he complained:

> Recently [...] the same Don Bosco on returning from Rome wrote me a long letter in which he claims to have been reprimanded for submitting my name for nomination as bishop of Saluzzo, and later as Archbishop of Turin; and that I am pursuing a ruinous course. He adds that he is writing this letter *on orders from higher authority*. I cannot regard such a letter from one of my own priests, as anything but an *insolent affront*. Therefore, I sent one of my seminary professors to plead with him [...]. His reply was in the form of another letter in which he expressed the same sentiments."[48]

However, in 1873 Gastaldi relented–on condition that in the future diocesan seminarians would not be accepted in Salesian houses, except by written consent from the chancery. Don Bosco did indeed write a declaration promising to do what was demanded, but attached a proviso that rendered it unacceptable: "[...] This statement is made with the reservations and within the limits prescribed by the sacred canons to safeguard the freedom of religious vocations."[49]

An attempt to mediate a reconciliation was made in Don Bosco's name by Bishop Giuseppe De Gaudenzi of Vigevano in early August. He was notoriously partial to the Salesians and of ambiguous sentiments toward the Archbishop. The latter's harsh reply to Bishop De Gaudenzi's letter was a dour put-down of the good-hearted bishop, and a bitter denunciation of Don Bosco's actions; it even called into question Don Bosco's reputed saintliness: "Saints never ran their superiors down, and never stirred up scandals that would compromise them."

When Don Bosco was shown the letter, he took the ill-advised step of replying. His opening remark shows a failure to appreciate how much the Archbishop's position had changed since his Saluzzo days: "If the letter had

[48] *Vatican Archives*, quoted in Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 267, note 37. Still later, in a letter to the Archbishop, dated October 28, 1875, Don Bosco wrote: "With all respect [...], I can assure you, and you know perfectly well, that if you were named bishop of Saluzzo, and then Archbishop of Turin [...], it was all due to poor Don Bosco's proposals and efforts" [Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 536]. Thus it appears that the letter of May 14, 1873 was not the only instance of Don Bosco's vaunting his good offices on the Archbishop's behalf.

[49] *EBM* X, 331.

not been written to a bishop, I should say that it was written in jest." And after reviewing the Archbishop's grievances of recent months and declaring that he had always done his best to comply with the Archbishop's wishes, he added: "For the past sixteen months I have pleaded with you to tell me what you hold against poor Don Bosco, and so far I have heard nothing but a few vague inferences."[50]

Needless to say, by this time the relationship had become a dialogue between two deaf persons, both being utterly convinced, rightly or wrongly, of the justness of their cause. The long series of clashes over ordinations and faculties to hear confessions that were to follow was the inevitable result of the confrontation between two people that regarded themselves as armored with just cause.[51]

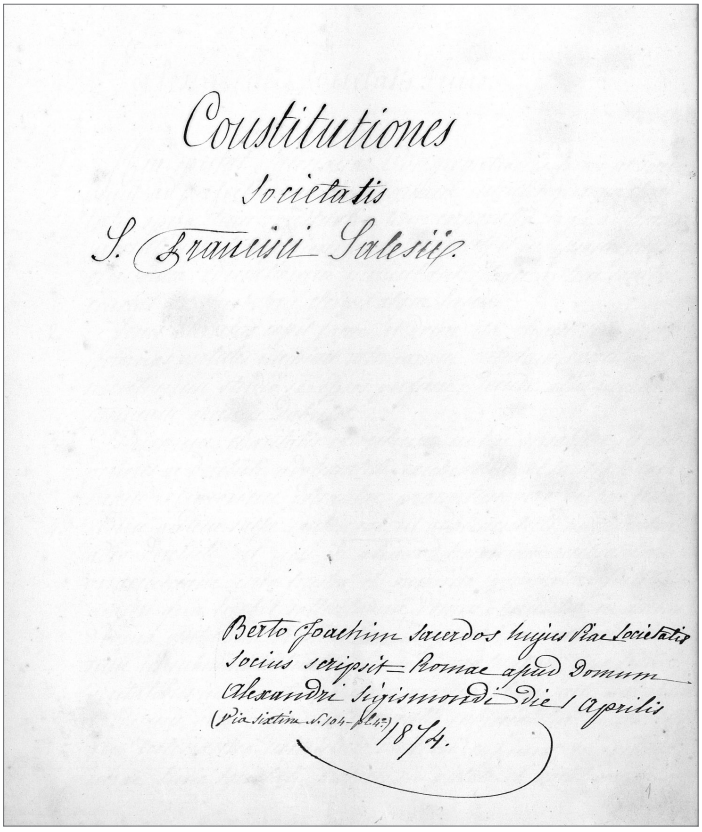
Gastaldi's vexation found an echo even in the constitutions of the Diocesan Synod of 1873. The Archbishop's undisguised critical allusions to Don Bosco and the Salesian Society must have had a telling repercussion among the clergy.[52] Understandably, too, Don Bosco's dissatisfaction spread to the Salesians around him, for he was heard to complain about the Archbishop's way of acting and to blame himself for the Archbishop's appointment, for which he received nothing but ingratitude. After receiving Gastaldi's letters of October 24 and November 9, 1872, he had remarked to his secretary, Father Berto: "Just think! It was I who had him appointed bishop of Saluzzo and then Archbishop of Turin. I did all I could with the Holy See and even with the Italian government, which in no way wanted to accept him. And now see how he treats me!" Don Bosco then went on to quote Psalm 55:12-13. On June 9, 1873, Father Berto recorded similar words of Don Bosco, who, perhaps in connection with the Borelli-Rocca controversy, complained about Archbishop Gastaldi's actions, and quoted God's lament in Isaiah 1:2-3. [53]

[50] For the exchange, cf. *EBM* X, 337-339 and more fully *IBM* X, 730-733.

[51] Cf. G. Bosco, *Esposizione* 1881, in *Opere Edite* XXXII, 49-124, where Don Bosco later listed in detail instances of Gastaldi's harassment through the years in all areas of Salesian activity.

[52] Synod of June 25-27, 1873, in Titles XIV (Holy Orders) and XXIV (Religious). The synod of 1873 and its constitutions, the factions it created among the clergy, and the attacks of the hostile liberal press are discussed in some detailed in Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 85-107, 268. See also Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps*, 855-857, and Gastaldi's biographical sketch given in the preceding chapter.

[53] *EBM* X, 309 and 332-333. Father Gioacchino Berto, Don Bosco's secretary since 1872, kept a kind of journal (especially as Don Bosco's traveling companion) in which he recorded



14 – Manuscript of the Salesian Constitutions approved on April 11,1874 in the calligrapic transcription by Father Gioachino Berto

5. Examiner Bianchi's Thirty-Eight Critical Observations on the Constitutional Text of 1873 (Ns)

While Don Bosco and the Archbishop were drifting farther and farther apart, in Rome the new text of the constitutions was being subjected to meticulous scrutiny by Father Raimondo Bianchi, O.P., designated examiner for the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. On May 9 he submitted his evaluation to the Secretary of the Congregation, Archbishop Vitelleschi. It was an awesome thoroughgoing *thirty-eight-point* critique, going far beyond the

these and other utterances. [*ASC* A004: Cronachette, Berto, Appunti [...] 1873 and 1873-74, *FDBM* 907 D8 - 911 A8].

thirteen critical observations of 1864.[54] Father Bianchi's action may be briefly summarized.

He prefaced his thirty-eight *critical observations* with a reference to objections and proposals received in Rome: those advanced "for example, by the Archbishop of Genoa and especially by the Archbishop of Turin, ordinary of the mother house." He then expressed "his surprise [...] that most of the thirteen *critical observations* officially handed down by the Holy See [in 1864 and 1869] [...] had not been complied with, or had been evaded under more or less specious pretexts, as may be seen from the superior general's [Don Bosco's] *Declaration on the Rules* submitted together with his petition for approval."

The examiner first listed eight points (from 1864) not complied with, of which the following are perhaps the most significant: (1) the 3rd, denying the power to dispense from vows; (2) the 4th, denying the faculty to issue dimissorials; (3) the 9th, demanding the removal of the chapter on extern Salesians.[55]

He then proceeded to add thirty more *critical observations*. In the thirty-eighth and last he suggested:

> That before being submitted for approval by the Holy See, these constitutions be diligently emended in accordance with the former *critical observations*, and in accordance with any of the present ones that His Holiness may see fit to hand down; that it would also seem desirable that before approval the constitutions be submitted to a trial period, especially for what regards the novitiate and the program of studies.

This was on May 9, 1873. Shortly thereafter, on May 19, in a kindly worded letter Secretary Vitelleschi notified Don Bosco that the constitutions had not passed the test. He advised him not to come to Rome at this time, but to wait patiently for further instructions.[56]

[54] The thirty-eight Bianchi observations are given in *IBM* X, 934-940, Appendix. V, No. 13 (omitted in *EBM*), and are critically edited in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 241-244.

[55] The Savini-Svegliati *observations* of 1864 and Don Bosco's response were given in our earlier Chapter 3.

[56] Archbishop Vitelleschi to Don Bosco, May 19, 1873 in *IBM* X, 726 (omitted in *EBM* X, 335). The events are related in context in *IBM* X, 726-728 (briefly referred to in *EBM* X, 335-336).

6. Secretary Vitelleschi's Twenty-Eight Critical Observations and their Demands[57]

On July 26 instructions came from the secretary, in the Holy Father's name, in the form of a twenty-eight-point summary of Father Bianchi's report. A sensitive cover letter accompanied the twenty-eight *Critical Observations* and gave Don Bosco friendly advice as to how to proceed. Archbishop Vitelleschi held Don Bosco in high esteem and was also aware of the Holy Father's desire to see the Salesian Constitutions approved. However, he emphasized the necessity of compliance.[58] Hence in his letter the Secretary urged Don Bosco to accept the *critical observations* and revise the constitutions accordingly. He added:

> In the main, these *critical observations* reflect the guidelines established by Rome for the approval of new religious institutes. I notice that you would wish to modify or eliminate what is established with regard to novitiate, studies and ordinations. But these are precisely the matters that have always been of greatest concern to ordinaries and that the Holy See has always held as firm and unassailable. [...] Men come and go; [...] but he Holy See must guarantee the existence and the continuance of your institute. [...]

The new *critical observations* were prefaced with a clear statement: "It is our *absolute* will that [the 1864 *critical observations*] should be *taken into account*. The fear of reprisal from the [civil] authorities [...] cannot be regarded as sufficient justification."

From among the twenty-eight, the following important points are especially to be noted:

> 1. Since it is contrary to the Holy See's practice to approve a preamble and a historical summary commending the Institute, these two opening chapters should be removed from the constitutions.
>
> 3. The repeated mention in the constitutions of lay civil rights and of the duty to abide by civil laws should be deleted.
>
> 7. Obligatory manifestation of conscience as laid down in the constitutions *is not admissible*. Voluntary manifestation might be acceptable, but it should in

[57] For a translation of the 28 Bianchi-Vitelleschi observations and Don Bosco's response see Appendices 1 and 2 below. Here we give only such items as are needed for our discussion.

[58] Archbishop Vitelleschi to Don Bosco, July 26, 1873, *IBM* X, 728 (omitted in *EBM* X, 335).

any case be limited to external observance of the constitutions and progress in virtue.

16. The constitutions lack any provision with regard to the novitiate. The novitiate should be set up in accordance with Clement VIII's Constitution *Regularis disciplinae* and with the other prescriptions of canon law. Of special importance are the prescriptions regarding gathering of novices together in a house of novitiate, their total separation from the professed, and their being engaged solely in spiritual exercises and not in any of the works of the institute.

17. Likewise the constitutions lack any provision with regard to studies. All candidates for the priesthood should spend four years in the study of theology, whether in a special house of studies of the institute or in a seminary; and should not be engaged during that period in the works of the institute.

18. What is said in the constitutions with reference to ordinations, "that is, in accordance with the privileges granted to those congregations that are regarded as religious orders" (*videlicet ex privilegiis Congregationum quae tamquam Ordines regulares habentur*) would imply that the superior general has the power of issuing dimissorials–which has already been denied. Such concession would be objected to by ordinaries, and would in any case be an exception to the general law. Occasional exceptions granted by the Holy See may not be invoked as precedents, especially if objected to by ordinaries. Furthermore, the lack of a regular novitiate and of a regular course of studies would discourage the granting of such concessions.

The last three points show that Archbishop Gastaldi's brief had been heard.

7. Don Bosco's Response to the Twenty-Eight Critical Observations

With Secretary Vitelleschi's *critical observations* before him, Don Bosco undertook a revision of the constitutions and compiled a Response to accompany the eventual presentation of the new text. The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars had demanded "absolute compliance." Don Bosco (so he stated in the Response) had "accepted most of the twenty-eight *critical observations* handed down to him. However, "in the case of a number of them" he had "made some accommodations;" and on "some articles" he had stood firm "solely to safeguard his institute from shipwreck in the fierce storm of civil law," and had done so relying on "advice recently received."

In his Response Don Bosco accepted the six above-listed important observations only in part:

1. *Observation 1* called for the removal of the first two chapters of the constitutions, the Preamble (*Prooemium*) and the Historical Summary (*De ejusdem Societatis primordiis*).

R) Don Bosco removed these chapters from the text itself, but kept them in italics as a kind of double preface. He considered both texts important, for they constituted the basis on which the sparing Article 1 of the chapter on Purpose could be understood.

2. *Observation 3* called for the removal of clauses mentioning the member's civil rights as citizens and their abiding by the civil law.

R) Don Bosco accepted this observation only in part. He softened, but did not eliminate, the clauses on civil rights and civil law. For example, in article 2 of the chapter, "Form of the Society," he devised a simpler formula: "No one on entering the society, even after making vows, forfeits his civil rights. Hence he can validly and licitly acquire and sell property, as well as make out his last will and testament and receive an inheritance. However, as long as he remains in the Society [...]." On the one hand, he felt that the formula satisfied the Church's demand regarding the canonical vow of poverty, even though it expressed the essence of religious poverty in terms of renunciation of the administration of goods, rather than in mere "radical dominion" (the canonical formula). On the other hand, the mention of civil rights and their exercise constituted a sufficient safeguard before the civil law.

3. *Observation 4* called for clearer constitutional provisions regarding the observance of the vow of poverty, in accordance with the directives of *Collectanea S.C. Episcoporum et regularium*, N. 859.[59]

R) Instead of transcribing the article referred to, Don Bosco maintained what he had written in the chapters on the 'Form of the Society' and on the 'Vow of Poverty' (in effect that the members retained private ownership and the Society owned nothing), in the conviction that this solution offered the best guarantee against reprisals by the government. He merely added a footnote stating that the two chapters in question had been taken almost literally from the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Schools of Charity (Cavanis of Venice) approved by Pope Gregory XVI.

4. *Observation 16* noted the total absence of a constitution regarding the novi-

[59] Article 859 of the *Collection of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (Collectanea)* read: "Professed religious with simple vows may retain the radical dominion (as it is called) of their goods; but they may not administer them or use or dispose of the income from them. Hence, before their profession they must give over both administration of goods, and the income and use thereof, for the whole period of their vows, to whomever they choose–even to their Congregation, if that is what they wish to do" [*IBM* X, 748, note 1 (omitted in *EBM*)].

tiate and called for such a constitution in accordance with Pope Clement VIII's Constitution, *Regularis disciplinae*, and with other canonical rules–especially, that the novices should reside in a special house of novitiate, be separated from the professed, be totally engaged in spiritual exercises, and not be engaged in the work of the Society.

R) Don Bosco greatly expanded the chapter, "The Master of Novices and Their Direction," to twelve articles. But these articles revealed an idea of the Salesian novitiate that did not comply with the observation. Here are the salient points:

[1] Every candidate, before being definitively admitted to the Society, must undergo three trials. The first trial precedes the novitiate and is called the "aspirantate" [postulancy or candidacy]; the second is the novitiate itself; and the third is the period of triennial vows.

[3] As a rule for the first trial it is sufficient for the candidate to have spent a few years in a house of the Society, or to have attended one of the schools of the Congregation and to have given proof of virtue and intelligence.

[6] Once the first trial is over and the candidate has been received into the Congregation [into the novitiate], the master of novices shall at once take him under his care, and shall leave nothing undone that may help him in the observance of the constitutions and regulations.

[7] Hence the master of novices shall make every effort (a) to show himself amiable, mild and full of gentle goodness, so that the novices will open their hearts to him regarding anything that may help them in their striving for perfection; (b) to provide his charges with guidance and instruction in all the rules generally, but especially in those that pertain to the practice of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience; (c) to get everyone to observe with exemplary regularity all that is prescribed regarding the practices of piety of our institute; (d) to regularly hold a weekly conference on a moral topic; (e) to invite each novice with great gentleness to make his spiritual manifestation at least once a month.

[8] It is the purpose of our congregation to give young people, especially poorer ones, a secular and religious education [...]. Hence during the second trial each novice shall be seriously engaged in study, as well as in teaching day and evening classes, in teaching catechism to children, and even in assisting the ones that are in grave need [*nei casi più gravi*]. If the candidate shall have shown in all these exercises that he can work for the greater glory of God and the good of the Congregation, and if he has been exemplary in the observance of the practices of piety and in the practical exercise of charity, then the second trial shall be regarded as completed. If not, the trial may be prolonged for an additional few months or even for one additional year.

[11] Through these trials, the novice master shall recommend and gently inculcate the practice of mortification of the external senses, in a particular manner

the virtue of sobriety. But much prudence should be exercised in the matter of mortification, and care should be taken that physical health is not impaired to the point that the member is unable to perform the work proper of our institute.[60]

5. *Observation 17* likewise noted the absence of a constitution regarding a regular program of study, and called for such a constitution. This was to include the explicit provision that all candidates for the priesthood should spend four years in the study of theology in a house of the Society set aside for that purpose, or in a diocesan seminary, and not be engaged for that period of time in the works of the institute.

R) Don Bosco pointed out that for the moment he could not establish a special separate house for this purpose, and that in any case it would have to be submitted for approval to the Ministry of Public Education in accordance with the laws of the state. He also noted that teaching catechism and assisting pupils need not be incompatible with a proper course of studies, and that by doing so his seminarians would show their ability and willingness to take on the work of the institute. Don Bosco, however, declared himself in agreement with a four year program of theological studies, and drafted and inserted a short chapter on "Studies" as follows:

[1] Priests and all candidates to the priesthood in the Society shall seriously apply themselves to ecclesiastical studies.

[2] They shall apply themselves with serious attention first and principally to the study of the Bible, of Church history, and of dogmatic, systematic and moral theology. In addition they shall apply themselves to the study of those authors and treatises that deal specifically with the education of young people in the faith.

[3] Our masters shall be St. Thomas and those authors who have achieved recognition for their work in catechetics and in Catholic religious education.

[4] Each member, besides attending daily lectures, shall prepare a course of meditations and instructions, suitable in the first place for young people, and then adaptable also for the faithful at large.

6. *Observation 28* was the most serious of all. It concerned the coveted power to issue dimissorial letters for ordination, and it ordered the article removed.

R) Article 4 of the chapter, "Religious Government of the Society," in speaking of the ordination of Salesian candidates to the priesthood by the local ordinary, provided that this should be done "*in accordance with the custom approved for congregations that have a communion of houses and in accordance with privileges granted to*

[60] As may be seen, the novitiate described in these articles is not in compliance with the demands of Observation 16. Don Bosco's novitiate lacks a house of novitiate; it is not an ascetical novitiate; the novices are not separated from the professed; the novices are involved in the work of the institute. Furthermore, the novice master appears to be in charge of all the (three) stages of formation.

congregations that are regarded as regular orders." (In a note appended to this article Don Bosco stated that it had been taken almost literally from the Constitutions of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary [Lanteri], Part 2, paragraph 1).[61]

Observation 28 rejected this claim as unavailing, and cited the fact that the superior general [Don Bosco] had already asked for, and had already been denied the power of granting dimissorial letters.

Don Bosco later countered by claiming that the denial had been due to the fact that in 1869 only the Society, not its constitutions, was being considered for approval. He added that he had nevertheless obtained that faculty for ten years, applicable to those candidates who had entered a Salesian house at age of fourteen or younger. He had also obtained that faculty by special privilege for others who had entered after their fourteenth year. In any case, by the constitution in question he was not asking for a blanket privilege, but was only requesting the restricted power to issue dimissorial letters to a local diocesan bishop, since the article spoke of ordination by the bishop of the diocese, in accordance with Clement VIII's Decree of March 3, 1596. Don Bosco's plea was not accepted, and the article was eventually removed by the cardinals of the special congregation before voting for approval.

7. No new observation had been made with regard to the chapter, "Extern Salesians." Don Bosco kept it as an appendix, after the "Formula for Profession."

By this response Don Bosco fairly indicated the kind of Society he had in mind. This is even more evident in a letter to Archbishop Vitelleschi, dated August 5, 1873 apparently written after he had already sketched out the Response and the *Historical Summary* of 1873/1874.

Your Excellency:

At first sight the *critical observations* relating to our rules did not appear to be impossible to implement. But when I set myself to the task, I experienced all kinds of difficulties. If these *critical observations* were accepted, I should have to remove [from the constitutions] a number of provisions that have generally been approved in the case of other religious orders or congregations. For in the mat-

[61] "Communion of houses" meant houses in various dioceses, but centrally united under one rule and one superior, as would be the case with a religious congregation that had extended beyond the diocese of origin. "Privileges granted to congregations that are regarded as regular orders," might have meant "privileges granted to exempt clerical congregations in accordance with established custom." What Don Bosco was asking for with regard to ordinations was the authorization to issue dimissorial letters, which is one of the "exemption" privileges.

ter of principles I have faithfully been guided by constitutions already approved, such as those of the Jesuits, Redemptorists, Oblates, and Rosminians. I would, moreover, have to deviate from the foundations set for me by the Holy Father, to which all Salesian rules are conformed.[62] [...]

Bearing this in mind, I have complied with the demands to the extent that it was possible without reducing our Society to a diocesan congregation, for otherwise our Society would cease to exist as intended. Having houses in various dioceses, our Society should be subject to the ordinaries only in matters that pertain to the external exercise of religion.

Furthermore, my concern has been not to change or destroy what has already been established by the decrees of 1864 and 1869. And in order that these matters should be understood in their proper context, I have written a Historical Summary (*Cenno istorico*).

I would ask your Excellency to read the Historical Summary and my response to the *critical observations*; then, please be so good as to tell me if, after the modifications I made, I might again present the constitutions to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars with any chance of success. If all the *critical observations* must needs be complied with, then I would rather desist from submitting another petition, for an approval won on those conditions would place the Salesian Society in a much worse situation than it is in now. I am also writing to Cardinal Berardi [...]. How is one to explain the fact that, whereas the examiners of 1869 made no objection, now everything must be done all over again? [63]

3. Year 1874: Final Stage of the Process of Approval–Don Bosco's Second Petition, Further Revisions in the Text and Definitive Approval

Don Bosco's exasperation and despondency come through powerfully in the last paragraph of the letter. He appears ready to "throw in the sponge."

[62] The twin foundations, of which Don Bosco so often speaks, are that the Society should be on the one hand a union of private citizens before the state, and on the other, a fully recognized religious congregation with vows before the Church [*EBM* V, 561 (Don Bosco's first audience with Pope Pius IX, 1858)].

[63] Don Bosco to Archbishop Vitelleschi, August 5, 1873 in Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 151-152, partly in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 19, note 41, and in its entirety in Braido, *L'idea*, 252-253. Motto speculates that, in spite of the address ("Your Excellency"), the letter may have been addressed to Prefect Cardinal Bizzarri, not to Secretary Vitelleschi. It should be noted moreover that the "examiners of 1869" had clearly indicated that the observations of 1864 had to be complied with "absolutely." No further observations were made at that time (1869) because the constitutions were not up for approval–which was the case in 1873, with Gastaldi clamoring for a hearing, to boot.

But although sorely tempted, perhaps on Cardinal Berardi's advice, he did not give up and again went on the attack. With the two above-mentioned documents completed or near completion (the *revised text* of the constitutions, and the *Response*), and likewise, according to the above-cited letter, with a draft of the Historical Summary (*Cenno istorico*), Don Bosco left for Rome on December 29, 1873, with his faithful secretary, Father Gioachino Berto, in tow. He was to remain in the city until the decree of approval was obtained on March 13, 1874. Throughout those two-and-a-half months he would be engaged in ceaseless rounds of consultations and interviews, and in feverish activity relating to the approval of the constitutions (as well as to the matter of the *Exequaturs*, in which he ultimately failed).

1. First Printed Latin Constitutional Texts of 1874 and Associated Activities

On successive days (January 3, 4 and 5, 1874) Don Bosco had conversations on the Salesian constitutions with Secretary Vitelleschi and Cardinal Berardi, and was granted a long audience with Pope Pius IX.[64]

Then early in January, the Response and the new text were finalized and printed at the *Propaganda Fide* Press.[65] This, the first constitutional text of 1874 (*Ns-1*), had a new chapter entitled, *The Master of Novices and their Direction* (clearly a concession to Archbishop Gastaldi), but otherwise the new constitutional text basically reflected the position of the Response, and was far from the total compliance demanded by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. For instance, as noted above, it retained the Preamble and the Historical Summary as prefaces; it merely rephrased the concepts of civil rights, especially in the chapter on Form of the Society, where it had appeared most objectionable; it merely retouched the constitutions on Poverty; it introduced chapters on novitiate and on studies, but not according to the form demanded; it stood firm on the power to issue dimissorial letters; it retained the constitutions on Extern Salesians as an appendix.

[64] *EBM* X, 341-342.

[65] Don Bosco's Response is described in *IBM* X, 746-755 (omitted in *EBM* X, 346), critically edited in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 245-247. The First Text of 1874 (*Ns-1*) is given as *Regulae Societatis S. Francisci Salesii* (Romae: Typis S. C. de Propaganda Fide, MDCCCLXXIV) in *Opere Edite* XXV, 235-292; transcribed in *IBM* X, 896-915, Appendix IV (omitted in *EBM*). The Historical Summary, *Cenno istorico sulla Congregazione di S. Francesco di Sales e relativi schiarimenti* is critically edited in Braido, *L'idea*, 276-331; also in *Opere Edite* XXV, 231-250 and in *IBM* X, 949-954, Appendix VI (omitted in *EBM*)].

Throughout the month of January Don Bosco paid numerous visits, seeking support in the matter of the approval: besides the already mentioned visits to Archbishop Vitelleschi, Cardinal Berardi and Pius IX (who were the principal champions of his cause), he paid visits to Cardinal Vicar Costantino Patrizi (a prospective member of the Special Congregation), to Father Sallua, O.P. (a member of the Holy Office and a confrere of Examiner Bianchi), and to Cardinal Bizzarri (Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars).[66]

On February 2, Secretary Vitelleschi notified Don Bosco that the Special Congregation had been designated. It consisted of the Cardinals Costantino Patrizi, Antonino De Luca, Giuseppe Andrea Bizzarri, and Tommaso Martinelli.

On February 17, Secretary Vitelleschi introduced Don Bosco to Attorney Father Carlo Menghini, a lawyer of the Sacred Congregation; he would represent the Salesian part in the process of approval. Don Bosco submitted to him the galley proofs of a revised *Historical Summary* with separate comments on the novitiate, studies, and dimissorial letters. Menghini was impressed with the Historical Summary, but he thought that it was too extensive for the purpose. Don Bosco then set to work and produced a shorter version (*Riassunto,* Summary).[67] Together they began to assemble the docket or *positio.*[68]

It is at this time (February 21) that Secretary Vitelleschi showed Don Bosco Gastaldi's letters of July 26 (1873) and of January 9 (1874), to be included in the *Positio.* As mentioned earlier, immediately Don Bosco himself composed a letter in response and had it addressed to himself anonymously in the hand of Father Giovanni Anfossi. He subsequently showed it to Cardinal Berardi (February 27), who promised to make it available to the Cardinals of the Special Congregation.[69]

[66] *EBM* X, 346-347.

[67] *Riassunto della Pia Società di S. Francesco di Sales nel Febbraio 1874*, in *Opere Edite* XXV, 377-384; EBM X, 352-353 (short excerpt).

[68] EBM X, 347-348.

[69] Cf. *EBM* X. 348-352 for Gastaldi's letter of January 9 and for Don Bosco's "anonymous" letter.

2. Second and Third Printed Constitutional Text of 1874 and Don Bosco's Associated Activities

On March 4, Don Bosco had a new text of the constitutions (modified, but not significantly in terms of the demands) printed at *Propaganda Fide* press. This, the second Constitutional Text of 1874 (*Ns-2*), was basically a polished edition of the first text of 1874. On March 7 the *Positio* or docket containing all relevant protocols, was re-assembled and printed.[70] The text of the constitutions, however, would be presented as a separate document because Don Bosco was still in the process of retouching it; but a little later in March he had it reprinted (Third Constitutional Text of 1874, *Ns-3*). In this text the appendix on Extern Salesians was removed, as Examiner Bianchi had recommended, but Don Bosco stood firm on other capital points.

This is the text that he submitted together with the *Positio* to the four cardinals of the Special Congregation.

Now, that the *Positio* and the constitutions had been presented, Don Bosco was received by Pope Pius IX in special audience; then, continuing pleading his case to the point of importunity, he paid *ad hoc* visits to the cardinals of the Special Congregation and to other persons connected with the process.

Acting on advice received, Don Bosco on March 18 composed a 9-point memorandum and submitted it to the four cardinals of the Special Congregation, as well as to Cardinal Berardi, to Archbishop Vitelleschi and to the

[70] The Docket (*Positio*) is given in IBM X, 916-948, Appendix V (omitted in *EBM*), and the *Summarium* for the Special Congregation in *Opere Edite* XXV, 335-385. The *Positio* contained: [1] Don Bosco's petition; [2] the *Decretum Laudis* of 1864; [3] the thirteen Savini-Svegliati Observations of 1864; [4] the decree of approval of the Congregation of 1869; [5] Gastaldi's *Quum admodum* memorandum of February 10, 1873; [6] Gastaldi's letter of April 20, 1873; [7-12] letters of commendation from the bishops of Casale, Savona, Vigevano, Albenga, Fossano, and from the Archbishop of Genoa. [13] Examiner Bianchi's thirty-eight *Critical Observations* of 1873; [14] Secretary Vitelleschi's twenty-eight *Critical Observations* handed down to Don Bosco; [15] Don Bosco's report on the moral and material state of the Society, which is the shorter version (Summary, *Riassunto*) of the *Historical Summary* (*Cenno istorico*) made at Attorney Menghini's suggestion. Some of Don Bosco's statements in the report are noteworthy: "This Pious Society has been in existence for 33 years," referring to the year 1841; "It has a membership of three hundred and thirty priests, seminarians, and laymen;" "Forty-four bishops were asked and wrote letters of commendation expressing their highest approval, the one exception being the present Archbishop of Turin [...];" "Some three-fourths of the priests presently active in Turin and of the professors in the seminaries of the archdiocese were our pupils; and the same may be said of other dioceses;" etc.

Holy Father himself (Don Bosco's staunchest supporters). It was entitled, *Considerations that prompt Father John Bosco's Petition.*[71]

3. Two Sessions of the Special Congregation and Definitive Approval

The Special Congregation of the four Cardinals held two sessions in which the discussion bore largely on Gastaldi's objections and proposals and on Don Bosco's failure to comply with what was demanded–hence, on the peculiar provisions embodied in the constitutional text at hand.

First Session

The first session was held on March 24, 1874. Although the Cardinals leaned toward the approval, "the debate was prolonged on account of Archbishop Gastaldi's letters, especially that dated April 20, 1873."[72] The discussion remained inconclusive, and the meeting was adjourned to March 31.

Meanwhile, the cardinals were at work emending the text of the constitutions. They were determined, if these were to be approved, to correct their (much lamented!) deficiencies and to bring them into compliance with the pre-established Tridentine canonical mold in every other respect.

With regard to chapters, the Preamble and the Historical Summary that served as a kind of preface were removed, so that the sixteen chapters appeared as follows: Purpose, Form, Obedience, Poverty, Chastity, Religious Government, Internal Government, Rector Major, Other Superiors, Particular Houses, Admission, Studies, Practices of Piety, Novitiate, Habit, Profession Form.

The text itself suffered drastic revisions, especially with regard to the following subjects: the civil rights clauses were almost entirely removed or rewritten in terms of the practice of the vow of poverty; the chapters on

[71] *Alcuni pensieri che muovono il Sac. Giov. Bosco a supplicare umilmente per la Definitiva Approvazione delle Costituzioni della Società Salesiana*, in Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 263-264; *EBM* X, 359-360. In this nine-point presentation, Don Bosco repeated some of the statements of earlier memoranda–for example, that the constitutions had been tested for the past thirty-three years (referring to 1841), that the Salesian work was about to be established in America, Africa, and China, etc.

[72] *EBM* X, 362.

Studies and Novitiate were practically re-written; the chapter on Practices of Piety was considerably enlarged. The power to issue dimissorial letters was denied, and the article suppressed. It was instead suggested, if the Holy Father should wish to grant it, that the power to issue dimissorial letters for a candidate to be ordained in the diocese of residence might be given for ten years by way of privilege.[73]

In the meantime Don Bosco was not idle. The Cardinals required Don Bosco to submit a set of regulations for the Novitiate, and Don Bosco immediately responded. Having obtained constitutions of other religious congregations, he worked through the night of March 27-28 and produced that chapter for the Cardinals.[74] Then, having been shown (March 28) Gastaldi's letter of April 20, 1873 to Cardinal Bizzarri, he undertook to compose a rebuttal (March 29) in the form of a 12-point Memorandum that he sent to the Cardinals and to Archbishop Vitelleschi.[75]

Second Session and Definitive Approval

The second session of the Special Congregation was held on March 31, 1874, and the drastically revised text (in line with Gastaldi's demands as regards formation) was finally approved, though not without "a fight." The debate revolved around a suggestion made by one of the cardinals that the constitutions should be approved on a 10-year trial basis. But the good offices of Cardinal Berardi and of the Holy Father himself helped to win a 3-1 vote for definitive approval.

On April 3 Secretary Vitelleschi in a long audience reported to Pius IX (who cast his own vote to make it "unanimous"). With the same date he wrote the report announcing the affirmative vote (*affirmative ad mentem*), with a 5-point "explanation" stating the understanding behind the vote.

[73] The changes and emendations introduced are recorded in *IBM* X, 809-819 (omitted in *EBM* X, 378-380, except for what concerns the chapter on the novitiate, see footnote that follows).

[74] The new chapter on the novitiate (only) as finally approved is edited in *EBM* X, 377-380.

[75] Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 267-270; *EBM* X, 364-366 (emend "Card. Caterini" to read "Card. Bizzarri.")

4. Report on the Approval of the Salesian Constitutions by Archbishop Salvatore Vitelleschi, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars[76]

On March 24 and 31, 1874, special meetings were held by the most eminent Cardinals Patrizi, De Luca, Bizzarri and Martinelli of the Holy Roman Church. Presented with a question for approval, they were of the opinion that the answer should be *Affirmative et ad mentem* [Affirmative and as explained below].

Explanation

[1] The observations made by the consultor Father Bianchi in his report of May 9, 1873 […] must be inserted in the constitutions.

[2] Citation must be made in the aforesaid constitutions of two well-known decrees of the Sacred Congregation concerning religious, *Romani Pontifices* and *Regularis Disciplinae* of January 25, 1848.

[3] Moreover all those modifications and amendments listed by the secretary [of the Sacred Congregation] in the margin of the enclosed copy and the additional articles, mainly concerning Chapter 14, *De Novitiorum magistro eorumque regimine* and Chapter 4, *De voto paupertatis* listed on a separate sheet, must be incorporated in the said constitutions.

[4] In regard to the second observation made by the consultor Father Bianchi concerning the faculty of issuing dimissorial letters for Holy Orders, this privilege should be sought from the Holy Father for a period of ten years in conformity with the decree of Pope Clement VIII, March 15, 1596, *Impositis Nobis*, with the usual clauses of suspension for those priests who might leave the Salesian Congregation, until they shall have acquired an ecclesiastical patrimony. Such privilege, if conferred by His Holiness, should not be inserted in the constitutions but is to be granted in a separate rescript.

[5] A petition may be made to the Holy Father for approval of these constitutions thus amended and amplified, said approval being definitive and perpetual according to the opinion of three of the eminent Fathers, and experimental and temporary in the opinion of one.

[† Salvatore Vitelleschi
Archbishop of Seleucia]

Father Joachim Berto (Don Bosco's secretary) diligently made a calligraphic copy of the revised and approved text (*Q*), and Don Bosco presented the

[76] *EBM* X, 367.

manuscript to Pope Pius IX for approval and for filing with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Father Berto then made a second calligraphic copy for the Salesian archives.[77]

4. Summary of Results Obtained

Thus it was that despite his diplomatic efforts for the *Exequaturs* and the prestige he had thereby acquired in Roman circles; despite the steady outpouring of memorandums in his own defense and his frenzied activity to further his cause; despite his friendship with Pius IX, with Cardinal Antonelli, with Cardinal Berardi, and with Archbishop Vitelleschi, Don Bosco did not prevail. The cardinals of the Special Congregation had worked within the fixed traditional juridical principles, which were axiomatic in the matter of the approval of a religious congregation: ecclesiastical centralization, total binding force of vows reserved to the Pope, even though simple, independence from the State's juridical order, experimental gradualism, freedom of conscience for the members, etc. Proximately, the cardinals' work was guided by the *Critical Observations* of 1864 (enjoined again in 1869), by the thoroughgoing ones of 1873, and also no doubt by Archbishop Gastaldi's insistent demands.

Consequently Don Bosco's novel concepts, which made the Society new and special (flexibility in structures, freedom of action, relating to new political realities, etc.) were either erased or greatly reduced in force. Likewise all references to times and places, representing historical experiences that Don Bosco considered charismatic and normative were expunged, with the removal of the first two chapters and of references in the rest of the text. The constitutions on extern Salesians, an unheard of idea, had been previously removed.

He obtained from Pope Pius IX the power to issue dimissorial letters for the ordination of Salesian candidates, but apart from the constitutions and by a separate Rescript–a privilege limited to ten years and applicable only to members with *perpetual* vows.[78]

[77] The approved text is in *ASC* D4730106, *FDBM* 1,912 E2ff., critically edited as text *Q* in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 73ff. This is not a printed text, for protocol required that an approved text should be submitted and filed in manuscript form. Nor does the critical edition assign a lower case letter for the writer, because it is a calligraphic copy. For the decree see Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 253, *EBM* X, 372-373.

[78] Cf. separate Rescript in *EBM* X, 373.

Yet even in defeat Don Bosco claimed victory. The short letter by which, on the very day of the Decree, April 13, 1874 he notified Archbishop Gastaldi had a ring of triumph and a touch of mischievous glee about it: "I have just received the decree of the definitive approval of our constitutions. It bears today's date. Since your Grace has at all times spoken in our favor [*ci ha sempre raccomandati*], I want you to be the first to know."[79]

5. Closing Comment

Throughout the process of approval the issue was between what, in Don Bosco's view, the times required (a different kind of congregation for a new historical situation) and the established canonical tradition guiding the actions of the Roman authorities. Whereas the established tradition required ecclesiastical control and centralization, Don Bosco wanted a free hand, that is, independence from local ordinaries and in some ways also from Rome. Whereas the established tradition regarded vows, even simple vows, as totally binding, and subject only to papal control, Don Bosco had a more flexible idea of the vows, and wanted power to dispense from vows when necessary.[80] Whereas in established tradition religious congregations were subject to the Church's juridical order, and independent from the state's, Don Bosco wanted his congregation to be recognized as such by the Church and yet to be in line with the juridical principles of the liberal state–that is, an association of free citizens retaining their civil rights, and not a religious corporation, nor a corporation of any kind. Whereas established tradition was for granting recognition and privileges only by degrees (experimental gradualism), Don Bosco wanted everything at once. Whereas established tradition safeguarded the member's freedom of conscience, Don Bosco wanted manifestation of conscience from the members, in view not only of spiritual direction, but of their availability for the apostolate.

As indicated, the cardinals of the Special Commission did not accept any of his proposals on these points. And yet Don Bosco was substantially

[79] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, April 13, 1874 in Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 277; *EBM* X, 376. Note Amadei's comments in connection with this notification of the approval [*EBM* X, 376-377].

[80] This is how Don Bosco interpreted Pius IX's statement, which he cited: "This Society must have vows [...], but these vows should be simple and such as to be easily dissolved" [*Breve notizia*, 1864, in *IBM* VII, 892, (omitted in *EBM*)].

pleased with the outcome; in some respects it surpassed his expectations. The Society and its constitutions had indeed lost much of the suppleness and versatility he had endowed them with, but they nonetheless remained, in his view, a sufficiently apt and viable tool for the Salesian apostolate.

Thus on March 4, the day following the approval by the Special Congregation, he wrote exultantly to Father Rua:

> Our constitutions have been definitively approved, with the power to issue dimissorial letters without restrictions. When you learn the details, you'll know that it all came about because of your prayers. The Holy Father granted this concession yesterday at seven in the evening. But for now keep it "under wraps."[81]

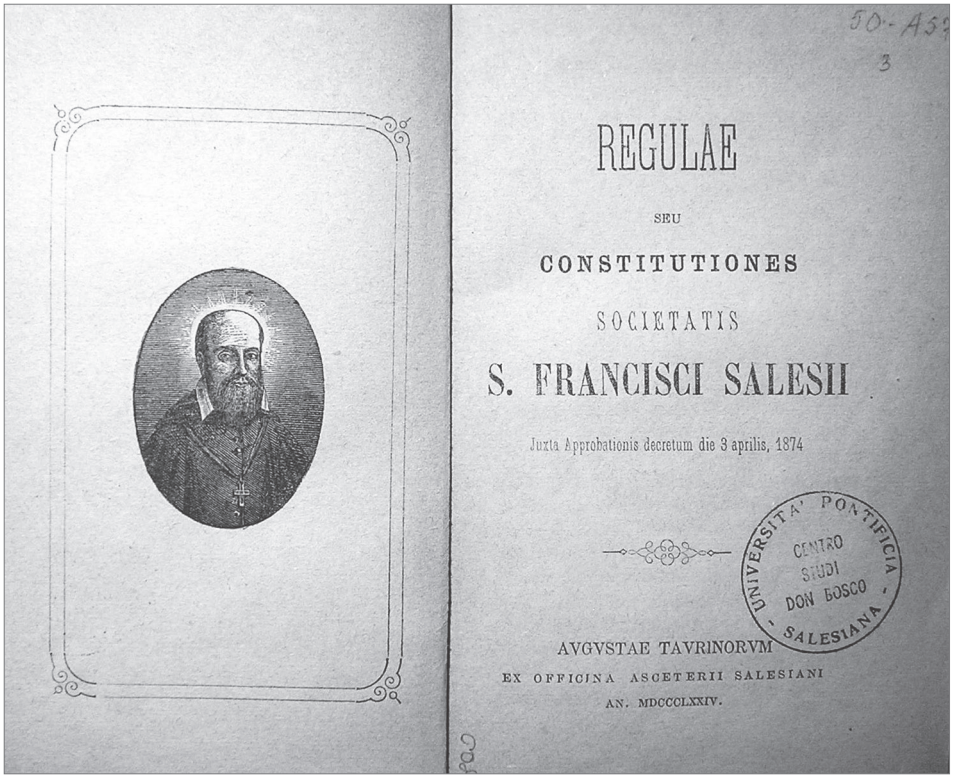
Clearly the concession mentioned here referred to the privilege of issuing dimissorial letters for the ordination of Salesians candidates. It was obviously not without restrictions, though it no longer set an entrance age requirement for a candidate (fourteen years or under). But Don Bosco, in a private audience with Pius IX on April 8, obtained what was perhaps an even more significant concession. For in their definitive form, the constitutions did indeed embody the substance of Gastaldi's demands regarding novitiate and studies. Pope Pius IX, however, made concessions by way of privilege in matters that the cardinals had refused to grant in the constitutional text itself. In that audience of April 8 Don Bosco had obtained from Pius IX *vivae vocis oraculo* (by an unwritten papal pronouncement) a concession to implement a type of novitiate *different* from that demanded by Gastaldi and approved in the constitutions.[82]

And these are the "modified" constitutions he gave to his Salesians in the "official" Latin and Italian editions of 1874 and 1875–not the text approved by the Roman Congregation and filed in the Vatican and Salesian Archives, but a text emended throughout and modified at strategic spots in accordance with the concessions he had obtained directly from Pius IX *vivae vocis oraculo*.[83]

[81] Don Bosco to Father Michael Rua, April 4, 1874, in Motto, *Epistolario* IV, 275-276.

[82] *EBM* X, 368, 370.

[83] The modified Latin and Italian texts (1874 and 1875) are given in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 73ff. with the designations T and V. The approved Latin text (*Q*) and the emended Latin text of 1874 are given side by side in *IBM* X, 956-993 (omitted in *EBM*). See study by Germano Proverbio, "La prima edizione latina ufficiale delle costituzioni salesiane dopo l'approvazione pontificia," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 3 (1984) 93-109.



15 – Official Latin text of the Constitutions printed by Don Bosco in Turin for the Salesians (1874)

In practice, therefore, the concessions amounted to a defeat of the Archbishop. They also reflected a difference in the position taken by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, attentive to Gastaldi's objections, and that taken by Pius IX, favoring Don Bosco. Gastaldi was fully aware of the Pope's favor, and he perceived the ambiguity of the solution as humiliating. Thus with the approval of the constitutions the tension between the two persisted, and the attitude of the Archbishop and of his chancery toward the Salesians became significantly more hostile.[84]

Perhaps because he had received neither an official notification from Rome nor an authentic copy of the constitutions and of the Decree, Ga-

[84] See *EBM* X, 380-417 for details and the increasing animosity of the correspondence.

staldi persisted in demanding of the Roman Congregation a clear statement regarding the approval of the Salesian Society.[85] His thinking in the months that followed is most clearly expressed in his letter to Pius IX of October 4, 1874,[86] as well as in the cited Report *ad limina*. In both documents he assembled all his standard complaints about Don Bosco and the Salesians. But in the second he dared express the hope that when the Vatican Council should be reconvened, and the matter of novitiate and of formation of religious should be taken up, the competence of the diocesan bishop to judge the suitability of candidates for the religious life should be recognized, and the bishop's right *diligently to examine* religious previous to their being admitted to sacred orders should likewise be maintained. [87]

He apparently intended to fight on. The manner in which he annotated Don Bosco's letter bearing the news of the approval was an omen of more strife to come. As reported by the biographer, he wrote and underscored the words: "April 13, 1874 – Don Bosco – Notification of the definitive approval of his institute, *which, however, is not definitive*."[88]

[85] Archbishop Gastaldi to Archbishop Vitelleschi, September 3, 1874, in *EBM* X, 393-394. In his Report *ad limina* of December 31, 1874 Gastaldi complained: "[The Salesian Congregation] now claims to have the *definitive* approval of the Holy See. But the Pontifical Decree granting this kind of approval is still to be shown to me." [Tuninettti, *Gastaldi* II, 270, note 49 (citing document from the archdiocesan archives)].

[86] Archbishop Gastaldi to Pope Pius IX, October 4, 1874, in *EBM* X, 396-402.

[87] Cf. Tuninetti, *Gastaldi II,* 270, note 49 (citing document from the archdiocesan archives).

[88] *EBM* X, 376 (no source cited).

Appendices

1. Archbishop Salvatore Vitelleschi's Twenty-Eight Observations on the Salesian Constitutions (July 26, 1873)

Note: The Secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Archbishop Salvatore Vitelleschi, officially handed down to Don Bosco twenty-eight observations on points of the constitutional text that needed emendation. They were drawn up by on the basis of thirty-eight observations made by the consultor (examiner), Fr. Raymond Bianchi, O.P. on May 9, 1873.
The 38 Bianchi observations are given in *IBM* X, 934-940 (Appendix xiii); and the 28 Vitelleschi observations, in *IBM* X, 941-943 (Appendix xiv). Both are omitted in *EBM*.
The events connected with this action by the Sacred Congregation are related in context in IBM X, 726-728 (briefly referred to in EBM X, 335-336).
Don Bosco's response is described in *IBM* X, 746-755 (omitted in *EBM* X, 346).

Summary of the Preceding [Bianchi's 38] Observations Handed down to the Priest Fr. John Bosco Regarding the Constitutions Submitted in the Year 1873

[Introduction][89]

The thirteen observations given to you in March 1869 [actually, first in 1864 and again in 1869 with the approval of the Salesian Society] have for the most part been overlooked in the new draft of the constitutions. It is our absolute will that they should be taken into account. The fear of reprisal from the [civil] authorities, which is given as the reason for not accepting some of the observations, cannot be regarded as sufficient justification. The same norms have been written into the constitutions of many religious institutes in existence in Italy at present [with no adverse effects]. After all, there is no need to publish the constitutions in print, or to submit them in their entirety to the government.

[The 28 New Observations]

1. Since it is contrary to the Holy See's practice to approve a preamble and a historical commendation of the Institute, these two opening chapters should be removed from the constitutions.

[89] Words in square brackets are the translator's.

2. The *special* listing of titles of good books should also be removed; for it might be taken as a *blanket* approval by the Holy See of books published or to be published.

3. The repeated mention in the constitutions of lay civil rights and of the duty to abide by civil laws should be removed.

4. Clearer and more detailed norms for the observance of the vow of poverty should be established; the norms are those given in *Collectanea S.C. Episcoporum et Regularium*, No. 859.

5. The retention of simple benefices by seminarians and priests as provided for in the constitutions is not in keeping with the spirit of a religious institute. The constitutions should state that these cease with the taking of perpetual vows, unless such benefices are in the possession of the member's family.

6. The provision permitting modification of the constitutions as stated should include a statement that such modifications are subject to approval by the Holy See.

7. Obligatory manifestation of conscience as laid down in the constitutions *is not admissible.* Voluntary manifestation might be acceptable, but it should in any case be limited to the external observance of the constitutions and to progress in virtue.

8. The *canonical* age required for the office of Superior General should be *forty* years; for that of General Councilors, thirty-five, with at least five years of profession; and for that of Master of Novices, likewise thirty-five years, but with at least *ten* of profession.

9. The election of the Superior General and of the General Councilors is to be made only by the electors present [at the Chapter] and by an absolute majority, *not otherwise.*

10. The composition of the General Chapter shall be as in other institutes. The perpetually professed members of the house in which the Chapter is held shall not be admitted; for otherwise professed members of other houses would have a legitimate grievance.

11. The General Councilors are elected by the General Chapter without exception; all of them shall reside with the Superior General.

12. It is not customary that the Superior General designate one who, after his death, should govern the Institute until the General Chapter is convened for the election of a successor. It is customary, on the other hand, that one of the principal authorities in the Institute serve in this capacity.

13. The admission and dismissal of novices and professed members, as well as the appointment of local superiors and of the chief officers of the Institute is the prerogative of the General Council. This is the Holy See's custom. What is laid down in the constitutions in this regard runs contrary to custom.

14. At least three or four persons, and not just two as allowed in the constitutions, are required to open a house; and at least two of these should be priests.

15. The Master of Novices should not hold other offices; hence the Spiritual Director or Catechist cannot, as stated in the constitutions, be Master of Novices, precisely because he already holds other offices.

16. The Constitutions lack any provision with regard to the novitiate. The novitiate should be set up in accordance with Clement VIII's Constitution *Regularis disciplinae* and with the other prescriptions of canon law. Of special importance are the prescriptions which relate to housing novices in a house of novitiate, to their total separation from the professed, and to their being engaged solely in spiritual exercises and not in any of the works of the Institute.

17. Likewise the Constitutions lack any provision with regard to studies. All candidates for the priesthood should spend four years in the study of theology, whether in a special house of studies of the Institute or in a seminary; and should not be engaged during that period in the works of the Institute.

18. The phrase, *prout regulae societatis patientur* [as the rules of the Society will allow], where it occurs in the constitutions, should be substituted with *juxta praescripta SS. Canonum* [in accordance with the prescriptions of canon law], or some similar expression.

19. The requirement that a prospective candidate obtain his parents' permission to enter the Institute may be a practical measure dictated by prudence, but may not be laid down as a condition in the constitutions.

20. It is not customary for institutes of men to require an entrance fee, as is laid down in the constitutions. This clause should preferably be removed.

21. The phrase *aliquot dies* [for a few days] (in reference to the spiritual retreat prescribed in the Constitutions) should be replaced with *per decem dies* [for ten days].

22. A requirement is laid down with regard to the health of a candidate for the novitiate. What about after the novitiate?

23. For the sake of allowing greater freedom of choice it is ordinarily required that two or three confessors be designated for each house. Hence the requirement of "one confessor" should be modified accordingly.

24. The Confessors, whether for the pupils or for the members, should preferably be approved by the ordinary.

25. The permission of the Holy See is required in order to institute a lawsuit before a civil tribunal. This should be noted at the appropriate place.

26. In addition to the General Chapter to be convened every twelve years for elections, General Chapters should be held every three years to deal with important affairs of the Institute. The acts of all Chapters should be submitted the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for examination and approval.

27. It is not appropriate that the Superior General should have the power to dispense from the spiritual retreat, as provided for in the constitutions.

28. With reference to ordinations the constitutions say, "*videlicet ex privilegiis congregationum quae tamquam ordines regulares habentur* [that is, in accordance with the privi-

leges granted to those congregations that are regarded as regular orders]. This would imply that the Superior General has the power of issuing dimissorial letters–a power that has already been denied. Such a concession would be objected to by ordinaries, and would in any case be an exception to the general law. Occasional exceptions granted by the Holy See may not be invoked as a precedent, especially if objected to by ordinaries. Furthermore, the lack of a regular novitiate and of a regular course of studies would discourage the granting of such concessions.

2. Don Bosco's Response to Archbishop Vitelleschi's Twenty-Eight Observations

The sign [+] means that Don Bosco complied; the sign [-] means that he did not comply; and the sign [+/-] means that he complied only in part.

[Introduction]

In response to Secretary Vitelleschi's 28 observations Don Bosco revised the constitutions and had the revised text printed in Rome at *Propaganda Fide*. The wording of Secretary Vitelleschi's *Introduction* (above) seem to assume that not only the observations of 1864-69 but also the present ones of 1873 were non-negotiable ("It is our absolute will"). Don Bosco, however, in revising the text thought otherwise.

In a *memorandum* accompanying the presentation of the new text, he stated that he had "accepted most of the 28 observations" that had been handed down to him. However, "in the case of a number of them" he had "made some accommodation." In the case of "some articles" he had held his ground "solely to safeguard his Institute from shipwreck in the fierce storm of civil law;" but he had done so also on the strength of recent advice received.

Here then is a summary description of how he re-worked the text in response to the observations received.

[Don Bosco's Response]

(1) **Observation 1** called for the removal of the first two chapters of the constitutions, the Preamble (*Prooemium*) and the Historical Summary (*De ejusdam Societatis primordiis*).

[+/-] Don Bosco removed these chapters from the text itself, but kept them in italics as a kind of double preface.

(2) **Observations 2, 7, 19, 20 and 22** called for the suppression of various items.

[+] [i] Don Bosco removed the mention of the *Catholic Readings* and of the *Library of Italian Classics for the Young*. [ii] He struck the clause on obligatory manifestation of conscience (*rendiconto*), limiting the manifestation to the observance of the constitutions and to progress in virtue. [iii] He abolished the requirement of parents' consent for entrance into the Congregation, as well as [iv] the requirement of entrance fees or dowries. [v] He struck the clause requiring certification of sufficient health for an aspirant so that at least during the novitiate he would be able to observe all the constitutions.

(3) **Observation 3** called for the removal of clauses mentioning the member's civil rights as citizens and their abiding by the civil law.

[+/-] Don Bosco accepted this observation only in part. [i] In art 2 of the chapter, "Local Houses", he merely retained the general reference, "never to act contrary to Church and civil law." [ii] In art 2 of the chapter, "Form of the Society", he devised a simpler formula: "No one on entering the society, even after making vows, forfeits his civil rights. Hence he can validly and licitly acquire and sell property, as well as make a last will and testament and receive inheritance. However, as long as he remains in the Society [...]." This was *similar* to what other religious institutes had in their constitutions. But by such a formula Don Bosco expressed the essence of religious poverty in terms of complete renunciation of the administration of goods, rather than in terms of radical dominion only. This, he felt, both satisfied the Church's demand regarding the canonical vow of poverty and put him in the clear before the state.

(4) **Observation 4** called for clearer constitutional provisions regarding the observance of the vow of poverty, in accordance with the directives *of Collectanea S.C. Episcoporum et regularium*, N. 859.[90]

[-] On this point Don Bosco did not modify what he had written in the chapters on the "Form of the Society" and on the "Vow of Poverty" [namely that the members retained civil rights of ownership, etc.]. It was his conviction that this solution offered the best guarantee against reprisals by the government. He merely added a footnote stating that the two chapters in question had been taken almost literally from the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Schools of Charity [Cavanis Brothers of Venice] approved by Gregory XVI.

(5) **Observation 5** demanded that seminarians and priests resign from simple benefices on their perpetual profession, except from such as were in their personal

[90] Article N. 859 of the Register of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars reads: "Professed religious with simple vows may retain the radical dominion (as it is called) of their goods; but they may neither administer them, nor dispose of or use the income therefrom. Hence before their profession they must give over both the administration of their goods, and the income and use thereof, for the whole period of their vows, to whomever they choose–even to their Congregation, if that is what they want to do."

possession or in the possession of the family. Accordingly, it called for emendation of art. 4 and 5 of the chapter, "Form of This Society", which allowed members to retain simple benefices without any qualification.

[-] Don Bosco left the articles in question unchanged in the conviction that retention of benefices (without administration and use by the member) infringed neither on the practice of poverty nor on the form of a religious institute.

(6) **Observations 6, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25 and 26** required modifications to conform to the practice obtaining in all religious institutes. Specifically they made the following demands: [i] that approval by the Holy See should be obtained for deliberations of General Chapters to be in force; [ii] that three member, of whom two priests, should be required to open a new house; [iii] that priestly ministry should be exercised not "in so far as the rules of the Society permit," but "in accordance with the prescriptions of canon law;" [iv] that an aspirant should be required to make a 10-day spiritual retreat before entering the Society; [v] that more than one confessor should be provided in every house; [vi] that permission should be obtained from the Holy See to enter into litigation in civil courts; [vii] that a General Chapter should be held every three years, and that its acts should be approved by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

[+] Don Bosco complied in all cases, making modifications either at the place suggested by the examiner, or at some other appropriate place.

(7) **Observation 24**, referring to art 2 of the chapter, "Individual Houses", called for approval by the ordinary of confessors appointed by the Rector [Major].

[-] Don Bosco did not comply with this suggestion; he felt that this was unnecessary since, in accordance with custom established in religious congregations, authorization by the superior sufficed for hearing the members' confessions.

(8) **Observation 27** called for the suppression of the provision (in art 8 of the chapter, "Practices of Piety") which granted the Superior General the power to dispense from the spiritual retreat and from other practices of piety.

[-] Don Bosco did not comply with this demand. The probable reason was that he needed his freedom in the matter, since he had to do this often on account of scarcity of personnel and their manifold commitments. But there may also have been an ideological reason, namely, the priority given by Don Bosco to "the fervent exercise of charity toward neighbor" over practices of piety.

[**Observations 8-13 and 15** dealt with age requirements and various other matters relating to elective offices.]

(9) **Observation 8** required the minimum age of 40 for the Superior General; of 35, and 5 of profession, for General Councilors; of 35, and 10 of profession, for the Master of Novices.

[+/-] Don Bosco modified the requirement for the Rector Major (art. 1 of the chapter, 'The Rector Major's Election'), though only in part: 35 years of age and 10 of profession. For the rest he declared his readiness to comply, if the Holy See was

ready to make exceptions, since most Salesians at the time would be below canonical age.

(10) **Observation 9** required that the election of the Rector Major and of his Council be by absolute majority and by the General Chapter.

[-] Don Bosco did not comply, but modified Articles 5 and 6 of the chapter, "The Election of the Rector Major." He wrote an additional article providing for the election of the Rector Major by the members of the General Council with the director of each house and a delegate elected by the professed members in each house. He also modified Article 1 of the chapter, "The Other Superiors", providing for the election of the members of the General Council in the same way.

(11) **Observation 10** required that the General Chapter be composed as customary in religious institutes, and that "all the perpetually professed members of the house where the Chapter is held" be excluded, for this would be discriminatory against the perpetually professed members of other houses.

[-] Don Bosco did not comply, apparently in the belief that the modifications already introduced regarding frequency, manner of convocation, and composition of the Chapter for the Rector Major's election, were sufficient.

(12) **Observation 11** required that all the members of the General Council (including the Prefect General and the Spiritual Director) should be elected by the General Chapter and reside in the same house as the Rector Major.

[-] Don Bosco complied neither with the first requirement, apparently because he thought it right that the Rector Major should pick his two closest collaborators himself; nor with the second, probably because implementation would have been difficult at the time.

(13) **Observation 12** called for the suppression (in the chapter, "Internal Government of the Society") of the provision empowering the Rector Major to designate beforehand (keeping the name secret) the person who at his death should govern the Institute until the General Chapter was convened for the election of a successor.

[+] Don Bosco complied by suppressing the whole article, and by substituting "Prefect" where there was mention of the designated temporary Vicar.

(14) **Observation 13** called for a modification of the provision (in art. 1 and 3 of the chapter, "Admissions") by which the admissions and dismissals of novices and professed members was reserved to the Superior General (contrary to custom). It also pointed out that according the art. 16 of the chapter, "Other Superiors", such actions were the prerogative of the General Council.

[+] Don Bosco complied by modifying the former provision in terms of the latter. But he also added the clause (in art. 3 of the chapter, "Admissions") that in the absence of the General Council or for some other just reason the Superior General alone could take action in those matters, with the consent of local councils.

(15) **Observation 15** stressed that the Master of Novices should hold no other

office, and that therefore the Spiritual Director (Catechist) could not be Master of Novices.

[+] Don Bosco cleared up the matter by specifying (in art 9 of the chapter, "Other Superiors", that the care of the novices is particularly entrusted to the Spiritual Director "together with their Novice Master;" and especially by adding a whole new chapter, "The Master of Novices and Their Direction" [see immediately below].

(16) **Observation 16** noted the total absence of a constitution regarding the novitiate and called for such a constitution in accordance with Pope Clement VIII's Constitution, *Regularis disciplinae* (Of the Discipline of Religious Orders), and with other canonical rules. The novices should reside in a special house of novitiate, be separated from the professed, be totally engaged in their spiritual exercises, and not be engaged in the work of the Society.

[-] Don Bosco compiled an extensive chapter, "The Master of Novices and Their Direction", in a way that revealed his idea of the Salesian novitiate, but that did not comply with the observation. [It is given here in its entirety, characteristic clauses being highlighted.]

[1] Every candidate, before being definitively admitted to the Society, must undergo *three trials*.

The first trial precedes the novitiate and is called aspirantate (postulancy); the second is the novitiate itself; and the third is the period of triennial vows.

[2] Hence in addition to established requirements for admission, it is hereby laid down that the Master of Novices shall carefully observe the candidate's conduct to determine whether, in the superiors' judgment and before the Lord, he will be likely to give greater glory to God and bring benefit to the Society.

[3] As a rule for the first trial it is sufficient that the candidate have spent a few years in a house of the Society, or have attended the schools of the Congregation, and have given proof of virtue and intelligence.

[4] If the candidate seeking admission is an adult, at the very start of the first trial he shall make a spiritual retreat. He shall then be employed for a few months in various tasks in the Congregation, so that he may have an opportunity to learn and to practice the kind of life he wishes to embrace. At the same time the Master of Novices and the other superiors shall observe the candidate to determine whether he is suitable for the Salesian Congregation.

[5] Throughout the period of the first trial the Master of Novices and the other superiors shall take note and report to the General Council anything regarding the candidate that they may think appropriate before the Lord to report.

[6] *Once the first trial is over and the candidate has been received into the Congregation* [*second trial* or novitiate] the Master of Novices shall at once take him under his care, and shall leave nothing undone that may help him in the observance of the constitutions and regulations.

[7] The Master of Novices shall make every effort (a) to show himself amiable,

mild and full of gentle goodness, so that the novices will open their hearts to him regarding anything that may be conducive to perfection; (b) to provide his charges with guidance and instruction in all the rules generally, but especially in those that pertain to the practice of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience; (c) to get everyone to observe with exemplary regularity all that is prescribed regarding the practices of piety of our institute; (d) regularly to hold a weekly conference on a moral topic; (e) with great gentleness to call each novice to make his *spiritual manifestation at least once a month*.

[8] It is the purpose of our Congregation to educate young people, especially poorer ones, in studies [*scienza*] and in the faith [*religione*], and so to guide them through worldly dangers on the way to salvation. Hence, during the second trial each novice shall be seriously engaged in study, in teaching day and evening classes, in teaching catechism to children, and even in assisting the ones that are more seriously in need [*nei casi più gravi*]. If the candidate shall have shown in all these exercises that he can work for the greater glory of God and the good of the Congregation, and that he has been exemplary in the observance of the practices of piety and in the practical exercise of charity–then the second trial shall be regarded as completed. If not, the trial may be prolonged for an additional few months or even for one additional year.

[9] *Once the candidate has completed his novitiate and has been accepted into the Congregation*, with the Novice Master's agreement, the General Council may admit him to triennial vows. The period of triennial vows is the *third trial*.

[10] For the period of his third trial the member may be sent to any house in the Congregation, where he shall work at any task that may be assigned to him. The Director of the house shall care for the new member as the Novice Master did during the novitiate.

[11] *Through these trials, the Novice Master* shall recommend and gently inculcate the practice of mortification of the external senses, and in a particular manner the virtue of sobriety. But much prudence should be exercised in the matter of mortification, and care should be taken that physical health is not impaired to the point that the member is unable to do the work proper of our Institute.

[12] When these three trials have been satisfactorily completed, and the member has resolved to remain permanently in the Congregation, the General Council may grant his wish and admit him to perpetual vows.[91]

[91] Remarkably, the Master of Novices is active in each of the three trials–not only with the novices, but also with the pre-novices (aspirants) and with the Salesians in triennial vows. He seems to act as a general director of formation. It may also be noted that nowhere in the chapter is there any mention of a "house of novitiate." Perhaps it might be inferred from articles 3 and 10, but this is doubtful. However, by 1879 Don Bosco had established a house of novitiate at San Benigno (ca. 30 km. N of Turin). In any case, Don Bosco's novitiate as described in this chapter is not a traditional ascetical novitiate.

(17) **Observation 17** likewise noted the absence of a constitution on a regular studies program and called for such a constitution. This should include the explicit provision that all candidates for the priesthood should spend four years in the study of theology in a house of the Institute set aside for that purpose, or in a diocesan seminary. Also they should not be engaged for that period of time in the works of the Institute.

[-] Don Bosco pointed out that for the moment he could not establish a special separate house for this purpose, and that, if he did, it would have to be submitted for approval to the Ministry of Public Education in accordance with the laws of the state. He also noted that teaching catechism and assisting pupils need not be incompatible with a proper course of studies, and that by doing so clerical students would show their ability and willingness to take on the work of the Institute. Don Bosco, however, declared himself in agreement with a four year program, and drafted and inserted a short chapter on "Studies" as follows:

[1] Priests and all candidates to the priesthood in the Society shall seriously apply themselves to ecclesiastical studies.

[2] They shall apply themselves with serious attention first and principally to the study of the Bible, of Church History, and of Dogmatic, Systematic and Moral Theology. In addition they shall study those authors and treatises that deal specifically with the education of young people in the faith.

[3] Our masters shall be St. Thomas and those authors who have achieved recognition for their work in catechetics and in Catholic religious education.

[4] Each member, besides attending daily lectures, shall compose a course of meditations and instructions [for a spiritual retreat], suitable in the first place for young people, and then more generally adapted to the faithful at large.

(18) **Observation 28** was the most serious of all. It concerned the coveted power to grant *dimissorial letters for ordination*.

Art. 4 of the chapter, "Religious Government of the Society," provided for Salesian candidates to the priesthood to be ordained by the local ordinary, "*in accordance with the custom approved for congregations that have a communion of houses* [houses in various dioceses, centrally united], *and in accordance with privileges granted to congregations that are regarded as regular orders*." (In a note appended to this article Don Bosco stated that it had been taken almost literally from the *Constitutions of the Oblates of B.V.M.*, Part 2, paragraph 1.)

Observation 28 rejected this argument as unavailing, and cited the fact that the Superior General [Don Bosco] had already asked for, and had already been denied, the power of granting dimissorial letters.

[-] Don Bosco countered by claiming that the denial had been due to the fact that in 1869 only the Society, not the Constitutions, were up for approval. He added that he had nevertheless obtained that faculty for ten years, applicable to those candidates who had entered a Salesian house at an age of 14 or younger; that he had

also obtained it by special privilege for others who had entered after their 14th year. In any case, by the constitution in question he was not asking for a blanket privilege, but only for the restricted power to issue dimissorial letters to a local ordinary, since the article spoke of ordination by the bishop of the diocese, in accordance with Clement VIII's Decree of March 3, 1596. (Art. 4 was eventually removed in 1874 by the Special Congregation of four cardinals.)

(19) No *new* observation had been made demanding the removal of the chapter, "Extern Salesians." Hence Don Bosco kept it as an appendix, after the *Formula for Profession*.

3. Comments on Significant Issues Relating to the Salesian Society

The Novitiate

The Salesian Constitutions were criticized for not providing for appropriate structures for religious and priestly formation, a deficiency that reflected perhaps a real lack in the group. As discussed above, this was Archbishop Gastaldi's view, and one of the reasons why he opposed the approval of the Constitutions in the seventies and the granting of "privileges" in the eighties. The lack of a constitution on the novitiate was especially remarkable.

It is sometimes said that Don Bosco was for an open, as opposed to a closed, novitiate. But, he was probably not thinking in those terms. Novitiate meant only one think–the spiritual and ascetic internship preparatory to being initiated to the mission work of a congregation. If the society he had in mind was a fairly loose association bonded by a private resolve and promise to work for youth, then it is probably fairer to say that he was not thinking of a "novitiate" at all. He avoided using the term "novitiate" until forced to do so by Rome, and this was not just for political reasons. He spoke instead of "a first and second trial" and of "being admitted to the practice of the rule." That is why the earlier drafts of the constitutions had a chapter on admission of candidates, but none on the novitiate. It appears therefore that even as, bowing to a higher will, he was accepting the traditional model for the congregation, he still insisted on carrying forward concepts from the earlier model that were important to him. One of these was that his young candidates were to be initiated into the group that practiced a rule for the work of charity *by practicing that rule for the work of charity*. This initiation would not be bound to a particular house, nor limited to a specific span of time. This seemed especially important because the group as a whole was oriented toward the young and toward the poor. This concept goes beyond, in fact bypasses that of "open novitiate," which is a modern cultural

adaptation of the traditional concept that would have been anachronistic in Don Bosco's day.

Even after the form of the society was modified, Don Bosco still defended this type of initiation and continued to favor training candidates in an actual working situation, a way which had all along proved valid by its excellent results (so he claimed). Pius IX seems to have been in agreement on this point.

The novitiate that was finally approved in the Salesian Constitutions by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars was the traditional ascetical novitiate of Tridentine congregations. But availing himself by the special privilege obtained from Pius IX *vivae vocis oraculo*, Don Bosco continued *for a while* to form his Salesians by the "admitting them to the practice of the Rule" and not by the traditional novitiate. It was not long, however, before he himself established a regular novitiate in basic accord with the model approved in the constitutions.

Privileges and Dimissorials

It should be borne in mind that in the 1860s and 1870s the Church was making a great effort to curb abuses among the clergy, both secular and regular, to enforce ecclesiastical discipline, and to strengthen episcopal authority to that effect. Within this reforming program the trend in Rome was to curtail privileges that were being almost routinely granted to clerical religious congregations.

These privileges consisted in partial exemption from episcopal authority, and were concerned especially with a religious congregation's government and discipline. An important aspect of exemption had to do with the program of training and formation of candidates for holy orders, and with the power of the Superior to judge the worthiness of candidates and to issue dimissorial letters to the local, or to any, bishop for their ordination. The congregations that enjoyed these and other lesser privileges were called "exempt" congregations (that is, not subject to episcopal jurisdiction in certain areas).

Aside from the fact that in those historical circumstances the Holy See was trying to strengthen episcopal authority and curtail easy exemptions, there was also the juridical question of when a congregation might obtain exemption and what credentials might be required. For instance, according to Canon Law then in force, it was not enough for exemption to have been approved as a clerical congregation.

Don Bosco began to request exemption, especially as it related to the power to issue dimissorial letters, when he first petitioned for approval in 1864, on which occasion he obtained the decretum laudis. This commendation of the institute was a first step in the process of approval, but it was not an approval. Obviously his request for the privilege of dimissorials was denied. He was, however, granted some faculties in this regard for practical reasons. But he tried to obtain more from Pius IX directly by special concession. He continued insistently to request the privilege of dimissorials

as part of the constitutions with every application for approval. These demands by Don Bosco, and the mentality that went with them, were strongly opposed by Archbishop Gastaldi and did not ingratiate him to the Roman authorities.

The privileges were granted to the Salesian Society in 1884, ten years after the definitive approval of the constitutions. They were granted by "communication" of the Redemptorist privileges, and included exemption from episcopal jurisdiction and the power to issue dimissorial letters, that is, presenting candidates of the Salesian Society for holy orders. This conferred on the Salesian Society an exempt status, which is the highest juridical category a congregation can obtain.

4. Historical Summary *(Cenno Istorico)* of 1873-1874[92]

The text is given in *Opere Edite* XXV, 231-250, as printed in 1874: *Cenno istorico sulla Congregazione di S. Francesco di Sales e relativi schiarimenti.* (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta della S. C. di Propaganda, 1874), con approvazione dell'Autorità ecclesiastica. This text is edited from archival manuscripts by Pietro Braido, *Don Bosco per i giovani* [...], 112-146, with a critical apparatus giving variants from the drafts which preceded the final edition. These prior drafts appear in the form of three manuscripts: one completely in Don Bosco's hand, and two transcribed by Father Berto, both bearing Don Bosco's corrections. The manuscripts are in *ASC* A230 *Pubblicazioni*, *FDBM* 302 A4-E11. Braido's critical edition is prefaced by an important introductory study entitled, "L'Idea della Società Salesiana nel "Cenno Istorico" di Don Bosco del 1873/1874," *Ibid*, 81-111. This *Cenno istorico*, unlike other historical summaries authored by Don Bosco to describe the origin and development of the work, deals with the idea of the Salesian Society and makes a plea for its approval in accordance with his response to the Bianchi-Vitelleschi 38/28 Observations (given above).

Beginnings of This Congregation

From 1841 to 1848 we practiced some rules that reflected the spirit of this Congregation, but we did not lead common life.

In that year (1848) a furious attack was mounted first against Church's religious orders, and subsequently and more generally against the clergy and the ecclesiastical authorities. It was a frenzied, hatred-inspired denigration of religion, the effect of which was to deter the young from the practice of the Christian life. This in turn gravely affected vocations to the religious life and to the priesthood; their numbers were reduced to practically nothing. At a time when religious institutes were being disbanded and priests were publicly reviled, imprisoned, placed under house arrest, how could vocations be fostered?

[92] Translated from P. Braido's critical edition.

At that very time, God deigned to take initiative and clearly show where the new ranks of the Church's ministry were to come from. They were to come [from the common folk], no longer from the families of the rich. The children of the rich usually attended the public schools and the best boarding schools. In such environments any idea and any inspiration to a vocation would quickly be erased. The poor, who wielded the spade or the hammer, were to be chosen instead and were to take their place in the honorable ranks of the Church's ministry.

But where were the means to come from, so that suitable premises, a program of studies, clothing, food, ecclesiastical dowry, and later the ransom from military service,[93] could be provided? Divine Providence uses us, weak though we are, as instruments; in God's hands and with God's help, we do what God wishes to accomplish. For my part, I began to take in a few peasant lads from the countryside, strengthening their number with a few apprentices from the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales who stood out for their good moral conduct and aptitude for study. They attended school regularly; but to keep these new pupils from forgetting their humble origins, and to save some money at the same time, we used them as assistants to their companions, as teachers in the evening classes, and as catechists in the several oratories established in the city of Turin. Others in increasing numbers joined that first group. The trials, the sufferings, difficulties of every sort we had to endure at the hand of the civil and scholastic authorities are hard to imagine.[94] But God blessed his work; and by 1852 we had succeeded in putting together a group of young people, who publicly and privately dedicated themselves to a variety of charitable works, thereby winning the approval of all people. The Archbishop of Turin was concerned with preserving the spirit of this new kind of work. Accordingly, in that same year (1852), he gave it his approbation and designated Father John Bosco to be its director-in-chief with all necessary and appropriate faculties.

Without drawing people's attention, we established Sunday oratories in various districts of this city; we opened schools and homes for poor youngsters. Every year we were able to send a number of young men to various diocesan seminaries, while others who had a religious vocation remained as members of the nascent congregation. By 1858 our membership included several priests and seminarians, and a few laymen. All the members led the common life and generally speaking observed the rules of the Salesian Society.

[93] On May 30, 1869 the limited exemption of clergy from military service granted each diocese in proportion to the population was abolished. But one could still get exemption by "ransom," that is, one could buy exemption from military service through paying rather stiff fees. This practice was discontinued by law of June 7, 1875.

[94] "Trials, sufferings and difficulties" may be a reference to the troubles of the "wandering oratory" days, or to Vicar Michael Cavour's "persecution" of the oratory (hence, prior to 1852, as the text implies) [*MO-En*, 244].

The Holy Father's View of This Pious Society

At the time (1858) Archbishop Fransoni, of happy memory, advised me to take steps to put on a permanent basis the work of the homes and of the Sunday oratories on which the future of so many young people depended. With a letter of introduction, he advised me to apply to the Supreme Head of the Church, the great Pius IX. This incomparable pope received me most graciously, and wished to have a detailed account of this institution: how it began, what had prompted me to start it, what was being done in it and how it was being done. Having heard me out, he said to me:

> "My dear [son], you have many things in hand; but you are mortal, and if God were to call you to the place to which every mortal is destined, what will become of these undertakings of yours?"
>
> "Most Holy Father," I replied, "this is the reason why I came and am now kneeling at your feet; and this is the import of my Archbishop's letter. [I am here] to beg Your Holiness to set out for me the fundamental principles on which an institution which would be compatible with the times and places in which we live might be based."
>
> "This is not too difficult a task [he replied]. It is a matter of living in the world without drawing the world's attention. But [have no fear;] if this work is in accordance with the will of God, God will enlighten us. Go now and pray; then come back after a few days, and I will disclose my mind to you."

A week later I returned to the Holy Father. As soon as he saw me, he spoke to me as follows:

> "Your undertaking can do a lot of good to poor young people. But it seems to me that in these troublesome times a religious association, society or congregation is needed. This should be based on the following fundamental principles (*basi*): it should be a society with simple vows, because without vows the necessary bond between members (*soci*), and between leaders and members (*superiori ed inferiori*), would be lacking. The manner of dress, the practices of piety, should be such as not to attract the world's attention. The rules should be mild and easy to keep. A way should be found by which a member is a religious as far as the Church is concerned, and a free citizen in civil society (*sia religioso in faccia alla Chiesa e nella civile società sia un libero cittadino*). It might be preferable to call such an organization a society rather than a congregation, so that it may attracts little attention. Try to bring your rules into compliance with these principles, and when you are done, give your work to Cardinal Gaudi [Gaude]; he will report to me in due time."

With the Holy Father's special blessing, and guided by the foundation principles (*basi*) proposed by him, I set to work without delay to bring the written constitutions, which had for several years been practiced in Turin, into compliance with what had been suggested.

Cardinal Gaudi very kindly went over the work. I treasured his observations and advice, and having sought again the Holy Father's blessing and encouragement, I returned to Turin and to our family at Valdocco.[95]

The Decree of Commendation of 1864

Thus modified, the constitutions were put through a trial period of six years, during which further modifications were introduced, as the greater glory of God seemed to demand.[96]

In the year 1864, after obtaining testimonial letters from a number of bishops, I submitted the rules to the Holy Father. He received them with his wonted kindness, and [even] showed a special interest in them. By Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars dated July 1864, he expressed his satisfaction with the work that the Salesian associates (*congregati Salesiani*) were doing. He commended and praised the Congregation, but put off to a more appropriate time the approbation of its constitutions. However, in view of the special circumstances prevalent in those times and places, he appointed the present writer superior general for life, and fixed at twelve years the term of office of his successor.

Given with the aforementioned decree were thirteen observations; and I was to respond with comments on whether they could be incorporated [into the text of the constitutions] at their appropriate place, and on how that could be done.

A letter signed by Archbishop Svegliati explained that some of the observations, the fourth in particular, which referred to dimissorial letters, had been made because the Salesian Congregation was not yet definitively approved.

Problems with the Conferral of Sacred Orders

Up to that point [1864] each diocesan bishop conferred sacred orders on our candidates in accordance with common canonical norms. Each bishop then was happy to give the newly ordained priest back to us. In other words, the bishop made

[95] Francesco Gaude, O.P. (1809-1860), professor first and then procurator general of the order, was made a cardinal in 1855, and was appointed Vicar of Rome. He was from Piedmont and a life-long friend of Don Bosco. It is assumed that Don Bosco submitted a copy of the constitutions of 1860 to Cardinal Gaude (as well as to exiled Archbishop Fransoni). But the Cardinal died in 1860, and it is not known whether he could report to the Pope.

[96] The earliest draft of the constitutions is dated 1858.

a present of the priest to that particular house, which year after year it supplied a number of seminarians to the diocese. After the Decree of Commendation, however, the situation changed. With the appointment of a superior, and with the norms governing the succession, the bishops saw the Society as a moral person. Hence the question arose whether sacred orders should be conferred in the name of the Congregation or of the ordinary. It could not be in the name of the Congregation because it lack the power to issue dimissorial letters; nor could it be in the ordinary's name because, so it was thought, the candidate belonged to a religious family. The procedure I followed then was to send a testimonial to the bishop of the diocese where my seminarians resided, and the bishop would usually accept it and confer orders on those candidates.

Finally the bishops, as though by common agreement, advised me to petition to the Holy See for the definitive approbation of the Society. Indeed a high placed and distinguished dignitary formally counseled me to do so.[97]

Approbation of the Society on March 1, 1869

The six years following on the Decree of Commendation were filled with uncertainty and difficulties. Finally, with the backing of testimonials from twenty-four bishops I went [came?] to Rome. All of them supported the approbation of the Congregation as also of the rules just as they stood when I submitted them. Hence also the faculty to issue dimissorial letters [as one of the stated provisions] was implicitly requested. I did my best to comply with the [thirteen] observations [of 1864]; and in a written statement I explained what had been introduced into the constitutions and what parts [of the constitutional text] had been modified. But I also asked that some of the observations be suspended, since it seemed to me that they applied only to the time preceding the final approbation.

Since this Society as to its basic constitution is somewhat different than most existing congregations, I have had, upon request, to provide extensive explanations to Archbishop Svegliati and Cardinal Quaglia, to the Holy Father himself, and to the distinguished Cardinal Berardi.[98]

Since my explanations have been pretty much the same in each case, I shall summarize them here in dialogue form to facilitate reading.

[97] Almost certainly the reference here is to Cardinal Giuseppe Berardi, who from 1867 on appears as Don Bosco's staunch supporter and counselor. Giuseppe Berardi (1810-1878), assistant (*sostituto*) to Secretary of State Cardinal Giovanni Antonelli, was made a cardinal in 1868.

[98] Angelo Quaglia (1802-1872), created cardinal in 1861, served as prefect of the Congregations of Bishops and Regulars and of Discipline of Regulars from 1863 on.

[1] Q/ This society–is it [established] for the good of neighbor or for that of its members?

A/ The purpose of the Society is the spiritual good of its members through the exercise of charity toward neighbor, especially toward poor young people.

[2] Q/ In accepting candidates what especially do you look for in them?

A/ In admitting candidates we look especially for virtue in them. The reason is that our Congregation is not designed for converted sinners who desire to lead a life devoted to prayer, penance and retirement. It seeks instead to admit candidates of proven moral conduct, well grounded in virtue and religious practice, and who desire to devote themselves to helping young people, especially those who are poorer and more at risk (*più poveri e pericolanti*). This is why we have up to now admitted only young people whom we have known for years, and whose life, while they were residing in our houses, was known to be in all respects exemplary.

[3] Q/ Do you have a novitiate?

A/ We do have a novitiate; but the laws in force in the places where we live do not allow us to set aside a house exclusively for that purpose. Our novitiate, which we call "time of trial" (*tempo di prova*) is held in a section of the mother house in Turin.

[4] Q/ What is the nature of this "trial?"

A/ It is a threefold trial. The first trial, which must precede the novitiate, is that of the aspirants. The second, which lasts at least one year, is the novitiate properly so called. The third is the period of triennial vows. Up to now we have admitted only those who have spent at least four to seven years in one of our houses, and have been exemplary both in their studies and in the practice of the Christian life. When that is ascertained, the aspirant is admitted to the second trial, namely, to the careful practice of the rules of the society, for at least one year, but occasionally for two or more years.

[5] Q/ What religious exercises are prescribed for novices?

A/ Novices are regularly engaged in the study and practice of the rules of the Congregation. Every morning they meet for vocal prayer, meditation, and the Rosary. They receive Holy Communion several times a week. During the day, time is set aside for spiritual reading, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, including reading in an ascetical subject, examination of conscience and spiritual communion. Every evening at a certain hour, they meet in church, and after the singing of a hymn, a reading is held in the life of the saint of the day. This is followed by the chanted Litany of Loreto and by benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. Besides these special devotions, the novices join the youngsters of the house in their common exercises, such as morning and evening prayer with appropriate short sermon, and in religious services on Sundays and holy days. These include two Masses, Matins and Lauds [from the Little Office] of the Blessed Virgin, and a sermon on the gospel of the day, all of this in the morning. In the afternoon they help with teaching catechism to

the children, and they attend the common instruction or sermon, as well as Vespers and benediction, and the like.

[6] Q/ How often do [novices] go to Confession?

A/ In accordance with our rules, they receive this holy sacrament every week from confessors designated by the superior.

[7] Q/ What further ascetical instruction do novices (*provandi*, [those on trial]) receive?

A/ Besides what has been mentioned above, they have a weekly conference with the director of novices (*provandi*). This deals with a moral subject, that is, with virtues to be practiced and with defects to be avoided; and it is usually based on some article of the constitutions.

[8] Q/ In what further activities are [novices] engaged?

A/ During this time [of trial], novices are also engaged in teaching catechism as needed, in assisting the children of the house (*stabilimento*), occasionally in teaching day or evening classes, in preparing the most backward for Confirmation or for Communion, in serving Mass, and the like. These are the most important activities of the trial period. Anyone who shows no aptitude for this kind of work is not admitted to the Congregation.

[9] Q/ What results do you obtain for the moral life [of the individuals concerned]?

A/ Results thus far have been very satisfactory. Those who pass the trial turn out to be good members. They cultivate a habit of work and shun idleness. Work is for them a necessity, and therefore they are available at any moment for anything that may redound to God's greater glory. On the other hand, those who show no aptitude for this kind of life are free to find their vocation elsewhere.

Program of Study

[10] Q/ What is your practice in the matter of required studies?

A/ No one is admitted to the Congregation as a seminarian who has not successfully completely his secondary course of studies (*corso ginnasiale ossia la retorica*, [high school]). They are then admitted to the study of philosophy for not less than two years. For this purpose they are gathered as a community in our [mother] house in Turin. Those who have to take public examinations enroll in a three-year college (*liceo*) course. I speak of *public examinations*, because the laws require that all teachers in both public and private schools be certified through a degree or a diploma. Our teachers have to obtain such certification, because those who don't are automatically excluded from teaching.

[11] Q/ Do you have trained (*idonei*) professors to teach the members of your congregation?

A/ As many of our members take public examinations, we have a sufficient

number of teachers. Should more be needed, we have the help of some of our former pupils who have gone on to a teaching career and are only too glad to help when asked to do so.

[12] Q/ How is your theological course organized?

A/ We have established a regular theological course at the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales.

[13] Q/ What areas of theology are especially emphasized?

A/ Our regular curriculum includes Biblical interpretation, Church history, as well as moral, dogmatic and systematic (*speculativa*) theology.

[14] Q/ Where do you get professors for the teaching of theology?

A/ Several members of our Society have received the doctorate in theology and serve as professors. We have also have the services of one of the most renowned professors of the archdiocesan seminary. He has been giving and is still giving lectures in theology regularly throughout the year, and at year's end he conducts examinations. He belongs to the Congregation as an external member.[99]

[15] Q/ Who are your authors, and how many years does your theological course last?

R/ Generally speaking, our master is St. Thomas Aquinas. [In particular] for moral theology, the courses are based on the works of St. Alphonsus as digested in the treatises of Mgr. [Pietro] Scavini; and for dogmatic and systematic (*speculativa*) theology, [we use the treatises] of Fr. [Giovanni] Perrone.

[Normally] it is a five-year theological course. But because of [advanced] age or other serious reason a candidate may be presented for orders after the fourth year. He is bound, however, to make up the fifth year after his ordination.

[16] Q/ How is your study of moral theology conducted?

A/ The regular course in moral theology is offered in the [motherhouse of the] Congregation. But before taking their final examinations for confessions, after completing their five-year course, our members attend for two years the conferences [in moral-pastoral theology] that are held at the Pastoral Institute for Priests (*Convitto Ecclesiastico*) at the church of the *Consolata*, under the direct supervision of the Archbishop.

[17] Q/ Is it true, as is being rumored, that your seminarians are engaged also in other activities?

A/ Our seminarians are not ordinarily so engaged. But when they have to be test-

[99] Don Bosco may be referring to Canon Dr. Francesco Marengo who, together with Fr. Dr. Roberto Murialdo, is lauded in the *Bollettino Salesiano* [6 (1882) n. 5, 92] as a faithful teacher and confessor of the older boys at the Oratory [Braido, *DB per i giovani*, 132].

By "external member" Don Bosco may mean one who was affiliated to the Salesian Society though without vows and not living in community (as described in that chapter of the Constitutions). Or he may just mean "a close friend and supporter."

ed, or when there is special need, they help with supervision in the study halls (where they can themselves study), in the dormitories, at recreation, during walks, at church and the like. These activities are undertaken only during their free time, and do not interfere with their classes or study. When necessary, some seminarians are asked also to help with teaching in the day or evening school. It should be noted, however, that all these activities are in accord with their vocation and with the basic purpose of our Society. These activities are a good preparation for the members' future work for the good of souls. Besides, their work is so regulated that there remains more than sufficient time for study and prayer. In addition, the experience gained over the past thirty-three years has shown us that being constantly busy is a strong safeguard for morality.[100] I myself have seen that those who were busiest and most active have the most pleasant memory of their formation period: they kept healthy in body and soul, and once ordained have worked with great success in the sacred ministry.

[18] Q/ Would not your seminarians have greater advantage if they attended lectures in the seminary?

A/ Our seminarians used to attend lectures in the seminary in the times when we could not provide otherwise. But as soon as it became feasible we made other arrangements even at the cost of great sacrifice. The treatises used in the seminary are different from those in use in our congregation. They are changed often, because each professor lectures from his own treatise. Furthermore the days and the hours of the seminary lectures do not agree with the timetable in use in our house. Then our seminarians would have to walk nearly four miles (*sei chilometri*) each day to and from the seminary, which takes up quite a bit of time. In addition the route to the seminary is through the most frequented and busiest area of the city. There, people's unusual manner of dress and speech, entertainers, newspapers, books, immodest (*oscene*) pictures, and all too often ridicule and contemptuous behavior, would jeopardize, as has been more than once the case, the students' virtue (*moralità*) and their very vocation.

Dimissorial Letters

Each of the above-mentioned dignitaries expressed their satisfaction with my frank exposition of our customary practice regarding studies, novitiate, and observance of the rules. There remained, however, the difficult matter of the faculty to grant dimissorial letters, which is a basic need in ecclesiastical congregations.[101] With

[100] If this memorandum was written in 1874, "thirty-three years" would refer to 1841, the year when after ordination Don Bosco enrolled in the Pastoral Institute.

[101] By "ecclesiastical congregations" (*congregazioni ecclesiastiche*) Don Bosco may mean simply "religious congregations" (of men) approved by the Church, or perhaps "clerical congregations."

the exception of the diocesan, all others congregations that have communion of houses in various dioceses in our area enjoy this privilege.[102] The bishops were willing to help the Salesian Congregation achieve stability and to favor it in whatever they thought advantageous and appropriate (*in quello che giudicavano utile e conveniente*). Now the faculty to grant dimissorial letters would be included in the constitutions with their approval. This faculty was included [in the texts of 1864 and 1869] when the approval was given only to the society in general, not to the constitutions. [That is why] at the time a compromise was reached: the superior personally, and not by a provision of the constitutions, was given the faculty for ten years (*ad decennium*) to issue dimissorial letters for the ordination of candidates who had entered our schools and homes before the age of fourteen. In the case of those who had entered at an older age, a petition was to be submitted each time [to the Holy See] for a specified number of candidates.

The Holy Father was in favor of such [temporary] arrangement, but spoke to me the following encouraging words: "Let's take a step at a time. Haste makes waste. If your affairs go well, the Holy See will add, never take away." And as a matter of fact, when requested, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars granted the faculty to issue dimissorial letters for seven, ten, and recently another six candidates, applicable by the superior of the Congregation as he saw the need. By this procedure the difficulties relating to ordinations were smoothed over, and we have had no problem ever since in this regard.

Now, again on advice from the above-mentioned distinguished dignitary, I have presented the same constitutions [with a provision granting dimissorial letters] for definitive approval, even though the ten-year period has not yet elapsed.

[In the first draft of this Historical Summary Don Bosco added at this point:]

> Two are the reasons for advancing the submission of this petition. First, the pope who has, so to speak, founded and guided this Society should be the very person to give it its definitive approval. Secondly, before my death, which I see coming on apace, I would like to bequeath to my confreres a Society solidly established and definitively approved.
>
> When I last saw the Holy Father and gave him a report on how matters stood, he asked me with great kindness: "What more do you need to bring your project to the desired conclusion?"
>
> I replied: "The definitive approbation of the constitutions with the faculty to issue dimissorial letters. One of the reasons for this request is that our houses are being established in ever increasing numbers in various dioceses of various

[102] By "communion of houses" (*comunione di case*) Don Bosco means religious houses in various dioceses united under one central superior. The designation is used in contrast to "diocesan." "In our area" (*tra noi*) may simply refer to Piedmont.

countries. We draw young people from all parts of the world: Americans, Africans, English, French and German people are members of this society. How are we to trace the ordinary of each of them?"[103]

"But you did obtain some concessions," the pope said.

"Yes, Holy Father," I replied. "I have obtained the faculty of issuing dimissorial letters to those [of my candidates] who entered a house of ours before the age of fourteen. In the case of other candidates we have obtained rescripts permitting issuing dimissorial letters for a limited number. I have now come before Your Holiness to implore the definitive approval of the constitutions with the faculty to issue dimissorial letters without restrictions (*facoltà assoluta*)."

"I want you to have what you are asking," said the pope. "Have you discussed the matter with Cardinal Bizzarri?[104]

"Not yet, Holy Father," I replied. "I first wanted to seek Your Holiness' advice and proceed accordingly."

"Well, then," he told me, "begin by making a full report to the Cardinal Prefect of the [Congregation of] Bishops and Regulars. Then ask Archbishop Vitelleschi to make a report to me. We will take care of everything."[105]

With that in mind, I have submitted to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars a copy of the constitutions, with all appropriate documents, together with a memorandum and a petition for a start of the proceedings.

I thought that no further observations would be added to the thirteen made earlier [in 1864]. Now, however [in 1873], I see that another twenty-eight were added. I have no objection; on the contrary I thank the kind examiner for taking the trouble. Most of these observations have been incorporated into the constitutions. I have added a chapter on studies and another chapter on novitiate reflecting the way it is being done as laid down in our directory, though it had not yet been inserted into the constitutions.[106] My only request is that the provisions relating to the retention of civil rights and of ownership, even after taking vows, not be changed; and that the trial period [novitiate] and the study program be allowed as they stand as in the present practice.

[103] Don Bosco had advanced this very reason for standing firm on his request for this faculty when responding to the thirteen Savini-Svegliati observations of 1864. [See earlier Chapter 3.]

[104] Giuseppe Andrea Bizzarri (1802-1877), created cardinal in 1863, served as prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars and of Religious Discipline from 1872.

[105] Salvatore Nobili Vitelleschi (1818-1875) served as secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars from 1871. He was created cardinal in 1875, but died suddenly.

[106] "Reflecting the way...:" I find the meaning of Don Bosco's Italian somewhat uncertain: "*siccome è stabilito, usato nel direttorio, ma non ancora inserito nelle Costituzioni.*"

[In the first draft of this Historical Summary Don Bosco added at this point:]

These provisions are essential. It they are changed, the very foundation on which this institute rests will be changed beyond recognition.

As for the faculty to issue dimissorial letters, I hope it will not be restricted, but rather enlarged. In fact, I fully trust that it will be granted [with the constitutions] without any restriction.

In any case, I know that the Holy Father, Cardinal Bizzarri, Cardinal Berardi, and Archbishop Vitelleschi want nothing but what will redound to God's greater glory and to the good of our congregation. I therefore place my affairs in their hands, fully trusting their judgment as to whatever addition or correction they may wish to make.

For what concerns dimissorial letters, I humbly beg for the faculty to issue such letters without any restriction (*facoltà assoluta*), not indeed to any bishop (*ad quemcumque Episcopum*), but only to the bishop of the diocese in which the [candidate's] house is located. This is in conformity with Clement VIII's decree of *March 15, 1596*, in virtue of which any religious may obtain dimissorial letters for ordination from his superior. This is the privilege enjoyed by the Oblates of Mary [founded by Fr. Pio Brunone Lanteri], approved in 1826, and by the Institute of Charity [founded by Fr. Antonio Rosmini Serbati], approved in 1839.

[Pope Clement VIII's] Decree reads: "It is the mind of the Congregation of the Council that religious superiors may grant dimissorial letters to any subject of theirs, also a religious, who wishes to receive the orders for which he possesses all necessary qualities. But these letters may be issued only to the bishop of the diocese in which the monastery is located, to whose community the religious candidate in question has been assigned by those who have authority to do so. However, if the diocesan bishop is absent, or if he is not holding ordinations, [the letters may be issued] to any bishop, etc." See Benedict XIV's Constitution *On the Ordination of Religious.*[107]

The children in the care of the Salesians number over seven thousand. The members of this congregation are over three hundred and thirty in number.[108] A good

[107] The Decree is quoted in Latin: "Congregatio Concilii censuit superiores regulares posse suo subdito, itidem regulari, qui praeditus qualitatibus requisitis, ordines suscipere voluerit, litteras dimissorias concedere, ad Episcopum tamen dioecesanum, nempe illius monasterii, in cuius familia ab iis, ad quos pertinet Regularis, positus fuerit, et, si dioecesanus abfuerit, vel non esset habiturus ordinationes, ad quemcumque alium Episcopum etc." Clement VIII (pope, 1592-1605) made the reform of religious orders one of the primary goals of his pontificate. Benedict XIV (pope, 1740-1758) refers to Clement VIII's decree in his Constitution *Impositi Nobis* of Feb. 7, 1747 (not in *De Regularium Ordinatione*, "On the Ordination of Religious").

[108] The statistics given in the last two sentences are somewhat inflated. In 1874 the pro-

number of them are engaged in the ministry. They hear confessions and they preach triduums, novenas and spiritual retreats in educational institutions, in hospitals, in the prisons, and in country towns, as needed and as requested by various dioceses.

At the present time negotiations are in progress with the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith for the establishment of houses and Christians schools for children on the island of Hong Kong, China. These negotiations are expected to reach a favorable conclusion as soon as the Supreme Pontiff in his kindness (*la Clemenza del benemerito Sommo Pontefice*) will have granted the longed-for approbation of the Pious Salesian Society.

fessed Salesians numbered 148, the novices 103, and the houses (schools, etc) 8. The number of boys in Salesian schools may have neared 2,000–not counting the large but uncertain number of youngsters attending the oratories on Sundays and Holy Days.

Chapter 7

EARLY CONSTITUTIONAL TEXTS–I PRELIMINARIES, PREAMBLE AND HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Summary

1. Sources and Literature
2. Brief history of the constitutional text from 1858 to 1875, and its eight critical phases [repeated here as in Chapter 3]
3. Contents of the early Constitutions in their development
4. Literary sources of the Salesian Constitutions. Don Bosco's use of earlier constitutional texts
5. Reading and Comparison of selected articles in selected chapters:
   Preamble
   Historical Summary

1. Sources and Literature

1. English-Language Reading

EBM V, 635-645 (App. 27). This is an early (not the first) text of the Constitutions. Correct *EBM* title to: "Early text of the Salesian Constitutions produced after audience with Pius IX and after Rua prototype (1858/9), but before 1860."
P. Stella, *DB:LW*, 133-176, esp. 148-176
P. Stella, *DB:RO&S*, ch. 13, esp. 373-381, 388-392, 439-443
A. Lenti, "Community and Mission […]," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 9:1 (1998) 1-57

2. Select Bibliography

See Bibliography given in Chapter 3. In addition:

Giovanni Bosco, Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales [1858]-1875. Testi critici a cura di Francesco Motto SDB. Istituto Storico Salesiano, Roma. Fonti, Serie prima, 1. (Roma: LAS, 1982). This critical edition of eight original archival texts of the Constitutions, with the editor's introductory studies and Appendices, is the chief resource for chapters 7 to 10 to follow.

F. Desramaut, *Les constitutions salésiennes de 1966*. Commentaire historique. Rome, 1966f. (A work done in stages, lithographed and bound in 2 vols.)
F. Desramaut, "Lo scopo della società nelle costituzioni salesiane," in *La Missione dei Salesiani nella Chiesa*. Colloqui 2 (Torino: LDC, 1970) p. 65-85
F. Motto, "La figura del superiore salesiano nelle Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 2 (1983:1) 3-53
F. Motto, "Constitutiones Societatis S. Francisci Salesii: Fonti letterarie dei capitoli Scopo, Forma, Voto di Obbedienza, Povertà e Castità," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 2 (1983) 341-384
G. Proverbio, "La prima edizione latina ufficiale delle costituzioni salesiane dopo l'approvazione pontificia," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 3 (1984) 93-109
J. Aubry, et al., *Fedeltà e Rinnovamento*. Studi sulle costituzioni salesiane (Roma: LAS, 1974)
P. Stella, "Le costituzioni salesiane fino al 1888," in *Fedeltà e rinnovamento: Studi sulle costituzioni salesiane* (Roma: LAS, 1974), 15-54

The preceding chapters have described the tortuous process of approval of the Salesian constitutions and by the same token also the development of the text from its earliest draft in 1858 to the final approve form in 1874.

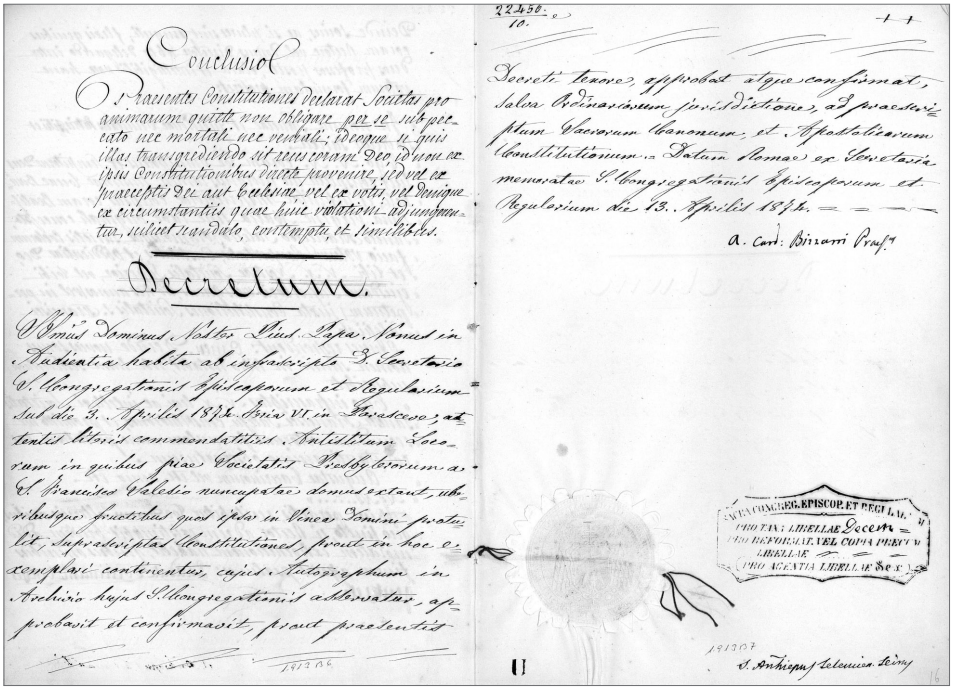
We now propose, after a preliminary general introduction, to look in some detail at some chapters and articles of the constitutional text with the aim of drawing out their significance in Don Bosco's intention.

2. Eight Stages of Development of the Constitutional Text in Summary

F. Motto, in his critical edition of the constitutional texts held in the Central Salesian Archive (*ASC,* cited above), has identified eight points of arrival and departure (eight stages) in the development of Don Bosco's constitutions. They are designated with uppercase Roman letters as follows: A (earliest, 1858), D (1860), G (1864), L (1867), N (1873), Q (approved text, 1874), T (revised Latin. 1874/5), and V (revised Italian, 1875).

To these capital letters a lowercase letter is added that stands for the name of the writer (if munuscript), or print (*stampa*, s)–as follows: *Ar* (Rua), *Do* (Boggero), *Gb* (Bosco), *Ls*, *Ns*, *Q*, *Ts*, *Vs*. (No lower lettercase is attached to *Q* because it is a calligraphic protocol).

The eight stages may be summarized as follows:



16 – Decree of the definitive approval of the Salesian Constitutions (April 13, 1874)

Stage I

(1858) [*Ar*] *Ms. Rua, Italian – ASC* D4720101 - *FDBM* 1893 E5ff.

Earliest-known extant text, result of "incubation" period, and of Don Bosco's meetings with Minister Rattazzi and Pope Pius IX

Eleven chapters: Preamble, Historical Introduction, Purpose, Form, Obedience, Poverty, Chastity, Internal Government, Rector Major, Other Superiors, Admission)

Stage II

(1860) [*Do*] *Ms. Boggero, Italian – ASC* D4720108 - *FDBM* 1895 B10ff.

Text sent to Archbishop Fransoni in exile, signed by Don Bosco and 25 "Salesians"

Four new chapters (Practices of Piety, Habit, External Members, Profession Form)

Stage III

(1864) [*Gb*] *Ms. Bosco, Italian – ASC* D4720205 - *FDBM* 1902 E1ff.

Text laboriously reworked by Don Bosco (1860-1864), submitted to Rome for the *Decretum Laudis* (1864), given 13 observations (Savini-Svegliati)

New articles (on Politics, Pope); 2 new chapters (Religious Government, Particular Houses)

Stage IV

(1867) [*Ls*] *Printed, Latin – ASC* D4720308 - *FDBM* 1904 C11ff.

Text modified in accordance with some (not all) of the 13 observations of 1864

Submitted in 1867 for the approval, but rejected

After the same text was re-submitted in 1869, the Institute (Salesian Society) was approved, but not the Constitutions–which were to be brought into compliance with the 13 observations of 1864

Stage V

(1873) [*Ns*] *Printed, Latin – ASC* D4720402 - *FDBM* 1907 C9ff.

Text only slightly modified, rejected and given 38/28 observations (Bianchi-Vitelleschi)

Reprinted in 1873/74 in Rome complying with some of the observations

Two new chapters (Novitiate, Studies); chapter on Poverty re-written; other modifications made

Reprinted, 1874 in Rome: chapter-appendix on External Members removed

Revised and emended by Special Congregation (4 cardinals); Preamble and Historical Introduction removed

Approved as emended (cf. *Q* below)

Stage VI

(1874) [*Q*] *Ms. Berto, Latin – ASC* D4730106 - *FDBM* 1912 E2ff.

Approved as revised and emended by Special Congregation by decree of April 11, 1874

Calligraphic transcription by Berto in two exemplars (for Vatican and Salesian archives)

Sixteen chapters: Purpose, Form, Obedience, Poverty, Chastity, Religious Government, Internal Government, Rector Major, Other Superiors, Particular Houses, Admission, Studies, Practices of Piety, Novitiate, Habit, and Profession Form

[Printed editions in Latin and Italian followed]

Stage VII

(1874) [*T*] *Printed, Latin – ASC* D4730202 - *FDBM* 1916 C5ff.

"Official" Latin text printed by Don Bosco in Turin for the Salesians

It differed from the approved Ms. text in style, and in places also in content (Don Bosco claiming authorization by Pius IX *vivae vocis oraculo*)

Stage VIII

(1875) [*V*] *Printed, Italian – ASC* D4730302 - *FDBM* 1920 B2ff.

"Official" Italian text printed by Don Bosco for the Salesians, not a translation of the above, but differing both from the above and from the approved Ms. text (same authorization invoked)

3. Chapter Sequence and Development in the Early Constitutions (Eight Stages)

I. Ms. Ar. (1858)–Ital	II. Ms. Do (1860)–Ital	III. Ms. Gb (1864)–Ital
[1. Preamble] Congr of SFdS	[1. Preamble] Society of SFdS	[1. Preamble] Society of SFdS
[2. Hist Int] Origin of This Congregation	[2. Hist Int] Origin of This Society	[2. Hist Int] Origin of This Society
[3.] Purpose of This Congregation	[3.] Purpose of This Society	[3.] 3. Purpose of This Society
[4.] Form of This Congregation	[4.] Form of This Society	[4.] 4. Form of This Society
[5.] Vow of Obedience	[5.] Vow of Obedience	[5.] 5. Vow of Obedience
[6.] Vow of Poverty	[6.] Vow of Poverty	[6.] 6. Vow of Poverty
[7.] Vow of Chastity	[7.] Vow of Chastity	[7.] 7. Vow of Chastity
——	——	[8.] 8. [Relig] Gov of Society
[8.] Internal Gov of Congregation	[8.] Internal Gov of Society	[9.] 9. Internal Gov of Society
—[El RM: art 5-7 of Int Gov]	—[El RM: art 5-7 of Int Gov]	[10.] 10. Election of Rector M
[9.] Other superiors	[9.] Other superiors	[11.] 11. Other superiors
——	——	[12.] 12. Local Houses
[10.] Admission	[10.] Admission	[13.] 13. Admission
——	——	——
——	[11.] Practices of Piety	[14.] 14. Practices of Piety
—[Novit: art 13f. of Form 4]	—[Novit: art 13f. of Form 4]	——
——	[12.] Dress	[15.] 15. Dress
——	[13. Form of] Prof of vows	[16.] Prof. & Form. of vows
——	[14] Externs	[17.] 16. Externs

IV. Pr. Ls (1867) – Lat	V. Pr. Ns. (1873) - Lat	VI. Ms. Q (1874) - Lat VII. Pr. T (1874) - Lat VIII. Pr. V (1875)- Ital
[1. Preamble] Society of SFdS I	[1.] Society of SFdS I. Preamble	——
[2. Hist Int] 2. Origin of This Society	[2. Hist Int] II. Begin of This Society	——
[3.] 3. Purpose of This Society	[3.] III. Purpose of This Society	[1.] I. Purpose of the Sal Society
[4.] 4. Form of This Society	[4.] IV. Form of This Society	[2.] II. Form of This Society
[5.] 5. Vow of Obedience	[5.] V. Vow of Obedience	[3.] III. Vow of Obedience
[6.] 6. Vow of Poverty	[6.] VI. Vow of Poverty	[4.] IV. Vow of Poverty
[7.] 7. Vow of Chastity	[7.] VII. Vow of Chastity	[5.] V. Vow of Chastity
[8.] 8. Religious Gov of Society	[8.] VIII. Religious Gov of Society	[6.] VI. Religious Gov of Society
[9.] 9. Internal Gov of Society	[9.] IX. Internal Gov of Society	[7.] VII. Internal Gov of Society
[10.] 10. Election of Rector Major	[10.] X. Election of Rector Major	[8.] VIII. Election of Rector Major
[11.] 11. Other superiors	[11.] XI. Other superiors	[9.] IX. Other superiors
[12.] 12. Local Houses	[12.] XII. Local Houses	[10.] X. Local Houses
[13.] 13. Admission	[13.] XIII. Admission	[11.] XI. Admission

—	—	[12.] XII. Study
[14.] 14. Practices of Piety	[14.] XIV. Practices of Piety	[13.] XIII. Practices of Piety
—	—	[14.] XIV. Nov Master & Formation
[15.] 15. Dress	[15.] XV. Dress	[15.] XV. Dress
[16.] Formula of vows	[16.] Formula of vows	[16.] Form of vows - Conclusion
[17. App] 16. Externs	[17. App] XVI. Externs	

4. Literary Sources of the Early Salesian Constitutions

Adapted from: Francesco Motto, "Constitutiones Societatis S. Francisci Salesii. Fonti letterarie dei capitoli Scopo, Forma, Voto di obbedienza, povertà e castità," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 2 (1983) 341-384.

1. Introduction

The text of the Salesian Constitutions, 1858-1874, is ultimately rooted in Don Bosco's own life and experience, in the early history and development of his work, and in concrete historical situations of nineteenth-century Church and society. The first known text (dated no earlier than 1858) was itself the result of a period of "incubation" during which Don Bosco consulted various authorities and worked out a plan.[1] This text embodies Don Bosco's oratory experience and the principles and structures already established in the early regulations. It reflects particular historical situations and owes much also to the constitutions of other religious institutes. Likewise, subsequent drafts of the text owe their character to concrete historical situations, to painstaking discernment on Don Bosco's part, and to contributions by early Salesians, representative members of religious institutes, and of various diocesan and Roman authorities. For these texts were produced after the Society had in effect come into being.

For a proper understanding, therefore, one should read a constitutional text with an awareness of all these contributing factors, with particular attention to the genetic process that determined its shape and character.

[1] Don Bosco discussed that matter with Fr. Cafasso, Fr. Rosmini, Fr. Borel, the Rosminian Fr. John Baptist Pagani, Bishop Losana of Biella, Minister Urban Rattazzi, and finally with Pius IX in 1858 [cf. *EBM* V, 452-464, 576-579; *IBM* VII, 621-622, 890-893]. Fr. Ascanio Savio states his conviction that Don Bosco had worked out such a plan as far back as 1850 [*EBM* V, 452].

A careful study of the literary sources of the text is important, for Don Bosco did use such sources, as he himself states. Thus to the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Turin in 1863, he writes:

> In drafting single chapters and articles, I have been guided by [the constitutions of] societies which have already been approved by the Church, and whose purpose is similar to ours, for example, the Cavanis Institute of Venice, the Institute of Charity [Rosmini], the Somasca Institute [St. Jerome Emiliani], the Oblates of the Virgin Mary [Lanteri].[2]

In a memorandum addressed to the Roman Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in 1864 he writes in greater detail:

> As far as the normative content is concerned, I have consulted, and where appropriate borrowed from, the constitutions of the Cavanis Institute of Venice, of the Rosminians, and of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, all of them religious corporations or societies approved by the Holy See. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 on the vows were derived from the Redemptorist constitutions almost in their entirety. The form of profession, on the other hand, is adapted from that of the Jesuits.[3]

Again later Don Bosco had occasion to refer to sources he had used, as for instance in his responses to observations received.[4] Likewise the Roman revisers suggested models he could use.[5] Don Bosco himself inserted notes into the constitutional text to indicate his sources.[6]

That Don Bosco used sources is clear; but the extent and manner of such use has to be established in detail. Pinpointing the model among several possible ones may be difficult. Even more difficult will be proving direct dependence in any particular instance where similarities might be due to coincidence, or to stereotypes in common use. Such common sources could have been the following: St. Alphonsus' *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ* and the *Treatise on the Religious Life*, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, Alphonsus Rodríguez' *Exercise and Perfection of Christian Virtues*, all highly regarded by Don Bosco.[7]

[2] Motto, *Epistolario* I, 562.

[3] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 229.

[4] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 232-233, 245-246, 248-249.

[5] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 241-244 (Voto... Bianchi).

[6] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 98, 116, 118-119.

[7] Don Bosco's spirituality and his ideas on religious life, vocation, perseverance, etc. owe much to St. Alphonsus and Rodríguez, as may be seen from the 1875 introduction to the constitutions, *Ai soci salesiani*.

The same may be said of Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and some spiritual writers.

Motto shows that the number of borrowings, literal and otherwise, is enormous. This is explained from the fact that Don Bosco lacked expertise in the matter of religious life and constitutions, especially with regard to their juridical aspects, and also from the fact that he wished to espouse a tradition of religious life already embodied in existing constitutions. But he was never slavishly bound to that tradition, and his personal experience and insights manage to come through and to remain in evidence even when the text is subjected to official correction.

2. Don Bosco's Use of Earlier Constitutions: Five Models

In drafting the Salesian Constitutions Don Bosco made special use of the constitutions of five religious institutes: the Vincentians, the Redemptorists, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, the Secular Priests of the Schools of Charity, and the Marists.

For each of these, we give a short summary dealing only with the institute and with its constitutions.

Constitutions of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission[8]

The Congregation of the Priests of the Mission (Vincentians, Lazarists) was founded by St. Vincent de Paul, was approved by the Archbishop of Paris in 1626, and by Pope Urban VII in 1633.

Rules embodying the structure and purpose of the congregation were first written on a trial basis in 1642, were printed and given to the members in 1658, but were completed only in 1670.

Evangelization and religious ministry in rural areas, formation of clergy (direction of seminaries), and spiritual exercises are the principal works of the congregation.

Three Vincentian features in particular have influenced other institutes,

[8] The Valdocco library had a copy of the printed Italian text of the Vincentian Constitutions: *Regole ovvero Costitutuzioni comuni della Congregazione della missione*, 1658. According to *EBM* IX, 233, Don Bosco obtained a copy of these constitutions from the Vincentian procurator general in Rome.

the Salesian Society included: (1) the bond by which St. Vincent made the missionary work of the group permanent without creating a religious order: in effect, the Vincentians were the first example of a congregation "without vows," namely, with vows (promises) that are simple and private, but perpetual and subject to dispensation only by the Church and by the superior general; (2) a concept of the vow of poverty (officially recognized in 1659) which allowed individual members to own and to acquire goods, but which made their administration and use subject to authorization by the local superior; (3) setting aside the obligation of the choir, and requiring only such religious and ascetical practices as were already in common use among the secular clergy at the time.[9]

Drawing freely, sometimes literally, on the Jesuit rule, the Vincentian constitutions had 12 chapters and 142 articles.

I. Purpose and structure of the congregation (3 articles)
II. Evangelical maxims (18 articles)
III. Poverty (10 articles)
IV. Chastity (5 articles)
V. Obedience (16 articles)
VI. Concerning the sick (4 articles)
VII. Modesty (7 articles)
VIII. Manner of conversing among us (16 articles)
IX. Manner of conversing with outsiders (16 articles)
X. Spiritual practices in use in the congregation (23 articles)
XI. Missions and other ministries toward neighbor (12 articles)
XII. Means and aids toward the good and profitable discharge of the abovementioned ministries (12 articles)

Constitutions of the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer[10]

The Congregation of the Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists) was founded by St. Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori at Scala (Amalfi) in 1732. Seventeen years later (1749) Pope Benedict XIV approved its constitutions.

The purpose of the institute is to "help the more deprived and spiritually

[9] Don Bosco made his retreats in preparation for ordination in the House of the Mission of Turin.

[10] Easily accessible to Don Bosco: *Costituzioni e Regole della Congregazione de' Sacerdoti sotto il titolo del SS. Redentore*, in *Opere ascetiche di S. Alfonso Maria de' Liguori* (Torino: Marietti, 1847).

destitute people in rural areas and in country villages by means of missions, religious instruction and spiritual exercises." Hence the Redemptorists are engaged in the ministry of preaching generally, and specifically in parish missions and retreats for people of various categories, and in spiritual retreats held in houses established for this purpose. They are also engaged, after the example of their founder, in the apostolate of the written word (the press).

Obviously the spirituality of this congregation is that of St. Alphonsus, and its foundation is the imitation of Christ, a standard adopted by all religious institutes, but in a special manner by the Redemptorists.

Even during St. Alphonsus' lifetime difficulties arose regarding the practice of the vow of poverty. It allowed *radical dominion*, but forbade administration and use of goods without authorization. As had been the case with the Vincentians before, the practical necessity of administering clashed with the ideal of the vow.

The Redemptorist constitutions are organized in 3 parts, 8 chapters, and 64 articles, as follows:

Part I: Mission and Other Exercises
- Ch. 1: Missions (6 articles)
- Ch. 2: Other exercises (1 article)

Part II: The Members' Special Obligations
- Ch. 1: Vow of poverty (9 articles); vow of chastity (1 article); vow of obedience (4 articles); vow of perseverance (1 article)
- Ch. 2: Reception of the sacraments (3 articles); Prayer and exercise of humility (4 articles)
- Ch. 3: Silence and recollection (1 article); mortification and corporal penances (4 articles)
- Ch. 4: Community meetings (2 articles)

Part III: Government of the Congregation
- Ch. 1: Rector major and his council (13 articles); monitor of the Rector Major (1 article); Procurator General (1 article); Visitor (2 articles); Local Rector and other officials (6 articles)
- Ch. 2: Qualities demanded of candidates (5 articles)

Constitutions of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary[11]

The Oblates were founded at Carignano (near Turin) by Frs. Giovanni Battista Reynaudi and Pio Brunone Lanteri in 1814, with diocesan approval of a plan of constitutions. The congregation was disbanded in 1820, re-established in 1825 at Pinerolo (near Turin), and definitively approved with its constitutions in 1826 by Pope Leo XII with the Brief *Etsi Dei Filius*. The papal action prevented the Oblates from being merged with the Redemptorists, as the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars had suggested on account of their close affinity. In 1833 the Oblates were established in Turin at the popular church of the *Consolata* and flourished there until 1858, when they were expelled. In the meantime they had established foundations in Piedmont and other places, and missions in Burma (Myanmar).

The Oblates are to engage in the apostolate of the press and in the production of good books, in combating errors, "especially those of unbelievers and reformers in dogma and morals," in missions for the people and in spiritual exercises according to the method of St. Ignatius, in the care and formation of the clergy with the aim of training good parish priests and apostolic workers.

The Oblate constitutions, at several points similar to those of the Redemptorists, are organized in 2 parts, 5 chapters, and 80 paragraphs, as follows:

Part I: Purpose and Rules of the Congregation
Ch. 1: Purpose of the Congregation (paragraphs 1-16)
Ch. 2: Rules of the Oblates:
Art. 1: Personal sanctification (par. 1-11)
Art. 2: Zeal for the salvation of souls (par. 12-14)
Ch. 3: Rules for the vow of poverty (par. 1-18); for the vow of chastity (par. 1); for the vow of obedience (par. 1-3); for perseverance in the congregation (par. 1)

[11] Easily available in Turin: *Costituzioni e Regole della Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria V.* (Torino: Botta, 1851). Don Bosco was obviously in touch with the Oblates. In 1843 he produced a biographical sketch of the Oblate seminarian, Joseph Burzio (d. 1842), who had been Don Bosco's fellow student at the Chieri seminary [Motto, *Epistolario* I, 48-53]. Don Bosco was familiar with the Oblates and their work. He attended the Pastoral Institute, which was the creation of both Fr. Lanteri and Fr. Guala, and (according to Lemoyne) in 1844 he was considering joining the Oblates with the missions in view. He was on familiar terms with the Oblates at the church of the *Consolata*.

Part II: Government of the Congregation
Ch. 1: The Rector Major and his council (par. 1-13); the Rector Major (par. 1); Procurator General (par. 1); Visitors (par. 1-2); Local Rector and other officials (par. 1-5)
Ch. 2: Qualities looked for in candidates (par. 1-5).

Constitutions of the Congregation of the Schools of Charity[12]

The Congregation of the Schools of Charity, also known as the Cavanis Institute, was founded by the brothers, Antonio Angelo and Marco Antonio Cavanis, in Venice. Having been ordained priests, they dedicated themselves especially to the religious instruction of children in their parish. In 1802 they started an oratory, and in 1804 a tuition-free school. With new and larger premises they expanded the school apostolate and moved into spiritual retreats as well.

The Cavanis Institute was approved by the Emperor of Austria in 1816 and by the Patriarch of Venice in 1819. It obtained the *Decretum laudis* from Pope Gregory XVI in 1831, and approbation in 1836. The constitutions were approved in 1839.

The purpose of the institute is the Christian education of poor young people through tuition-free schools (schools of charity), and the work of spiritual retreats.

The parallels between the Cavanis Institute and the Salesian Society are striking. The Institute aims at "safeguarding young people from the corrupting influence of current evil doctrines and licentious ways, and making free education available to them, thus promoting the greater good of civil society as well as of religion."[13] The work for poor and deprived children began in a shed, to which a vegetable garden was attached, and where the Cavanis brothers began to put their educational method into effect. It was their conviction that religious practice needed to go hand in hand with education and the learning of a trade or profession. The production and publishing of educational textbooks and the care of vocations are further points of similarity.

The Cavanis constitutions are structured in 10 chapters with 128 articles, and are introduced by a preamble on purpose, as follows:

[12] *Constitutiones Congregationis Sacerdotum Soecularium Scholarum Charitatis* (Venetiis: F. Andreola, 1837).

[13] *Notizie intorno alla fondazione della Congregazione dei Chierici Secolari delle Scuole di Carità* (Milano: G. Pirola, 1838), 5.

Preamble: Purpose of the Congregation
Ch. 1: Structure and Form of the Congregation (11 articles)
Ch. 2: Vow of Poverty (5 articles)
Ch. 3: Vow of chastity (7 articles)
Ch. 4: Vow of obedience (12 articles)
Ch. 5: Modesty and Charity (10 articles)
Ch. 6: Withdrawal from seculars ["from the world"] (9 articles)
Ch. 7: Exercise of the schools of charity (19 articles)
Ch. 8: Other pious exercises to be practiced in the congregation (35 articles)
Ch. 9: The sick (13 articles)
Ch. 10: Sacrifices and prayers for the dead (7 articles)

Constitutions of the Priests of the Society of Mary[14]

The Marist Fathers were founded at Belley (France) in 1825 by [Bl.] Jean Claude Marie Colin, after Pius VII approved a plan in 1822. The congregation was approved on April 29, 1836 by Pope Gregory XVI with the Brief, *Omnium gentium*.

From its inception the society devoted itself to the Christian education of the young in schools, to preaching (especially among the people in rural areas), and to foreign missions in Oceania. As it developed, it also accepted the direction of seminaries. Further works are study centers, parishes, leper colonies.

The highly structured Marist constitutions were first sketched out by the founder in 1836. They were laboriously re-worked in succeeding decades, and were definitively approved in 1873 (one year before the Salesian Constitutions). This chronological parallelism may explain why a few articles were brought into the Salesian constitutions from those of the Marists; and why in 1874 the Cardinals replaced articles that Don Bosco did not wish to rewrite with corresponding articles from the Marist constitutions.

The Marist constitutions are structured in two sections, entitled, "Ten Articles" and "Twelve Chapters" respectively, with a total of 450 numbers or articles, as follows:

Ten Articles: On the purpose and foundations of the Society
1. Name and purpose of the Society (number 1)

[14] *Constitutiones Presbyterorum Societatis Mariae a SS. Pio Papa IX approbatae et confirmatae die 28 februarii 1873* (Lugduni [Lyons]: J.B. Pelagaud, 1873).

2. Means for the attainment of the ends of the Society (numbers 2-10)
3. Establishing relationship with ecclesiastical and civilian persons (numbers 11-15)
4. Of the persons living under obedience in the Society (numbers 16-22)
5. Union among the members of the Society (numbers 23-25)
6. Life style in the Society (numbers 26-32)
7. Mortification and penances (numbers 33-36)
8. Spiritual practices (numbers 37-41)
9. Knowledge [=studies, education] (numbers 42-48)
10. Spirit of the Society (numbers 49-50)

Twelve Chapters

I. Examination of postulants and admission to the trial (3 articles, numbers 51-73)
II. Training of novices (4 articles, numbers 74-117)
III. Observance of the vows (5 articles, numbers 118-156)
IV. Dismissals (3 articles, numbers 157-179)
V. Norms to be observed by all members (7 articles, numbers 180-243)
VI. Missions (3 articles, numbers 244-275)
VII. The Society's temporal affairs (2 articles, numbers 276-295)
VIII. The government of the whole Society (4 articles, numbers 296-344)
IX. Election of the Superior General and completion of his term in office (3 articles, numbers 345-369)
X. Principal officials of the Society (5 articles, numbers 370-405)
XI. Congregations [meetings, chapters, etc.] (2 articles, numbers 406-422)
XII. Means for the increase and preservation of the Society (5 articles, numbers 423-450)

(Numbers 446-450 form a Conclusion.)

Don Bosco also used the constitutions of Rosmini's Institute of Charity and of the Society of Jesus.

Motto goes on to make a detailed comparative analysis of Don Bosco's text, from which it emerges that in styling his own articles Don Bosco relied on the constitutions of similar congregations, especially the following: Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians, CM), Schools of Charity (Cavanis Institute, CSC), Congregation of the Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists, CSSR), Institute of Charity (Rosminians, IC), Oblates of the Virgin Mary (Lanteri, OMV), Society of Jesus (SJ), and Society of Mary (Marists Fathers, SM).

5. Early Salesian Constitutions: Preamble and Historical Summary Introductory to the Early Constitutions

The Preamble and the Historical Summary (Chapters 1 and 2 and then as Introduction 1 and 2) were finally removed before approval in 1874. Therefore the comparison is made between the first five stages, noting that stages 4 and 5 are identical.

Don Bosco, in spite of critical observation to the contrary, did everything he could to keep these introductory chapters. They were removed because it was "not customary for constitutions to have introductory commendations," but Don Bosco regarded the oratory experiences as charismatic and normative. Indeed the Preamble and the Historical Summary function respectively as the rationale and the historical experiences on which the Salesian work is based. Their suppression before definitive approval in 1874 deprived the chapter on Purpose of its interpretative key.

(Italics mine, added to stress significance).

1. Preamble: Five Stages Compared

I (1858) Ms. Ar Rua Italian	**II (1860) Ms. Do Boggero Italian**	**III (1864) Ms. Gb Bosco Italian**	**IV (1867) Pr. Ls Lat V (1873) Pr. Ns Lat**
At all times it has been the special concern of the ministers of the church to promote, to the best of their power, the spiritual welfare of the young. *The good or evil moral condition of society will depend on whether young people receive a good or a bad education.* Our Divine Savior himself has shown us the truth of this by his deeds. For in fulfilling his divine mission on earth, with a love of predilection he invited children to come close to him: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me* [Let little children come to me]. The Supreme Pontiffs, following in the footsteps of the Eternal	At all times it has been the special concern of the ministers of the church to promote, to the best of their power, the spiritual welfare of the young. *The good or evil moral condition of society will depend on whether young people receive a good or a bad education.* Our Divine Savior himself has shown us the truth of this by his deeds. For in fulfilling his divine mission on earth, with a love of predilection, he invited children to come close to him: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me* [Let little children come to me]. The Bishops, and the Supreme Pontiffs in particular, following	At all times it has been the special concern of the ministers of the church to promote, to the best of their power, the spiritual welfare of the young. *The good or evil moral condition of society will depend on whether young people receive a good or a bad education.* Our Divine Savior himself has shown us the truth of this by his deeds. For in fulfilling his divine mission on earth, with a love of predilection, he invited children to come close to him: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me* [Let little children come to me]. The Bishops, and the Supreme Pontiffs in particular, following	It has always been the conviction of the ministers of the Catholic religion that the greatest care should be expended in providing the young with a good education. For *the good or evil moral condition of human society will depend on whether young people receive a good or a bad education.* Christ the Lord himself has shown us the truth of this by his high example, especially by inviting children to himself, and blessing them with his divine hands saying: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me* [Let little children come to me]. The Bishops, to whom the Holy Spirit committed the government

Pontiff, our Divine Savior, whose vicars on earth they are, have at all times by the spoken and written word promoted the good education of the young; and consequently they have favored and supported those institutes that are dedicated to this area of the sacred ministry.	in the footsteps of the Eternal Pontiff, our Divine Savior, whose vicars on earth they are, have at all times by the spoken and written word promoted the good education of the young; and consequently they have favored and supported those institutes that are dedicated to this area of the sacred ministry.	in the footsteps of the Eternal Pontiff, our Divine Savior, whose vicars on earth they are, have at all times by the spoken and written word promoted the good education of the young. The [presently] reigning [Pontiff] Pius IX (may God keep him long years for the glory of the Church!), besides laboring indefatigably for the welfare of young people at risk, has also favored and supported by special means both materially and morally those institutes that are dedicated to this area of the sacred ministry.	of God's Church, and the Supreme Pontiffs in particular, following in the footsteps of our Divine Savior, whose vicars on earth they are, by word and deed have encouraged with eager enthusiasm, and supported with special care, those institutes that are dedicated to the Christian education of the young. Likewise, our Supreme Pontiff, Pius IX (may God keep him for longest years safe and unharmed for the glory of the Church!), besides laboring indefatigably for the welfare of young people at risk, has also favored and supported by every means those institutes that are dedicated to this area of the sacred ministry.
At the present time, however, this need is felt with far greater urgency. *Parental neglect, the abusive power of the press, and the proselytizing efforts of heretics* demand that we unite in fighting for the Lord's cause, under the banner of the faith. Our efforts must aim at safeguarding the faith and the moral life of that category of young people whose eternal salvation is more at risk precisely because of their poverty.	At the present time, however, this need is felt with far greater urgency. *Parental neglect, the abusive power of the press, and the proselytizing efforts of heretics* demand that we unite in fighting for the Lord's cause, under the banner of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Our efforts must aim at safeguarding the faith and the moral life of that category of young people especially whose eternal salvation is more at risk precisely because of their poverty.	At the present time, however, this need is felt with far greater urgency. *Parental neglect, the abusive power of the press, and the proselytizing efforts of heretics and of the sects* demand that we unite in fighting for the Lord's cause, under the banner of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Our efforts must aim at safeguarding the faith and the moral life of that category of young people especially whose eternal salvation is more at risk precisely because of their poverty.	At the present time, however, this need is felt with far greater urgency. *Parental neglect, the abusive power of the press, and the proselytizing efforts of heretics and schismatics* demand that we unite in fighting for the Lord's battles under the banner of the Vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our efforts must aim at safeguarding the faith and at defending the moral life of those young people especially who lack the helps necessary toward a Christian education precisely because of their poverty.
This is the *specific purpose* of the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales, first established in Turin in 1841.	This is the *specific purpose* of the Society or Congregation of St. Francis de Sales.	This is the *specific purpose* of the Society or Congregation of St. Francis de Sales.	This is the *specific purpose* of the Society or Congregation of St. Francis de Sales.

Comment

A comparison of the five successive stages of the Preamble reveals Don Bosco's perceptive evaluation of the social problem of young people at risk. After a general statement of the need for the education of the young, and a description of the efforts of the Church (bishops, popes, Pius IX) to respond to this need after the example of Jesus ("Let little children come to me!"), Don Bosco identifies the root causes of the "risk:" "parental neglect, the abusive power of the press, and the proselytizing efforts of heretics."

Therefore (he concludes): "Our efforts must aim at safeguarding the faith and the moral life of that category of young people whose eternal salvation is more at risk precisely because of their poverty."

He ends with the categorical statement: "This is the specific purpose of the congregation of St. Francis de Sales."

2. Historical Summary: Five Stages Compared

[Paragraphs are numbered to facilitate reference]

I (1858) Ms Ar Rua Italian	**II (1860) Ms Do Boggero Italian**	**III (1864) Ms Gb Bosco Italian**	**IV (1867) Pr. Lat. V (1873) Pr. Lat.**
Origin of this Congregation	**Origin of this Society**	**[2] Origin of this Society**	**Origin of this Society – No. 2 [1867] II. On the Beginnings of this Society [1873]**
[1] As far back as the year 1841, Fr. John Bosco, working in association with other priests, began to gather together in suitable premises, the most abandoned young people from the city of Turin, in order to entertain them with games and at the same time break the bread of the divine word to them. Everything he did was done with the consent of the ecclesi-	As far back as the year 1841, Fr. John Bosco, working in association with other priests, began to gather together in suitable premises, the most abandoned young people from the city of Turin, in order to entertain them with games and at the same time break the bread of the divine word to them. Everything was done with the consent of the ecclesiastical	As far back as the year 1841, Fr. John Bosco, working in association with other priests, began to gather together in suitable premises, the most abandoned young people from the city of Turin, in order to entertain them with games and at the same time break the bread of the divine word to them. Everything was done with the consent of the ecclesiastical authority.	As far back as the year 1841, Fr. John Bosco, working in association with other priests, dedicated himself to gathering together in suitable premises, abandoned and poor young people from the city of Turin, in order to entertain them with games and at the same time break the bread of the divine word to them. Everything was done with the consent of the ecclesi-

astical authority. God blessed these humble beginnings, and the number of young people that attended grew so large that in the year 1844 His Grace Archbishop [Louis] Fransoni gave permission to dedicate a building for use as a kind of church, [Note 1] granting at the same time faculties to hold there such services as are necessary for the observance of Sundays and holidays and for the instruction of the young people who attended in ever increasing numbers.

[2] There the Archbishop came on several occasions to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Likewise, in the year 1846 he permitted the young people who attended this institution to be admitted to [first] Holy Communion and to fulfill their Easter duty there. He also permitted [priests] to sing Holy Mass [celebrate solemn Mass, as in parish churches] and to hold triduums and novenas as the occasion demanded.

[3] This was the practice at the Oratory named after St. Francis de Sales up to the year 1847. Meanwhile the number of youngsters was rising steadily, and the church then in use could no longer accommodate them. Thus it

authority. God blessed these humble beginnings, and the number of young people that attended grew so large that in the year 1844 His Grace Archbishop [Louis] Fransoni gave permission to dedicate a building for use as a kind of church, [*Note 1*] granting at the same time faculties to hold there such services as are necessary for the observance of Sundays and holidays and for the instruction of the young people who attended in ever increasing numbers.

There the Archbishop came on several occasions to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Likewise, in the year 1846 he permitted the young people who attended this institution to be admitted to [first] Holy Communion and to fulfill their Easter duty there. He also permitted [priests] to sing Holy Mass [celebrate solemn Mass, as in parish churches] and to hold triduums and novenas as the occasion demanded.

This was the practice at the Oratory named after St. Francis de Sales up to the year 1847. Meanwhile the number of youngsters was rising steadily, and the church then in use could no longer accommodate them. Thus it was that,

God blessed these humble beginnings, and the number of young people that attended grew so large that in the year 1844 His Grace [Louis] Fransoni, our late and lamented Archbishop, gave permission to dedicate a building for use as a kind of church, [*Note 1*] granting at the same time faculties to hold there such services as are necessary for the observance of Sundays and holidays and for the instruction of the young people who attended in ever increasing numbers.

There the Archbishop came on several occasions to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Likewise, in the year 1846 he permitted the young people who attended this institution to be admitted to [first] Holy Communion and to fulfill their Easter duty there. He also permitted [priests] to sing Holy Mass [celebrate solemn Mass, as in parish churches] and to hold triduums and novenas as the occasion demanded.

This was the practice at the Oratory named after St. Francis de Sales up to the year 1847. Meanwhile the number of youngsters was rising steadily, and the church then in use could no longer accommodate them. Thus it was that,

astical authority. God blessed these humble beginnings, and it was amazing [to see] how large the number of young people became that freely attended. Hence, after due deliberation, in the year 1844 Louis Fransoni, Archbishop of Turin, gave permission to dedicate a building for use as a kind of church, [*Note 1*] and to hold there all such sacred services as are necessary for the observance of Sundays and holidays and for the instruction of the young people who attended in ever increasing numbers.

There the Archbishop came on several occasions in person to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the year 1846 he decreed that youngsters who attended this institution could be admitted to Holy Communion and could fulfill their Easter duty there. He also decreed that priests could celebrate solemn Mass, and could hold triduums and novenas as the occasion demanded.

This was the practice at the Oratory named after St. Francis de Sales up to the year 1847. Meanwhile the number of youngsters was rising steadily, and the church then in use could no longer accommodate them. Thus it was that,

was that, in that year, again with the permission of the ecclesiastical authority, a second oratory, under the patronage of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, having the same purpose as the first, was established in another part of the city. And as with time the premises at these two institutions also proved inadequate, in the year 1849 a third oratory, under the patronage of the Holy Guardian Angel, was established in yet another part of the city.	in that year, again with the permission of the ecclesiastical authority, a second oratory, under the patronage of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, having the same purpose as the first, was established in another part of the city, in Plane-Tree Lane, at Porta Nuova. And as with time the premises at these two institutions also proved inadequate, in the year 1850 [sic] a third oratory, under the patronage of the Holy Guardian Angel, was established in the Vanchiglia district.	in that year, again with the permission of the ecclesiastical authority, a second oratory, under the patronage of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, having the same purpose as the first, was established in another part of the city, in Plane-Tree Lane, at Porta Nuova. And as with time the premises at these two institutions also proved inadequate, in the year 1849 a third oratory, under the patronage of the Holy Guardian Angel, was established in the Vanchiglia district.	in that year, again with the permission of the ecclesiastical authority, a second oratory, under the patronage of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, having the same purpose as the first, was established in another part of the city, at Porta Nuova. And as with time the premises at these two institutions also proved inadequate, in the year 1849 a third oratory, under the patronage of the Holy Guardian Angel, was established in Vanchiglia, also a district of the same city.
[4] By then the political climate had deteriorated to the point that [the Catholic] religion faced the gravest difficulties and dangers. In this situation, the ecclesiastical superior most graciously approved the regulations of these oratories, and *appointed Fr. Bosco their Director-in-Chief, granting to him all the faculties that would be needed or might be helpful for the task*.	By then the political climate had deteriorated to the point that [the Catholic] religion faced the gravest difficulties and dangers. In this situation, the ecclesiastical superior most graciously and *of his own initiative* approved regulations of these oratories, and *appointed Fr. Bosco their Director-in-Chief, granting to him all the faculties that would be needed or might be helpful for the task*.	By then the political climate had deteriorated to the point that [the Catholic] religion faced the gravest difficulties and dangers. In this situation, the ecclesiastical superior most graciously and *of his own initiative* approved the regulations of these oratories, and *appointed Fr. Bosco their Director-in-Chief, granting to him all the faculties that would be needed or might be helpful for the task*.	By then the political climate had deteriorated to the point that [the Catholic] religion faced the gravest difficulties and dangers. In this situation, that most magnanimous person to whom the care of the diocese had been entrusted *of his own initiative* approved the regulations of these oratories, and *appointed Fr. Bosco their Director, granting to him all the faculties that would be needed or might be helpful for the task*.
[5] Bishops in many parts have adopted the very same regulations and have made an effort to introduce these festive oratories into their dioceses.	Bishops in many parts have adopted the very same regulations and have made an effort to introduce these festive oratories into their dioceses.	Bishops in many parts have adopted the very same regulations and are making an effort to introduce these festive oratories into their dioceses.	Bishops in many parts have adopted the very same regulations and are making an effort to cause such oratories to flourish in their dioceses also.
[6] But, an urgent need arose in connection with the care of the [youngsters in these] oratories. Numerous	But, an urgent need arose in connection with the care of the [youngsters in these] oratories. Numerous	But, an urgent need arose in connection with the care of the [youngsters in these] oratories. Numerous	But, an unexpectedly urgent need arose. A number of young people somewhat more advanced in age, could

young people somewhat more advanced in age, could not receive proper [religious] instruction merely by attending the Sunday catechism. This made it necessary to open day and evening classes, with catechetical instruction [especially for them].

[7] Furthermore, many of these youngsters found themselves in a situation of dire poverty and neglect. Hence they were received into a home [set up for them]. By this means they were removed from dangers, they received proper religious instruction, and they were started on a trade.

[8] This is still the practice at present, especially in Turin, in the home attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, in which the youngsters given shelter number about two hundred. This is likewise the practice in Genoa, in the Work for Little Artisans, so called, where Fr. Francis Montebruno is director and where the youngsters given shelter are forty in number. This is also the practice in the city of Alessandria, where the work is for the duration entrusted to the care of [our] Cleric Angelo Savio, and where the youngsters given shelter are fifty in number.

young people somewhat more advanced in age, could not receive proper [religious] instruction merely by attending the Sunday catechism. This made it necessary to open day and evening classes, with catechetical instruction [especially for them].

Furthermore, many of these youngsters found themselves in a situation of dire poverty and neglect. Hence, they were received into a home [set up for them]. By this means they were removed from dangers, they received proper religious instruction, and were started on a trade.

This is still the practice at the present time, especially in Turin, in the home attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, in which the youngsters given shelter number about two hundred.

young people somewhat more advanced in age, could not receive proper [religious] instruction merely by attending the Sunday catechism. This made it necessary to open day and evening schools, with catechetical instruction that would function throughout the week.

Furthermore, many of these youngsters found themselves in a situation of such dire poverty and neglect that, in order to remove them from dangers, give them religious instruction, and start them on a trade, no means was at hand other than to house them in suitable premises, and provide them with whatever they needed.

This has been the practice for the past seventeen years, in Turin, in the home attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, where the youngsters given shelter number about 700. In 1863 another house [school] was opened at Mirabello Monferrato, [officially] known as St. Charles' Junior Seminary, where about one hundred youngsters receive an education in accordance with the regulations of this society.

not receive proper [religious] instruction merely by attending the Sunday catechism. This made it necessary to open both day and evening schools that would provide catechetical instruction for them throughout the week.

Furthermore, many of these youngsters found themselves abandoned and in a situation of dire poverty. Hence, in order that they might be removed from dangers, given religious instruction, and started on a trade, they were received into a home especially [set up for them].

This is even now the practice, especially in Turin, in the home attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, where [the youngsters given shelter] number over 700. In 1863 another house [school] was opened in the Monferrato town of Mirabello, [officially] known as St. Charles' Junior Seminary, where nearly one hundred and fifty youngsters receive an education in accordance with the regulations that are in force in the Oratory of this city. Then in the year 1864, another house was established as a boarding school at Lanzo, in the province of Turin,

in which two hundred youngsters receive an education and religious instruction. We are at present engaged in negotiations to open yet another house at a place named Troffarello, a village located seven miles from the city [of Turin].

[9] When, in addition to the youngsters that gather in the festive oratories, one considers those that attend day and evening school, and those that are given shelter, one realizes how the Lord's harvest has increased. Hence in order to maintain unity in spirit and discipline, on which the success of oratory work depends, *as far back as 1844 a number of priests banded together to form a kind of congregation, while helping one another by mutual example and instruction. They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise to devote themselves solely to such work as would, in their superior's judgment, redound to the glory of God and to the benefit of their souls. They regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior. And although no vows were made, nevertheless the rules that are here presented were [already] observed in practice.* Fifteen people at present profess these rules: 5 priests, 8 clerics, and 2 laymen

When, in addition to the youngsters that gather in the festive oratories, one considers those that attend day and evening school, and those that are given shelter, one realizes how the Lord's harvest has increased. Hence in order to maintain unity in spirit and discipline, on which the success of oratory work depends, *as far back as 1844 a number of priests banded together to form a kind of congregation, while helping one another by mutual example and instruction. They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise to devote themselves solely to such work as would, in their judgment, redound to the glory of God and to the benefit of their souls. They regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior. And although no vows were made, nevertheless in the main the rules that are here presented were [already] observed in practice.*

When, in addition to the youngsters that gather in the festive oratories, one considers those that attend day and evening school, and those that are given shelter, one realizes how the Lord's harvest has increased. Hence in order to maintain unity in spirit and discipline, on which the success of oratory work depends, *as far back as 1844 a number of priests banded together to form a kind of congregation for the purpose of helping one another by mutual example and instruction. They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise to devote themselves to the education of young people, and to such ministerial work as would redound, in their judgment, to the greater glory of God and to the benefit of their souls. They regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior. And although no vows were made, nevertheless in the main the rules that are here presented were [already] observed in practice.*

When, in addition to the youngsters that gather in the festive oratories, one considers those that attend day and evening school, and those that are given shelter, one realizes how the Lord's harvest has increased. Hence in order to maintain unity in a tested discipline from which richest fruits have been obtained, *as far back as 1844 a number of priests banded together to form a kind of society or congregation, while helping one another by mutual example and instruction. They did not bind themselves by any [formal] vow; they merely made a promise to devote themselves unreservedly to such work as would redound, in their judgment, to the greater glory of God and to the benefit of their souls. They freely chose Fr. John Bosco as their superior. And although no vows were made, nevertheless in the main the rules that are here presented were [already] observed in practice.*

[Don Bosco's Note 1, from paragraph 1:] "This consisted of two rooms in the living quarters of the priests, [spiritual] directors of the hospice of Our Lady of Refuge for girls at risk known as the *Rifugio*. Later in the year 1845, the Oratory was transferred to Valdocco, where it is even at present located."

Comment

Regarding Paragraph 1 and Don Bosco's accompanying note, one should bear in mind that in 1844 Don Bosco moved from the Pastoral Institute (*Convitto*) within the city to Marchioness Barolo's *Rifugio*, which was located in the outlying Valdocco district, as chaplain designate of the Little Hospital then under construction. The small oratory begun at the Pastoral Institute in 1841 moved to the *Rifugio* with Don Bosco in October 1844. On December 8 the Marchioness permitted the use of rooms in the Little Hospital where a chapel was established and where the oratory met until July 1845. It is in this light that one should read Paragraph 1 and Don Bosco's accompanying note.

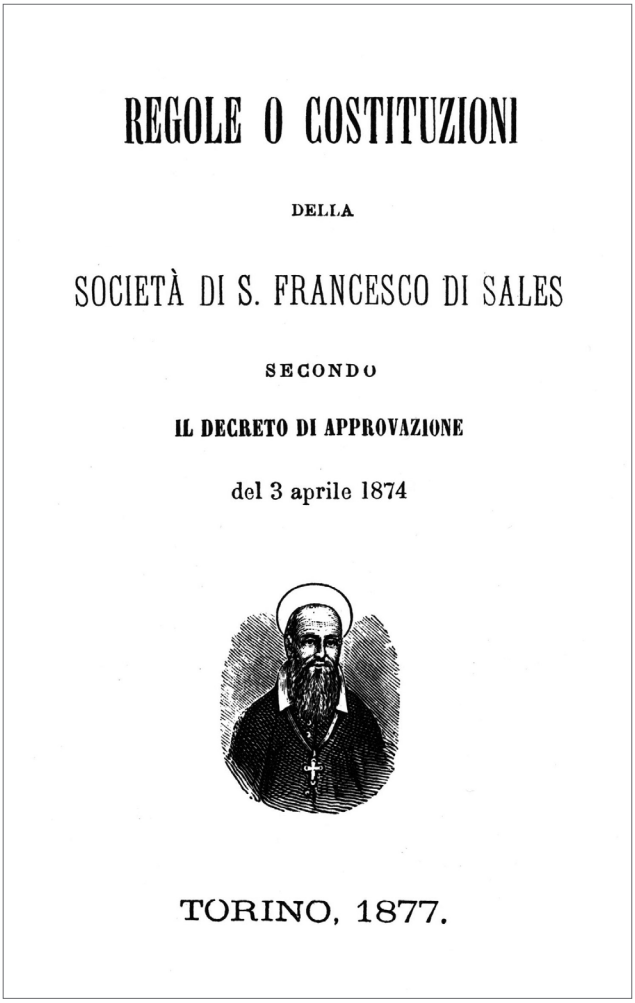
In Paragraph 2 the scene changes. In 1846 we find the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales established on Mr. Pinardi's property, also located, like Barolo's *Rifugio* and Little Hospital, in Valdocco. The famous Pinardi shed was dedicated as a chapel; here Archbishop Fransoni came to administer the Sacrament and gave Don Bosco the faculties that made the Oratory a kind of "parish for young people without a parish."

Then Don Bosco quickly surveys subsequent development: the establishment of two more oratories in 1847 and 1849 in other parts of the city (Paragraph 3), the liberal revolution, Archbishop Fransoni's approval of draft regulations and his 1852 Decree appointing Don Bosco Director-in-Chief of the three oratories with all necessary faculties (Paragraph 4).

Responding to "an urgent need", Don Bosco set up day and evening classes for somewhat older youngsters (Paragraph 6) and a home for the poorest of the poor (1847), where young people were removed from danger, received religious instruction and were started on a trade (Paragraph 7)

In Paragraph 8 Don Bosco describes further developments to the time of writing for each stage.

Stage I (Ar, 1858) is of special interest. He mentions a population of 200 boarders at the Home (*Casa annessa*) in Valdocco. This increase was made possible by a new building put up in sections in 1853 and 1856. Then he mentions the work for apprentices begun in Genoa by Fr. Francis Monte-


REGOLE O COSTITUZIONI

DELLA

SOCIETÀ DI S. FRANCESCO DI SALES

SECONDO

IL DECRETO DI APPROVAZIONE

del 3 aprile 1874

TORINO, 1877.

17 – Frontispiece of the printed Italian edition of the Salesian Constitutions published in 1877

bruno. Don Bosco had met this zealous priest in 1855 or earlier, and it seems that they discussed joining forces. However, it was not to be, and Montebruno is no longer mentioned in successive stages. The final item of Paragraph 9 (Stage I, 1858) is of special interest for its mention of Seminarian Angelo Savio working in Alessadria. The fact that Savio was assigned to that work in 1858-59 allows us to date the first draft of the constitutions (Ar) to 1858-59.

The last Paragraph (9) looks to the time when a petition for approval will be made. Don Bosco states that as far back as 1844 (when he lived and worked at Barolo's *Rifugio*, in association with Fathers Borel, Pacchiotti and others) the oratory workers in order to preserve unity, spirit and discipline formed "a kind of congregation." Its members took no formal vow, only a simple promise, but observed "these rules" in practice, and acknowledged Don Bosco as their superior.[15]

In stage I of Paragraph 9 (Ar, 1858) Don Bosco states that a group or community of fifteen members (otherwise unidentified) are already practicing "these rules"–"5 priests, 8 clerics and 2 laymen." This is before the founding of the Society in December 1859, and indeed before the constitutions Ar of 1858.

[15] In later historical outlines Don Bosco speaks not just as "a kind of congregation" but of a congregation that was canonically erected–a much-debated statement already discussed [see Vol. 3, Ch. 8].

Chapter 8

EARLY CONSTITUTIONAL TEXTS–II PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

Summary

I. Chapter on the Purpose of the Society – Selected Texts
II. Reflections on Significant Concepts of the Chapter on the Purpose of the Society
1. Purpose of the Salesian Society
The Work of the Oratories and the Salesian Society: an "oratorian" congregation
The Special Purpose of the Salesian Society as a Religious Congregation
The General Purpose of the Salesian Society as a Religious Congregation
2. Personal Sanctification *Through* the Work of Charity after the Example of Christ's Own Pastoral Charity
Articles 1 and 2 of the Chapter On Purpose in Their Earliest Drafts of 1858 and 1860
The Re-Writing of Article 1 of the Chapter on Purpose in 1864
3. Don Bosco's Social Commitment and his Apolitical Stance: Article 7 of the Chapter on Purpose in the Constitutions of 1864
Don Bosco's Continuing Apolitical Stance
Don Bosco's Work of Charity and the Renewal of Society
Possible Reason for the Prohibition of Political Involvement
Appendices: 1. Occurrence of the Term and Concept "Poor" - 2. The Forms "Poor" as Quantifiers and Classifiers - 3. "Poorest"– a Priority within a Priority?

For the Chapter on the Purpose of the Society only significant stages of the text are given for comparison: Stage II, totally under Don Bosco's control; Stage III, first text presented in Rome, but already under some external influences; Stage VI, approved text after modifications made by the cardinals of the General Congregation; Stage VIII, "official" Italian text edited and printed for the Salesians, but differing from the approved text in style and to some extent also in content.

1. Chapter on the Purpose of the Society – Selected Texts

II (1860) [*Do*] Ms Boggero, Italian	III (1864) [*Gb*] Ms Bosco, Italian	VI (1874) [*Q*] Ms Approved Text Latin	VIII (1875) [*V*] Printed Italian - for Salesians
1. It is the purpose of this society to gather together members, priests, clerics and laymen too, for the purpose of aspiring to perfection through the imitation of the virtues of our Divine Savior, especially in (the exercise of] charity toward poor young people.	1. The purpose of this society is the Christian perfection of its members; every kind of work of charity both spiritual and corporal, toward young people, especially if they be poor; and also the education of young seminarians. It is composed of priests, clerical students and laymen.	1. It is the purpose of the Salesian Congregation that its members, while striving together for Christian perfection, undertake every kind of work of charity, both spiritual and corporal, toward young people, especially if they be poorer; and engage in the education of young seminarians. This Society is composed of priests, clerical students and laymen too.	1. The purpose of the Salesian Society is the Christian perfection of its members; every kind of work of charity, spiritual and corporal, toward young people, especially poor [young people]; and also the education of young seminarians. It is composed of priests, clerical students and laymen.
2. Jesus Christ began to do and to teach; likewise shall the members begin by perfecting themselves through the practice of interior and exterior virtues and through the acquisition of knowledge; and then shall they go to work for the benefit of their neighbor.	2. Jesus Christ began to do and to teach; likewise shall the members begin by perfecting themselves through the practice of interior and exterior virtues and through the acquisition of knowledge; and then shall they go to work for the benefit of their neighbor.	2. Jesus Christ began to do and to teach; likewise shall the members begin by perfecting themselves through the practice of exterior as well as interior virtues, and through the acquisition of knowledge; and then shall they go to work strenuously to help others.	2. Jesus Christ began to do and to teach; likewise shall the Salesian members also begin by perfecting themselves through the practice of every interior and exterior virtue, and through the acquisition of knowledge; and then shall they go to work for the benefit of their neighbor.
3. The first exercise of charity shall be to gather together poor and abandoned young people in order to instruct them in the holy Catholic religion, especially on Sundays and holy days, as is presently done in this city of Turin in the three oratories of St. Francis de Sales, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga and of the holy Guardian Angel.	3. The first exercise of charity shall be to gather together the most abandoned (or, the more abandoned) young people, in order to instruct them in the holy Catholic religion, especially on Sundays and holy days, as is done in this city of Turin in the three Oratories of St. Francis de Sales, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga and of the holy Guardian Angel.	3. The first exercise of charity shall be about this, that poorer and abandoned young people are received and are taught the holy Catholic Religion, indeed especially on Sundays and holy days.	3. The first exercise of charity shall be that of gathering together poor and abandoned young people in order to instruct them in the holy Catholic religion, especially on Sundays and holy days.

4. Further, some young people are found that are so abandoned that unless they are given shelter every care would be expended on them in vain; to this end, as for as possible, houses of shelter shall be opened in which, with the means which Divine Providence will provide, lodging, food and clothing shall be supplied to them. Then, while they are instructed in the truths of the faith, they shall also be started on some trade or work, as is presently done in the house attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales in this city.

4. Further, some young people are found that are so abandoned that unless they are given shelter every care would be expended on them In vain; to this end, as for as possible, houses of shelter shall be opened in which, with the means which Divine Providence will provide, lodging, food and clothing shall be supplied to them. Then, while they are instructed in the truths of the faith, they shall also be started on some trade or work, as is presently done in the home attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales in this city.

4. Since it often happens that some young people are found that are so abandoned that unless they are received into a hospice, every care would be expended on them wholly in vain–for this reason, with the greatest possible concern, houses shall be opened in which, with the help of Divine Providence, shelter, food and clothing are supplied to them. And while they are instructed in the truths of faith, they shall at the same time apply themselves to [learning] some trade.

4. Since it often happens that some young people are found that are so abandoned that, unless they are given shelter, every care in their case would be without effect–for this reason, as far as possible, houses shall be opened in which, with the means that Divine Providence will provide, shelter, food and clothing are supplied to them. And while they are instructed in the truths of the Catholic faith, they shall also be started on some trade or work.

5. Moreover, in view of the grave dangers that young people desirous of embracing the ecclesiastical state have to face, this congregation shall apply itself with care to cultivating the piety and vocation of those who show a special aptitude for study and an outstanding disposition toward piety. When giving shelter to young people for the pursuit of study, those that are poorest [or, poorer] shall be accepted by preference, since these would lack the means whereby to pursue their studies elsewhere.

5. Moreover, in view of the grave dangers that young people desirous of embracing the ecclesiastical state have to face, this society shall apply itself with care to cultivating the piety and vocation of those who may show a special aptitude for study and an outstanding disposition toward piety. In. giving shelter to young people for the pursuit of study, those that are poorest [or, poorer] shall be accepted by preference, since these would lack the means whereby to pursue their studies elsewhere–provided they give well-grounded hope of success in [their vocation to] the ecclesiastical state. In the house of Valdocco the young people who are pursuing a classical course

5. Moreover, since young people desirous of entering the ecclesiastical ministry are exposed to the gravest dangers, this society shall take the greatest care to cultivate the piety and vocation of those who may show themselves to be especially commendable for study and piety. In receiving young people for their studies, those shall be given preference who are poorer, and who cannot therefore complete their course of study elsewhere–provided they give some hope of a vocation to the ecclesiastical ranks.

5. Moreover, since the dangers that young people who aspire to the ecclesiastical state have to face are many and grave, this society shall take the greatest care to cultivate the piety of those who show a special aptitude for study, and are commendable for [their] good conduct. In admitting young people for the purpose of studies, those who are the poorest [or, poorer] shall be accepted by preference, for the very reason that they could not pursue their studies elsewhere–provided they give some hope of a vocation to the ecclesiastical state.

	of study with this end in view number about 555, and in Mirabello over one hundred.		
6. The need of upholding the Catholic religion also among adults of the lower classes is keenly felt, especially in rural settlements– hence the members shall endeavor to give spiritual retreats, to spread good books, using all the means that charity will prompt, so that, both through the spoken and the written word, a barrier may be erected against irreligion and heresy, which in so many ways attempt to make inroads among simple and uneducated people. At present this is done by giving occasional spiritual retreats and by the publication of the *Catholic Readings*.	6. The need of upholding the Catholic religion also among adults of the lower classes is keenly felt, especially in rural settlements– hence the members shall endeavor to give spiritual retreats, to spread good books, using all the means that charity will prompt, so that, both through the spoken and the written word, a barrier may be erected against irreligion and heresy, which in so many ways attempt to make inroads among simple and uneducated people. At present this is done by giving occasional spiritual retreats and by the publication of the *Catholic Readings*, and through the printing shop inaugurated in the house of Valdocco two years ago expressly for the printing of good books. 7. But it is an accepted principle, and one that shall be followed without exception, that all the members of this society shall rigorously keep aloof from anything that has to do with politics. Hence, neither by the spoken nor by the written word, whether through books or through the press, shall they ever take part in discussions that could, even if only indirectly compromise them in matters of politics.	6. Since there is also a pressing need of defending the Catholic religion among the Christian people, especially in villages, so the members shall strenuously endeavor to strengthen and direct to [a life of] piety those people who, out of a desire to better their [spiritual] life, go on retreat for the few required days. Let the members likewise take care to spread good books among the people, and let them make use of all the means that an industrious charity would suggest; lastly let them oppose, through the spoken and written word, irreligion and heresy, which attempt everything to make inroads among simple and uneducated people. Let the sermons that are occasionally preached, as well as triduums and novenas, and finally the publication of good books be directed to this end.	6. The need of upholding the Catholic Religion also among the Christian people at large is keenly felt, especially in villages– hence the Salesian members shall zealously endeavor to give spiritual retreats [designed] to strengthen and direct in piety those who come to hear them out of a desire to change their lives. 7. Likewise they shall endeavor to spread good books among the people, making use of all the means that Christian charity inspires. Lastly, through the spoken and written word, they shall try to erect a barrier against irreligion and heresy, which in so many ways attempt to make inroads among simple and uneducated people. To this end should be directed the sermons occasionally preached to the people, as well as the triduums, the novenas and the spreading of good books.

[Note: Art. 7 on "politics" was immediately removed in accordance with the Savini-Svegliati observation 2 as noted in Ch. 3 above. Don Bosco, however, adhered to this principle in practice.]

2. Reflections on Significant Concepts of the Chapter on the Purpose of the Society

Adapted from: A. Lenti's article in *Journal of Salesian Studies* 9:1 (1998) 1-57.

1. Purpose of the Salesian Society

In Don Bosco's understanding, the Salesian Society was a religious congregation that arose out of a singular commitment to the young through the work of the oratories. The Salesian Society and the work of the oratories are of one bloodline; consequently it had to be and remain a pliable, functional instrument for that work. To this effect it had to be "new," and relatively free from the strictures of traditional forms. It is on this premise of continuity (in fact, identity) of the Salesian Society with the oratory that Don Bosco drafted the many historical sketches and memorandums that he submitted in defense of his constitutions.

This premise was perhaps not clearly understood, or not appreciated, by those who scrutinized the documents he presented. But he himself never had any other understanding of the Society: it existed in embryo in the work of the oratories, and its aim was to serve the young. This idea may explain Don Bosco's repeated claims that the Society, as well as its constitutions, dated back to 1841, or to some other early date in the development of the oratory (1844, 1852, etc.).

The Work of the Oratories and the Salesian Society: an "oratorian" congregation

Pietro Braido lists no less than eleven such memorandums authored by Don Bosco during the decade 1864-1874 and presented by him to Church authorities.[1] Later documents also propound the same thesis; it was inevitable that the early constitutions should be prefaced with a historical sketch to the same effect. Only a few examples are given here.

[1] Braido, *L'Idea* in *Don Bosco per i giovani*, 91-92.

In the memorandum addressed to Archbishop Riccardi di Netro in 1867 (*Società di S. Francesco di Sales*) Don Bosco traces the story of the Society from 1841, marking the dates 1846 (first organization), 1852 (Archbishop Fransoni's decree), 1858 (plan presented to Pius IX), 1864 (first approval). In the 1867 memorandum, under the heading, "Origin of this Society," he begins with the sentence: "This Society, which at its origin numbered only a few priests, began in 1841 with the purpose of gathering together poor young people on Sundays and holy days."[2]

In a Historical Sketch (*Cenno storico*) of 1868 addressed to Bishop Pietro Ferrè of Casale (who approved the Society as a diocesan congregation) Don Bosco begins the story of origins with the words:

> This Society had its origin in a simple ministry of catechetical instruction (*semplice catechismo*), which Father John Bosco undertook with the consent and encouragement of Fathers Luigi Guala and Giuseppe Cafasso [...]. Its purpose was to gather together the poorest and most neglected young people on Sundays and holy days, to entertain them with church services and songs, as well as with pleasant recreation.[3]

In the Brief Historical Notice (*Brevi notizie*) with which he prefaced his Report to the Holy See (*Esposizione alla S. Sede*) of 1879, Don Bosco gives what is perhaps the most succinct and systematic exposition of the thesis, Work of the Oratory-Salesian Society:

> In 1841 this Congregation was but a Sunday catechism class and a garden for [young people's] recreation on Sundays and holy days. To this work there was added in 1846 a home for poor apprentices. [...] A number of priests and lay gentlemen helped with this work of charity as extern cooperators. In 1852 the Archbishop of Turin approved the Institute by giving of his own initiative to Father John Bosco all necessary and appropriate faculties, and by appointing him superior and head of the work of the oratories. Between the year 1852 and 1858 community life got under way, together with a [resident] school and a program for the training of seminarians [...]. In 1858 Pius IX, of saintly memory, urged

[2] *Società di S. Francesco di Sales* [1867]: MS. in Don Bosco's hand in *ASC* A2230202, *FDBM* 1,925 A12-B3; *IBM* VIII, 809-811 (omitted in *EBM*).

[3] *Cenno storico intorno alla Società di S. Francesco di Sales* [1868]: MS. partly in Don Bosco's hand in *ASC* A2230203, *FDBM* 1,924 D11-E2; *IBM* IX, 61-64, *EBM* IX, 35-37. The time reference is to 1841, when Don Bosco enrolled in the Pastoral Institute (*Convitto*) and was almost immediately engaged in the catechetical instruction of young people at risk.

> Father John Bosco to establish a pious Society with the aim of preserving the spirit of the work of the oratories.[4]

As noted above (see preceding Chapter 7), Don Bosco's early constitutions were prefaced with a historical sketch, which was pointedly entitled "Origin of This Congregation (or Society)." It emphatically delivered the same message, namely, that the Salesian Society and its constitutions had their origin in the work of the oratory. Here Don Bosco goes so far as to state that there existed from the beginning "a kind of congregation" for the work of the oratories over which he presided as "superior."

Accordingly in the earliest draft of the constitutions (the Rua Ms. of 1858), under the title "Origin of this Congregation," Don Bosco writes:

> In order to maintain unity in spirit and discipline, on which the success of oratory work depends, *as far back as 1844 a number of priests banded together to form a kind of congregation* while helping one another by mutual example and instruction. They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise *to devote themselves solely to such work as would, in their superior's judgment, redound to the glory of God and to the benefit of their souls. They regarded Father John Bosco as their superior. And although no vows were made, nevertheless the rules that are here presented were [already] observed in practice.*[5]

Clearly, from a purely historical standpoint, Don Bosco's statements are open to challenge with regard both to the general thesis and to detail. (This is especially true of the Report of 1879, as the above-quoted passage would tend to show.) The bond uniting the Salesian Society with work of the oratories as one identity is a retrospective, ideal projection rather than a historical

[4] *Brevi notizie sulla Congregazione di S. Francesco di Sales dall'anno 1841 al 1879*, introduction to: *Esposizione alla S. Sede dello stato morale e materiale della Pia Società di S. Francesco di Sales* (S. Pier d'Arena: Tip. Salesiana, 1879), in *Opere Edite* XXXI, 240[-254]; edited in *BM* as follows: *IBM* XIV, 216-219 (*Presentazione*, *Brevi notizie* and *Stato morale*), *EBM* XIV, 156-159 (Foreword, Brief Historical Notice and Moral State); *IBM*, XIV, 756-763, Appendix 35: *Stato Materiale* [...] (omitted in *EBM*).

[5] Rua MS. (*Ar*, 1858) in Motto, *Cost. DB*, 62-70 (italics mine). Here as elsewhere the year 1844 is given as the point of reference because it was in October of that year that Don Bosco, reassured by the recurrence of the vocation dream, left the Pastoral Institute (*Convitto*) of St. Francis of Assisi, took a chaplaincy at Marchioness Barolo's institution (*Rifugio*), and put the oratory on a new basis as the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales. It was in these circumstances that the work became a collaborative ministry involving the priests of Barolo's institution and others as well.

reality. But it should be borne in mind that in all these presentations Don Bosco is concerned not with the letter but with the spirit of history. He wishes to throw into bold relief the bond between the work of the oratory and the Society that grew out of it and because of it. The Salesian Society, as Don Bosco conceived it, is an "oratorian congregation."[6]

The Special Purpose of the Salesian Society as a Religious Congregation

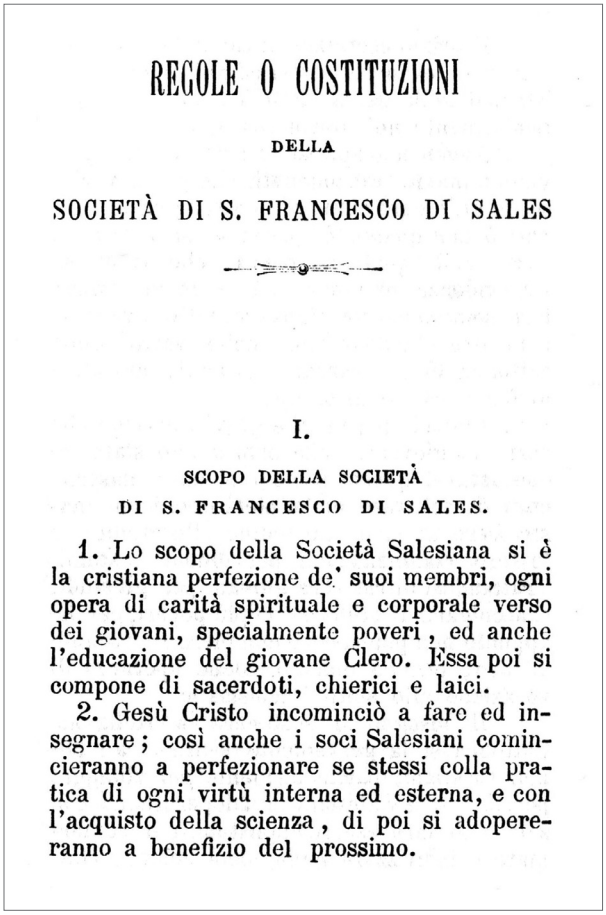
The foregoing excerpts show that, in Don Bosco's thinking, the work of the oratory constitutes the essential special purpose of the Salesian Society. Don Bosco, however, was not content with prefacing his constitutions (and the chapter on Purpose in particular) with such historical reference points. He wished to begin his constitutions with a Preamble intended to set forth a theological rationale for the work of the oratories and the Salesian Society. In this Preamble (I quote again from the earliest draft) he writes:

> At all times it has been the special concern of the ministers of the Church to promote, to the best of their power, the spiritual welfare of the young. [...]
>
> At the present time this need is felt with far greater urgency. Parental neglect, the abusive power of the press, and the proselytizing efforts of heretics demand that we unite in fighting for the Lord's cause, under the banner of the faith. Our efforts must aim at safeguarding the faith and the moral life of that category of young people whose eternal salvation is more at risk precisely because of their poverty. *This is the special purpose of the Congregation of St. Francis de Sales, first established in Turin in 1841.*[7]

In the light of these emphases, it is understandable that Don Bosco would resist the Roman authorities' demands that these two initial chapters of the constitutions (the Preamble and the Historical Sketch) be removed on grounds that it was not customary for constitutions to include "historical commendations of the institute." Don Bosco regarded the oratorian experience as charismatic and normative, that is, as embodying the spirit that was to power *all* Salesian work of charity. After receiving the critical observation in 1864, he thought he could meet the demand halfway by retaining the two chapters (in italics) merely as a general introduction. But he was finally forced to remove them in 1874 before approval. The curtailment had the effect

[6] Cf. Braido, *L'Idea* in *Don Bosco per i giovani*, 90 and 92.

[7] Rua MS. (*Ar*, 1858) in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 58 and 60 (italics mine).



REGOLE O COSTITUZIONI

DELLA

SOCIETÀ DI S. FRANCESCO DI SALES

I.

SCOPO DELLA SOCIETÀ
DI S. FRANCESCO DI SALES.

1. Lo scopo della Società Salesiana si è la cristiana perfezione de' suoi membri, ogni opera di carità spirituale e corporale verso dei giovani, specialmente poveri, ed anche l'educazione del giovane Clero. Essa poi si compone di sacerdoti, chierici e laici.

2. Gesù Cristo incominciò a fare ed insegnare; così anche i soci Salesiani comincieranno a perfezionare se stessi colla pratica di ogni virtù interna ed esterna, e con l'acquisto della scienza, di poi si adopereranno a benefizio del prossimo.

18 – "Purpose of the Salesian Society" in the printed Italian edition of the Salesian Constitutions published in 1877

of leaving the chapter on Purpose, particularly its foundational (but rather meager) first article, without supporting theological and historical rationale.

Describing the purpose of the Salesian Society in "Remarks" (*Cose da notarsi*) submitted with the Constitutions in 1864, Don Bosco writes:

> The purpose of this Society, in so far as it concerns its members [personally], is to offer them an opportunity to unite in spirit in order to work for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. We find inspiration in the words of St. Augustine: *Divinorum divinissimum est in lucrum animarum operari* [Of all divine works the most divine is to work for the salvation of souls].

> Considered in its historical existence (*in se stessa*), [this Society] has for its purpose to continue what has been in effect in the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales for the past 20 years or so.[8]

The above is a clear statement of the *special* purpose of the Salesian Society as a religious congregation. It is the active life totally devoted to the work of charity, undertaken according to the spirit and normative experience of the oratory.

But how did Don Bosco conceive the *general* or common purpose of the society as a religious congregation, and how did he view its relationship to the special purpose?

The General Purpose of the Salesian Society as a Religious Congregation

General and Special Purpose of a Religious Institute

The debate on the purpose or purposes of religious life has had a long and disputed history, since it has involved a consideration of all the varied forms of religious life that have appeared since early Christian times.[9]

In summary, the *general* purpose of all religious life is seen to consist in striving for personal perfection or holiness, that is, for perfect charity. It bears the following characteristics: (1) it is common to all forms of religious life; (2) it is an essential requirement of religious life as such; (3) it is achieved through a more perfect following of Christ and through a more intimate union with God (whether in individual or in communitarian form); (4) it is expressed in the evangelical way of life (including virginity, poverty, obedience).

The *special* purpose of religious life, on the other hand, consists in some specific activity relating to worship, the apostolate, or work of charity undertaken *in addition* to the general common purpose but *possessing formally the nature of a true purpose*. It should be noted that such a purpose is not common to all religious life, since historically there have existed recognized forms of religious life that lacked such a purpose. Nor has it, *in itself*, been regarded as essential for the same reason. However, since religious orders, and especially Clerks Regular and religious congregations, historically were founded and ap-

[8] *Cose da notarsi intorno alle Costituzioni della Società di S. Francesco di Sales*: MS. in Don Bosco's hand in *ASC* A2230201, *FDBM* 1,889 C2-5; Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 229; *IBM* VII, 622-623 (omitted in *EBM*). "For the past 20 years or so" refers back to 1844.

[9] For a historical survey and discussion see A. Carminati, "Fini della Religione," in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1977) IV, 40-51.

proved by the Church precisely for such a purpose, the special purpose is regarded as essential in their case. This has found confirmation in Vatican II's decree on religious life.

> In such communities [devoted to various aspects of the apostolate] the very nature of religious life requires apostolic action and services, since a sacred ministry and a special work of charity have been consigned to them by the Church and must be discharged in her name.[10]

As religious life developed, the special purpose took various forms: priestly ministry, evangelization, pastoral activity, work of charity, etc. It should be emphasized that such activity is undertaken not simply as "an occupation," but as a special way of contributing directly to the Church's ministry. (Hence it is that such religious institutes have always sought the Church's approval.)

Formulaic Expressions of the Relationship between the Purposes of Religious Life

The Jesuit constitutions were the first to adopt a formulation that gave expression to both purposes of religious life.[11] Later congregations have followed suit, using expressions such as "twin purposes" or "twin principal purposes," and other formulations designed to specify various aspects of the two purposes.

In any case, the purposes are always expressed in *coordination*. Don Bosco, on the contrary, in his earliest drafts of the constitutions expressed the purposes in *subordinatio**n***, to indicate that for the Salesian the general purpose (Christian perfection or holiness) is achieved *through* the special purpose (the work of charity).

2. *Personal Sanctification* Through *the Work of Charity after the Example of Christ's Own Pastoral Charity*

One of the most important spiritual insights embodied in Don Bosco's early Constitutions is the relatedness of the exercise of pastoral charity to the

[10] Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis* 8.

[11] "It is the purpose of this society not only to strive with God's grace after the salvation and perfection of one's soul, but also at the same time ardently to devote oneself to the salvation and perfection of one's neighbor." [St. Ignatius, *Summarium Const.*, No. 2, in Carminati, *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 1977) IV, 45].

religious and spiritual life of the Salesian. This finds expression in the foundational Articles 1 and 2 of the chapter on Purpose.

Articles 1 and 2 of the Chapter On Purpose in Their Earliest Drafts of 1858 and 1860

(1) Article 1 in the earliest draft (Rua Ms. of 1858) simply reads: "1. It is the purpose of this congregation to gather together [into community] its [as] members, priests, seminarians and laymen too, in order that they may strive for perfection *through* the imitation, in so far as it is possible, of the virtues of our divine Savior."

Surprisingly, it may be noted, this first foundational article on the Purpose of the Society makes no explicit mention of pastoral charity towards poor young people, though this would be included in the imitation of Christ's "virtues." It should, however, be borne in mind that the chapter on Purpose was preceded, as mentioned above, by two other chapters, the Preamble and the Historical Sketch. They were intended to provide the key for a correct understanding of this article, of the whole chapter on Purpose, as well as of the whole project set forth in the constitutions. Those two chapters, eventually removed in Rome as mentioned above, were all about the option for the young in imitation of Christ's pastoral charity. The Preamble said expressly:

> Our divine Savior himself by his deeds gave us clear proof of this truth [the importance of educating the young]. For in fulfilling his divine mission on earth, with a love of predilection he invited children to come close to him: *Sinite parvulos venire ad me* [Let little children come to me]. [...] Our efforts therefore must aim at safeguarding the faith and the moral life of that category of young people whose eternal salvation is more at risk precisely because of their poverty.[12]

This would have been enough. But, as though to make it doubly certain, in the next draft of 1860 Don Bosco revised the last phrase of Article 1 to read: "–in order that they may strive for perfection *through* the imitation, in so far as it is possible, of the virtues of our divine Savior, especially in [his? their?] charity toward poor young people."[13]

(2) Article 2 in the earliest draft (the Rua MS. of 1858) expands the concept of the imitation of Christ already set forth in Article 1, though it does so

[12] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 58.
[13] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 72.

along traditional lines not free of difficulty. This article, which remained fundamentally unchanged throughout, reads: "2. Jesus Christ began by doing and teaching. In like manner shall the members begin by perfecting themselves through the practice of both the internal and external virtues and through the acquisition of knowledge; then shall they apply themselves for the good of their neighbor."[14]

The sentence, "Jesus Christ began by doing and teaching," is a quote from the Acts of the Apostles [Acts 1,1]. In that preface, Luke says that in the first book (the Gospel) he spoke about "all that Jesus began to do and to teach," referring to Jesus' ministry; now (in Acts) he is going to continue the story. The phrase "doing and teaching" describes the double activity of Jesus' ministry (healing and teaching).

The traditional ascetical interpretation of the phrase, however, is entirely different. Here "doing and teaching" represent two successive stages in the life of Jesus, as applicable to the life of a religious. The "doing stage" is the period of formation in prayer, study and ascetical striving (paralleling the 30 years-long hidden life of Jesus). The "teaching stage" is the period of ministry or apostolate that follows (paralleling Jesus' 3-year long ministry).

There is no doubt that Don Bosco's wording here was influenced by the ascetical tradition, but he himself throughout the process of approval of the constitutions fought against the very idea of successive stages. He wanted the formation of his Salesians to take place in the context of the apostolate. For example, he consistently rejected the idea of a closed, ascetical novitiate.

(3) Comment – Articles 1 and 2 of the chapter on Purpose (in the drafts of 1858 and 1860), based as they are on the strong foundations of the Preamble and of the Historical Sketch, set forth two basic principle for the spiritual life of the Salesian.

First, Don Bosco sets forth for the Salesian, albeit in nineteenth-century ascetical language, a Christ-centered spirituality. The Salesian, gathered in community for the work of charity, is given a comprehensive means for attaining to "perfection" (holiness): the imitation of Christ in his ministry to the young and the poor. This is Christocentric spirituality. The French spiritual masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth century saw Jesus, in his

[14] Motto, *Cost. SDB,* 72. "External" and "internal" were secondary distinctions based on whether or not a virtue has an external effect or projection.

mystery, in his life and ministry, as the pattern of Christian existence.[15] Don Bosco simply proposes the imitation of Christ in his virtues, which reveals the moralizing and practical mentality of the nineteenth century. However, in calling for the imitation of the virtues of Christ as doer and teacher, particularly in his love of predilection for the young, he proposes a thoroughly Christocentric spirituality.

Secondly, the Salesian's personal perfection (that is, holiness) is to be attained *through* the exercise of charity. It should be noted that this formulation goes beyond even the idea of "double essential purpose" developed historically in religious congregations. Vatican II, in the passage from *Perfectae Caritatis* cited above, sanctioned the idea that the special apostolic or charitable purpose of religious congregations is an essential part of religious life, because such activity is entrusted to them by the Church and is exercised in the Church's name. Such a pronouncement has forced a re-thinking of the ascetical and canonical tradition, which tended to view the special purpose of an institute as additional and secondary. Don Bosco's formulation and the insight it supposes (general purpose to be attained *through* the special purpose) were so novel in the early 1860s that they must have appeared altogether revolutionary.

Then how explain the drastic re-writing of the article in the draft of 1864?

The Re-Writing of Article 1 of the Chapter on Purpose in 1864

A comparison *will reveal the nature and extent of the shift:*

***Do* (1860) Purpose, Art. 1**	***Gb* (1864), Purpose, Art. 1**
1. It is the purpose of this congregation to gather together [into community] [as] its members priests, seminarians and laymen too, in order that they may strive for perfection *through* the imitation, in so far as it is possible, of the virtues of our divine Savior, especially in charity toward poor young people.	1. The purpose of this society is the Christian perfection of its members; every kind of work of charity, both spiritual and corporal, on behalf of young people, especially if they are poor; and also the education of young seminarians. It is composed of priests, seminarians and laymen.[16]

[15] Jean Jacques Olier (founder of the Sulpicians) writes: "Christianity consists in these three points: [...] to look upon Jesus, to unite oneself to Jesus, to act on Jesus. The first leads us to respect and to religion; the second, to union and to identification with Him; the third, to an activity no longer solitary, but joined to the virtue of Jesus Christ." [E.A. Walsh, "Spirituality, French School of," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 13, 605].

[16] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 72.

Here truly significant changes have taken place. Community ("the gathering") is no longer in evidence. The tight *subordination* of purposes has been replaced by mere coordination of various juxtaposed elements. The concept of "perfection *through* the work of charity toward the young in imitation of Christ's pastoral charity" has been replaced by that of an unspecified Christian perfection. Finally a Christocentric spirituality for the Salesian is no longer to be deduced from the wording of the 1864 article.

Don Bosco's Abiding Conviction

Before attempting to offer an explanation for this shift, we may take this as certain: Don Bosco never swerved from his conviction that, for the Salesian, holiness is achieved through the work of charity undertaken in imitation of Christ's pastoral charity. For instance, this is the doctrine propounded through the various editions of the Savio biography (from 1859):

> The first piece of advice that [Dominic] was given for achieving holiness was that he should endeavor to win souls to God; because there is no holier work in this world than that of contributing to the salvation of souls, for whose redemption Jesus Christ shed the very last drop of his precious blood.[17]

This is also the spiritual doctrine taught in the 1876 document "Salesian Cooperators:"

> This Association might be regarded as a traditional Third Order; but with this difference, that whereas *there* perfection was made to consist in exercises of piety [devotions], *here* the main purpose is the active life and the exercise of charity toward neighbor, especially toward young people at risk.[18]

We may therefore confidently assert that Don Bosco never intended to propose a way to holiness to Salesians that differed from the one he proposed to his boys and to his Cooperators. Thus in the Historical Sketch of 1874, written ten years after the re-working of the article under discussion, he explains his idea of the Society in question-and-answer form and writes:

[17] *Vita del giovanetto Savio Domenico [...]* per cura del Sacerdote Bosco Giovanni (Torino: Paravia e Comp., 1859), 53, in *Opere Edite* XI, 203.

[18] Bosco Giovanni, *Cooperatori salesiani, ossia un modo pratico per giovare al costume ed alla civile società* (San Pier d'Arena: Tip. Salesiana, 1876), in *Opere Edite* XXVIII, 260.

> Q: In this Society is your aim the good of neighbor or that of its members?
> A: The purpose of this Society is the spiritual advancement of its members *through* the exercise of charity toward neighbor, especially toward poor young people.[19]

Possible Reasons for the Change

Then how explain the re-writing of Article 1 on Purpose in 1864? The following may be adduced as possible reasons.[20]

1. Criticism that the Salesians were engaged in mindless external activity and neglected their spiritual formation (as Father Durando and Archbishop Gastaldi later claimed) may have played a part. Perhaps Don Bosco himself feared that the general purpose of all religious life (personal holiness) might be defeated by the very ardor with which his followers pursued the special purpose of Salesian life (pastoral charity towards young people)–hence his decision to state the purposes separately.

2. The separate statement of purposes, hence the transition from subordination to *coordination*, may have been suggested to Don Bosco by the models he had before him, even if the change blurred his original insight and his abiding conviction. As indicated above, following the basic Jesuit model, the constitutions that served as Don Bosco's sources (those of the Vincentians, of the Schools of Charity of Venice, of Lanteri's Oblates of Mary, of the Redemptorists, and of the Marists) all listed the purposes separately in coordination.

3. But more telling and decisive were the new directives from the Cogregation of Bishops and Regulars, issued to clarify this very matter. The promulgation of the Methodus in 1863 set in motion a series of actions by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars designed to regulate the approval of the many religious congregations founded in the nineteenth century. Observations given to some religious congregations on the basis of the Methodus, required that "the purpose of the institute should perhaps be expressed more

[19] *Cenno istorico*, in Braido, *DB per i giovani*, 125. An English translation is given in the preceding Ch. 6 (Appendix).

[20] For a discussion of the whole subject cf. Francesco Motto, "Constitutiones Societatis S. Francisci Salesii: Fonti letterarie dei capitoli Scopo, Forma, Voto di Obbedienza, Povertà e Castità," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 2 (1983) 341-384, esp. 356-360 [Motto, *Fonti*]; also Francis Desramaut, "Lo scopo della società nelle costituzioni salesiane," in *La Missione dei Salesiani nella Chiesa*; Colloqui 2 (Torino: LDC, 1970), 65-85.

humbly, and separate mention shall have to be made of the member's [...] personal sanctification."[21] These directives were later codified in the *Normae* of 1901.[22] After defining the general and special purpose of religious congregations, the *Normae* directed that a clear and separate statement be made of the two purposes: "These two purposes are to be accurately distinguished, and they are to be stated with clarity, in unpretentious terms, and without exaggeration."[23]

The norms given by the Roman congregation also reflect the on-going debate on the purposes of religious life. Some theologians held that ministerial, apostolic, or charitable activities were not of themselves means of perfection, or simply that the two were separate purposes of religious life, but that one could not be subordinated to the other.

In this context, the 1864 re-writing of Article 1 on Purpose is understandable. It appears that Don Bosco both by following the models and by complying with official directives hoped to make his constitutions more acceptable.

Slight Recovery

Nonetheless after the *Decretum laudis* of 1864, perhaps under Rosminian influence, Don Bosco attempted to re-establish some kind of syntactical subordination between the general purpose and the specific purpose by a (Latin) participial temporal clause: "It is the purpose of this Congregation that its members, *while* striving *together* for Christian perfection, undertake every kind of work of charity, both spiritual and corporal, toward young people [...]."[24]

[21] Motto, *Fonti*, 359.

[22] *Normae secundum quas Sacra Congregation Episcoporum et Regularium procedere solet in approbandis novis Institutis votorum simplicium*, June 28, 1901 [Norms by which the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars is guided in the process of approval of new institutes with simple vows].

[23] *Normae*, No. 44, cf. Carminati in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, Vol. IV, 1977) IV, 49.

[24] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 72-73 (*Ls*, 1867). We mentioned a possible Rosminian influence. Don Bosco had known Antonio Rosmini personally, though he was probably not familiar with the great man's philosophical-theological system. He also knew and used the constitutions of the Institute of Charity. Now, Rosmini more subtly proposed distinct, yet somehow subordinated, purposes of religious life: the members' personal sanctification, and *through* personal sanctification (*sanctificatione mediante*) total dedication to every possible work of charity. The connection, according to Rosmini, lay in the fact that "in one's perfection (perfect

This formulation, however, appears only in the Latin texts, and not in the final Italian text printed for the confreres in 1875, which returns to the Italian text of 1864!

Don Bosco's insights pertaining to the purpose and mission of the Salesian Society as a religious congregation, which we have just discussed, are matched by his concept of the Salesian community as expressed in the chapter on the Form of the Society (to be discussed in the next Ch. 9).

At the moment we will briefly look at Don Bosco's apolitical stance.

Don Bosco's Social Commitment and his Apolitical Stance: Article 7 of the Chapter on Purpose in the Constitutions of 1864

Don Bosco's Continuing Apolitical Stance

In the 1864 edition of the constitutions, Don Bosco included an article prohibiting political activity to the members. After committing the Society to the apostolate of the spoken and written word among the people (that is, preaching and the press) in article 6 of the chapter on Purpose, he added a seventh article that reads:

> 7. But it is an established principle, and one that shall be adhered to without exception, that all members of this Society shall rigorously refrain from anything that has to do with politics. Hence neither by the spoken nor by the written word,

charity) is included also the exercise of charity toward neighbor [Motto, *Fonti*, 358, with note 53]. Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797-1855), was born of a noble family at Rovereto (Trent). Highly and broadly educated, he studied theology at the University of Padua, and was ordained a priest in 1821. In 1828 he founded the Institute of Charity. Popes Pius VIII and Gregory XVI prevailed on him to write, and through the years he authored numerous ascetical, spiritual, philosophical and theological works. At the time of the liberal revolution in 1848 he was given a diplomatic mission to the Holy See by the Piedmontese government, interrupted by the episode of the Mazzinian Roman Republic. At the same time he authored two "prophetic" works (*The Five Wounds of the Church* and *A Civil Constitution Based on Social Justice*) that drew a condemnation from the Holy Office. His original, non-Thomistic philosophical system, and the works which expounded it, likewise drew a condemnation. But Rosmini was finally vindicated as one of the most important Catholic philosophers and spiritual masters in the nineteenth century. Don Bosco first became acquainted with the Rosminians in 1840 and with Rosmini himself in 1850. Rosmini helped Don Bosco financially; and although Don Bosco was in no position to evaluate Rosmini's philosophical system, his friendship and esteem for the great and holy man never wavered. [Dicastero per la Formazione, *Sussidi* 2 (Roma: SDB, 1988), 312-316].

whether through books or through the press, shall they ever take part in questions that could, even if only indirectly, compromise them in matters of politics.[25]

When Don Bosco petitioned for approval and obtained the *Decretum Laudis* in 1864, Article 7 was ordered removed under the second Savini-Svegliati observation. He complied, and although the article might still be read in intermediate archival manuscripts, it no longer appeared in the revised draft of 1867 (*Ls*) presented in Rome.

However, in an address to the First General Chapter (1877) Don Bosco stated that the article was re-inserted and was finally removed only in 1874 before the final approval of the constitutions(!). Don Bosco's words are worth noting, if only for the reason that they show his determination to maintain that apolitical stance.

> The Association of Salesian Cooperators has the good will of all because it does not get involved in politics. [As for ourselves] in my view, the reason why we are allowed the freedom to go about our work undisturbed is that our Congregation is in no way involved in politics. I wanted our constitutions to have a special article forbidding all members to get in any way mixed up in politics. Such a provision was included in the manuscript drafts, but when our rules were submitted to the Holy See, and our Congregation received its first approval [*Decretum laudis,* 1864], the article was removed by the specially appointed examining commission. In 1870 [read 1869] the Congregation was up for definitive approval, and the rules were to be submitted again for examination. As if nothing had been said on the subject, I again inserted the article that forbade the members to get involved in political questions. Again they rejected it. Convinced of its importance, I once more inserted it in 1874, when the constitutions had to be examined article by article by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars before definitive approval. Once more it was removed, but this time they attached a written explanation: "This is the third time this article has been struck out. Of itself, it appears to be generally acceptable, but in this day and age circumstances may well force one in conscience to enter the political arena, since politics are often inseparable from religion. In such cases good Catholics cannot be forbidden political activity." So it was that the article was definitively removed. We may therefore get involved in politics when it is advantageous and genuinely advisable. Apart from such cases, however, let us abide by our established rule of not engaging in any political activity.[26]

[25] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 80.

[26] ASC D578: *Capitoli Generali*, GC I, Session 4, September 7, 1877, Barberis' Original

With regard to the question of how long the article endured in the textual tradition, Motto points out that the archival documentary evidence in our possession does not bear out Don Bosco's statements. One may therefore question the accuracy of Don Bosco's recollection.[27] On the other hand, Don Bosco (as reported) quotes the written explanation he was given for the removal of the article directly. In any case, Don Bosco never deviated from this principle. It is well known that he himself shunned not only all party politics but also all political activity. In his *Memoirs of the Oratory,* written between 1873 and 1875, he speaks of the patriotic celebrations organized for the granting of the liberal constitution in the Kingdom of Sardinia (1848). When Marquis Roberto D'Azeglio pressed him to take part in the festivities with his boys, Don Bosco stated his position very clearly: "It is my firm system to keep out of anything political. Never *pro,* never *con*. […] Invite me wherever a priest can exercise charity, and you'll find me ready to sacrifice life and means. But I want now and always to remain outside politics."[28]

Don Bosco also subscribed to the policy of "withdrawal" from political life called for by conservative Catholic newspapers and endorsed by Pope Pius IX's Decree *Non Expedit* of 1868. The decree "forbade" Italian Catholics to vote and otherwise participate in the political process. This policy remained in force throughout the pontificate of Leo XIII, until 1904.

Don Bosco continued to demand that the Salesians' engagement remain exclusively on the plane of apostolic and charitable activity. The apolitical stance that Don Bosco enjoined on his Salesians he also laid down as a rule for his Salesian Cooperators. As far as their social circumstances allowed, they were to be involved in all kinds of charitable work on behalf of young people, but at the same time not to have any political entanglements. This is borne out by the above-quoted passage from the minutes of General Chapter I. The very title of their "charter" which Don Bosco finalized in 1876, "Salesian Cooperators, an Association Dedicated to Furthering Christian Morals and the Good of Civil Society in Practical Ways," testifies to Don Bosco's

Minutes, 53-55, *FDBM* 1,843 C12-D2 (also in Transcribed Minutes, *FDBM* 1,849 C5); edited in *IBM* XIII, 265, and in *EBM* XIII, 195 (in need of correction).

[27] Motto, *Cost. SDB,* 18, n. 16. Did Don Bosco in 1877 accurately recall the series of events (1864-1874) leading to the approval? For example, the Salesian Society was definitively approved in 1869, not in 1870. Could Don Bosco have been thinking of some other article, e.g., the article on civil rights (Art. 2 of the chapter on Form) that was put through an ordeal similar to the one described by Don Bosco, above?

[28] *Memoirs of the Oratory* (*MO-En*), 356.

intention.[29] In another comprehensive statement made at General Chapter I, as reported in the minutes, Don Bosco said:

> While keeping aloof from politics, we [Salesians and Salesian Cooperators] shall always avoid anything that might compromise us with the constituted authorities, whether civil or ecclesiastical. All we ask is to be allowed to care for poor and neglected young people and to help them in any way we can. This, we believe, is the only way in which we can advance Christian morals and the good of society.[30]

Now, the reason for the removal of the article on politics by Rome is clear (see above), and it could easily have been deduced from the political situation and the position of the Holy See vis-à-vis the liberal state, which was one of total rejection. It is the inclusion of such a provision by Don Bosco, and his fierce, unwavering adherence to it, that demand an explanation. After all, the Salesian mission by its very nature addresses the need of society as well as of individual people.

Don Bosco's Work of Charity and the Renewal of Society

The question has been raised as to the kind of Christian society Don Bosco envisaged and would want his Salesians to be working for. We do not pretend that Don Bosco's social model was a "modern" one. It was in fact a model that, in spite of its intense moral and religious inspiration, had already been irremediably left behind. Faced with a social and political order that seemed to deny every day more traditional moral and religious values, he envisioned (at least sentimentally) not the coming of a new Christian order but the restoration of the old–the confessional state, a stratified and orderly society in which respect for authority and private property and hard work

[29] "*Cooperatori Salesiani ossia un modo pratico per giovare al buon costume ed alla civile società*" (1876), Previous titles of this "charter document" are: "Association for Charitable Work" (1875); "Christian Union" (1874). For a study of the four "charter documents" and Don Bosco's idea of the Salesian Cooperators see Francis Desramaut, "*Da Associati alla Congregazione Salesiana del 1873 a Cooperatori Salesiani del 1876*," in *Il cooperatore nella società contemporanea*; Colloqui sulla vita salesiana 6 (Leumann-Torino: LDC, 1975) 23-55, 356-373. For the 1875 and 1876 documents, cf. *IBM* XI, 535-545, Appendix 4 and 5 (omitted in *EBM).*

[30] *ASC* D578 *Capitoli Generali*, GC I, Session 4, September 7, 1877; transcribed minutes, 116-118, *FDBM* 1,849 C12-D2; edited in *IBM* XIII, 261-262 and *EBM* XIII, 192.

prevailed, and in which social order and peace were fostered by the Church's moral doctrine and the fear of God.[31]

We can cite examples of Don Bosco's enduring yearning for the old order. In the summer of 1887, not many months before his death, Don Bosco seemed to expect important political developments to take place in the near future and voiced his apprehension. Carlo Viglietti writes in his chronicle:

> This morning, after I had read the newspapers to him, Don Bosco remarked: "Just wait and see; if not by the time of the pope's jubilee, certainly some time in the near future, a crusade, will be formed against the revolutionaries. There may not be bloodshed, but they will have their backs to the wall and will be forced to give back to the pope what is his by right.[32]

Was Don Bosco correct in this assessment? No. The process of liberalization and secularization was not to be stopped. The practical separation of Church and State was a fact. Now, these realities called for a re-evaluation of the Church's responsibility, and in particular of the mission of a religious congregation. In spite of his sentimental attachment to the old, he had to be concerned about working for a Christian society in new political and social circumstances.

It may have been painful and reluctant, but in spite of his unswerving Catholic commitment of the most conservative kind, at the ministerial level Don Bosco was able to respond in open and forward-looking terms. A personal factor was also at work here that had to do with his experience and an increasingly deeper understanding of the problems of the poor, especially poor young people. Living as he did in touch and in solidarity with people in concrete situations of suffering, poverty and need, he felt urgently called to meet the need through long-term, as well as immediate, programs. Don Bosco therefore committed his Salesians, after his own example, to the fullest possible engagement in the work of charity and in apostolic activity. He even presented such commitment as the means whereby the general purpose of

[31] P. Braido, *Il progetto operativo di Don Bosco e l'Utopia della società cristiana.* Quaderni di Salesianum 6 (Roma: LAS, 1982), 10.

[32] C. Viglietti, *Original Chronicle,* Vol. VII, 37 and 54-55, September 2 and November 27, 1887, FDBM 1,226 E 12 and 1, 227 A9. "The pope's jubilee" would be Leo XIII's golden jubilee of priestly ordination (1888), or perhaps the tenth anniversary of his accession to the papal throne (1878-1888). Don Bosco seems to be thinking of a restoration of the pope's temporal power.

religious life itself, their personal sanctification, was to be achieved. It was a complex work of charity that, growing out of the oratory experience, ramified to address increasingly new situations.

Admittedly, it was "charity." And even though in the nineteenth century the term "charity" was not yet emptied of its rich theological and traditionally Christian content, it was "charity" nonetheless. It did not really address directly systemic problems of injustice, oppression, and the like. This in any case is the accusation leveled by social historians (especially those of a Marxist tradition) against all nineteenth-century "charity."

Even so, in practical social terms but in a real sense, such "charity" aimed at renewing society. But could this aim be achieved if Salesians, the Cooperators in particular, were to remain aloof from all political activity? Hence the question may again be asked–In view of such commitments and in the face of such historic developments, how could the cause of the mission be advanced and its aims achieved, without a political engagement of some kind, at least on selected issues? Then why did Don Bosco enjoin this apolitical stance on his Salesians?

Possible Reason for the Prohibition of Political Involvement

Don Bosco's known "pragmatism" may be part of the reason. In the context of the liberal revolution and of the political, social and religious turmoil attending it, Don Bosco may have thought that restraints were called for in order to forestall reprisals, or simply to ensure the survival of the work. This is the reason most often given by Don Bosco himself. Abstention from political activity and at the same time the Salesians' commitment to charitable work for the poor are often cited by Don Bosco as the reason why the Society could escape harassment and win the good will of all. Also, the Church's official posture and directives referred to above may be cited as an additional reason, no longer just "pragmatic." Don Bosco would have regarded such directives as normative.

Beyond such considerations, however, a deeper theological understanding or instinct may have been at work. He may have believed that the Christian society of the future was not to be rebuilt through political or social activism and that the Church's, and therefore the Salesian Congregation's mission, was essentially to witness to eschatological (though not "other-worldly") realities. Consequently, Don Bosco may have seen his Salesian priests, brothers and sisters, and (particularly) his Cooperators, as peacemakers helping people

transcend political confrontation and class struggle–as a combined force for charity and reconciliation in a society divided by deep rifts. Or did he perhaps think of the Salesian Family as a peaceful invasion, as Tertullian viewed the penetration of early Christianity into the pagan society of his day?

Whatever the reason, questions remain. Was Don Bosco's position tenable, realistic, and above all effective in his day, and would it be tenable, realistic and effective in our own day? Did it not rather curtail the Salesians' ability meaningfully to address the task of evangelization and effectively help the poor? More especially–Would Don Bosco still write the article today, or write it in that manner?

Perhaps Don Bosco's reported comment, quoted above, may offer a clue. There, after recording the reason given to him for the removal of the article, that "circumstances may well force one in conscience to enter the political arena, since politics are often inseparable from religion," he himself had to admit: "We may therefore get involved in politics when it is advantageous and genuinely advisable."[33]

[33] For Don Bosco's extensive involvement in Church-State negotiations–clearly a political, as well as religious, involvement–see: A. Lenti, "Politics of the Our Father […]," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 10:2 (1999) 181-245.

Appendix

"Poor, Poorer, [the] Poorest" in the Early Constitutions' Chapter on "Purpose"

"Poor" (in its several forms)[34] and various synonyms are used in the early Salesian Constitutions to describe the young people to whom the Salesian mission is addressed. Did Don Bosco's use of these terms show that he wished to establish *priorities* with respect to the object of the mission?

Occurrence of the Term and Concept "Poor"

In the chapter on Purpose the term occurs in various grammatical forms, through successive drafts, as follows:

I-Ar-1858-Ital	II-Do-1860-Ital	III-Gb-1864-Ital	IV-Ls-1867-Lat
1. —	**1**. ***poor*** young people (giovani poveri)	**1**. y. p. esp. if they be ***poor*** (g. specialmente se sono poveri)	**1**. y. p. esp. if they be ***poor*** (adolescentes praesertim si pauperes sint)
2. —	**2**. —	**2**. —	**2**. —
3. ***poor*** *&* *abandoned* (poveri ed abbandonati)	**3**. ***poor*** *&* *abandoned* (poveri ed abbandonati)	**3**. ***poor*** *&* *abandoned* (poveri ed abbandonati	**3**. ***poor*** *&* *abandoned* (pauperes ac derelicti)
4. so abandoned (talmente abbandonati)	**4**. so abandoned (talmente abbandonati)	**4**. so abandoned (talmente abbandonati)_	**4**. so abandoned (adeo derelicti)
[missing]	**5**. the ***poorest*** *by preference* (di preferenza i più poveri	**5**. the ***poorest*** *by preference* (di preferenza i più poveri)	**5**. let those be *preferred* who are ***poorer*** (ii praeferentur qui pauperiores sint)
			6. —
5. —	**6**. —	**6**. —	
		7. —	

[34] Italian: *povero/poveri*; *più povero/più poveri*; *poverissimo/poverissimi*; *il più povero/i più poveri*; Latin: *pauper/pauperes*; *pauperior/pauperiores*; *pauperrimus/pauperrimi.*

V-Ns-1873-Lat	VI-Q [Berto]-1874-Lat	VII-T[s]-1874-Lat	VIII-V[s]-1875-Ital
1. y. p. esp. if they be ***poorer*** (ad. prasertim si pauperiores sint)	**1**. y. p. esp. if they be ***poorer*** (ad. praesertim si pauperiores sint)	**1**. y. p. especially if they be ***poorer*** (ad. praesertim si pauperiores sint)	**1**. y. p. esp. ***poor*** ones (giovani specialmente poveri)
2. —	**2**. —	**2**. —	**2**. —
3. ***poorer*** *&* *abandoned* (pauperiores ac derelicti)	**3. *poorer*** *&* *abandoned* (pauperiores ac derelicti)	**3**. the ***poorest in the first place*** *and abandoned* (pauperrimi in primis ac derelicti	**3**. ***poor*** *&* *abandoned* (poveri ed abbandonati
4. *so abandoned* (adeo derelicti)	**4**. *so abandoned* (adeo derelicti)	**4**. *so abandoned* (adeo derelicti)	**4**. *so abandoned* (talmente abbandonati)
5. let those be *preferred* who are ***poorer*** (ii praeferentur qui pauperiores sint)	**5**. let those be *preferred* who are ***poorer*** (ii praeferentur qui pauperiores sint)	**5**. let those be *preferred* who are ***poorer*** (ii praeferentur qui pauperiores sint)	**5**. the ***poorest*** *by preference* (di preferenza i più poveri)
6. —	**6**. —	**6**. —	**6**. —

The Forms "Poor" as Quantifiers and Classifiers

The Latin forms *pauperes*, *pauperiores*, *pauperrimi* (Italian, *poveri*, *più poveri*, *i più poveri/ poverissimi*; English, *poor*, *poorer*, *poorest*) constitute a system having a twofold semantic value. These forms may be used either in an "absolute" fashion as *quantifiers*, or in a "relative" fashion as *classifiers*.

As *quantifiers* they express the quantity or the intensity of a person's poverty "absolutely," that is, without comparison to the poverty of other persons. As *classifiers* they express the poverty of a person "relatively," that is by comparison to the poverty of other persons.

As *quantifiers* the three forms express degrees of poverty by reference to a social standard, which may vary in different societies or by different subjective estimates, but which always denotes what is regarded as *real* poverty. On the other hand, as *classifiers*, the three forms express degrees of poverty in relation to another person or group. Although normally they denote what passes for real poverty, they need not do so. (Sometimes as a classifier "poorer" only means "less well off.")

Classifiers differ from quantifiers not only in meaning but also in syntax, as they require linking words and terms of comparison (A is poorer than B; A is the poorest of all).

"Poorest"– a Priority within a Priority?

Returning to the question posed above: "Did Don intend to *classify* various degrees of poverty and *prioritize* the highest degree to the exclusion of lower degrees?"

Does Don Bosco's use of the term in the constitutional text (in the chapter on Purpose in particular) support such an understanding? The following should be noted:

(1) The option for the poor is clear throughout.

(2) In article 1, in the Latin stages V, VI, and VII, "poorer" replaces "poor" of the earlier stages. But the Italian stage VIII (the text that Don Bosco printed for the Salesians) reverts to "poor" as in the earlier stages. This seems to indicate that Don Bosco did not intend to classify and choose. The option is for those young people who are quantitatively poor/poorer in society.

(3) In article 3, which speaks of the oratory as the first work of charity, stages I-IV (Italian and Latin) read "poor and abandoned;" stages V and VI (Latin), read "poorer and abandoned;" stage VII (the "revised" Latin printed edition) reads "poorest in the first place and abandoned." This is also the only instance of the use of the Latin superlative *pauperrimi* in the whole chapter. Unless the change is merely a stylistic revision by the Latin scholar Lanfranchi (who collaborated with Don Bosco in the revision), we may construe it as stressing the need of caring for the truly destitute in society, though not to the exclusion of others. However, stage VIII (the revised Italian printed edition) reverts to the simple "poor and abandoned."

(4) In article 5, which speaks of the "junior seminary," the Italian drafts (stages II, III and VIII) give *preference* to those youngsters who are "poorest", whereas the Latin drafts say "poorer." There seems to be no difference in meaning. In any case other poor youngsters are not excluded.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above considerations is that "poor, poorer, poorest" in the chapter on Purpose, and indeed throughout the Constitutions, are used as quantifiers, not classifiers. It was not Don Bosco's intention to classify young people by the criterion of poverty and to choose the poorest of all to the exclusion of others.

Don Bosco's mind in this respect may be deduced from what he himself did. Within the overarching option for poor young people, Don Bosco considered youngsters individually in their concrete situation of poverty, neglect, exploitation and so forth, and responded accordingly. Obviously in any particular situation he would address *preferentially* the most crying need. In this sense it may be said that he established "a priority within a priority." But in the exercise of charity Don Bosco avoids classifying the poor in a manner that would jeopardize the Salesians' *total availability to the poor as such*, as they are encountered in concrete situations.

Chapter 9

EARLY CONSTITUTIONAL TEXTS–III FORM OF THE SOCIETY AND VOW OF POVERTY

Summary

I. Form of The Salesian Society
1. Texts for General Comparison
II. Articles 1 & 2 of the Chapter on Form
1. Article 1: Religious Consecration *for* the Exercise of Charity
2. Article 2: Civil Right[s]
3. The Vows: the Pope's Second Foundation
III. The Vow of Poverty
1. Selected Texts for Comparison
2. Comment

I. Form of the Salesian Society

In our discussion of the chapter on Form, after presenting selected texts for general comparison, we will focus on Articles 1 & 2, which are foundational, and on some significant related questions.

1. Texts for General Comparison

The Chapter on the Form of the Society underwent considerable development through the various stages. Here we give only four significant stages in translation: I (1858), III (1864), V (1873) and VI (1874, approved text).

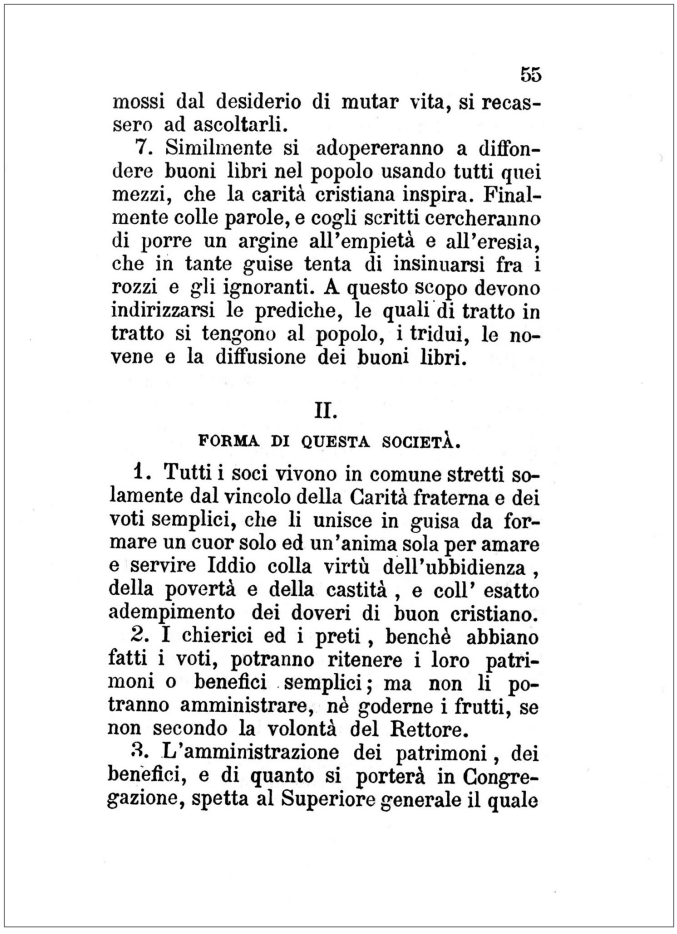
I (1858) *Ar* Ms Rua Italian	**III (1864) *Gb* Ms Bosco Italian**	**V (1873) *Ns* Printed Latin**	**VI (1874) *Q* Ms Berto Approved Text**
1. All the members lead the common life bound only by fraternal charity and by the simple vows, which bind them [together] so that they form one heart and one soul, in order to love and serve God.	1. All the members lead the common life bound only by the bond of fraternal charity and of the simple vows, which unites them so that they form one heart and one soul, in order to love and serve God by the virtue of obedience, of poverty, of chastity and by the exact performance of the duties of a good Christian.	1. All the members lead the common life bound only by the bond of fraternal charity and of the simple vows, which binds them (together) so that they form one heart and one soul, in order to love and serve God by the virtue of obedience, poverty and holiness of life, and by a committed Christian way of living.	1. All the members lead the common life bound only by the bond of fraternal charity and of the simple vows, which binds them (together) so that they form one heart and one soul, in order to love and serve God by the virtue of obedience, poverty and holiness of life, and by a committed Christian way of living.
2. No one on entering the congregation, even after making his vows, shall forfeit his civil right; therefore he retains possession of his goods, the power of succession and of receiving inheritances, legacies and gifts.	2. No one on entering the congregation, even after making his vows, forfeits his civil rights; therefore he retains possession of his goods, the power of succession and of receiving inheritances, legacies and gifts. But for as long as he lives in the congregation he may not administer his goods except in the manner and within the limits laid down by the Major Superior.	2. No one who has entered the Society, even after making his vows, forfeits his civil rights. Therefore he retains possession of his goods, and he shall likewise pay the public taxes as prescribed by civil laws; he may validly and licitly buy, sell, make a last will, and also succeed into [possession of] goods of others. But for as long as he remains in the society, he may not administer his possessions except in the manner and within the limits that the Rector Major will judge right in the Lord.	[Re-written and transferred to "Poverty."]
3. For as long as one remains in the congregation, however, the fruit of these goods shall be given over either to the congregation or to relatives or to some other person.	3. For as long as one remains in the congregation, the fruits [proceeds, usufruct] of immovable and movable goods brought into it shall be given over to the same. However, while in the congregation one may freely dispose of possessions held outside of it, with	3. For as long as one lives in the Society, the entire fruit of goods, whether movable or immovable, that one may have brought [with him] upon entering into the Society shall accrue to the same. One may, however, give away to relatives, in part or in their entirety, posses-	[Re-written and transferred to "Poverty"]

	the Superior's consent in each case.	sions held outside the Congregation, with the Rector's consent in each case.	
4. Clerics and priests, even after making their vows, retain possession of their patrimonies or simple benefices; but they may neither administer them nor, specifically, enjoy the fruits thereof.	4. Clerics and priests, even after making their vows, retain possession of their ecclesiastical patrimonies and simple benefices; but they shall neither administer them nor enjoy the fruits thereof.	4. Clerics and Priests, even after making their vows, shall retain possession of their patrimonies or simple benefices; but they shall neither administer them nor enjoy the fruits thereof, except in accordance with the Rector's will.	2. Clerics and Priests, even after making their vows, shall retain possession of their patrimonies or simple benefices; but they shall neither administer them nor enjoy the fruits thereof, except in accordance with the Rector's will.
5. The administration of patrimonies, of benefices and of anything whatever that is brought into the Congregation or that is in the possession of an individual member pertains to the Superior of the house. He shall administer them personally or through others, and receive their annual fruits for as long as that member remains in the Congregation.	5. The administration of patrimonies, of benefices and of anything whatever that is brought into the Congregation pertains to the Superior General. He shall administer them personally or through others, and receive their annual fruits for as long as that member remains in the Congregation.	5. The administration of patrimonies, benefices and of anything whatever that is brought into the Society pertains to the Superior General. He shall administer them either personally or through others; and for as long as the individual remains in the Congregation the same Superior shall receive their annual revenues.	3. The administration of patrimonies, benefices and of anything whatever that is brought into the Society pertains to the Superior General. He shall administer them either personally or through others; and for as long as the individual remains in the Congregation the same Superior shall receive their annual revenues.
[6. Mass Stipends]	*[6. Mass Stipends]*	*[6. Mass Stipends]*	*[4. Mass Stipends]*
[None]	7. The society shall supply each one with all that is necessary for [his] food and clothing, and for whatever may be needful in life's diverse vicissitudes, whether in times of good health or in the event of sickness. Moreover, given a reasonable cause, the Superior may place at a member's disposal such money or such things as, in his judgment, shall be put to good use for the greater glory of God.	[Removed]	[----------]

[7. Last Will and Testament].	[Transferred to "Poverty"]	[---------]	[---------]
8. Whoever dies intestate shall be succeeded by his rightful heir(s).	8. Whoever dies intestate shall be succeeded by his rightful heir(s).	[Transferred to "Poverty"]	[---------]
9. The vows bind the individual for as long as he remains in the Congregation. Those who either leave of their own free will or are dismissed from the Congregation in consequence of a prudent decision by the superiors, are by that very fact regarded as released from their vows.	[9.] The vows bind the individual for as long as he remains in the Congregation. Those who leave the Congregation either for a good [personal] reason or in consequence of a prudent decision by the Superiors can be released from their vows by the Superior General of the Master-House.	7 Everyone is bound by his vows for as long as he remains in the society. Whoever should leave the society either for a good [personal] reason or through a prudent decision by the Superiors can be released from his vows by the Superior General.	5. Everyone is bound by his vows. Nor can anyone be released from vows, whether temporal or perpetual, except through dispensation from the Supreme Pontiff or through dismissal from the Society.
10. Let each one endeavor to persevere in his vocation until death.	[10] Let each one endeavor to persevere in his vocation until death, Let each one bear in mind the weighty words of our divine Savior: *Nemo mittens manum ad aratrum et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.*	8. Let each one remain in the vocation to which he has been called until the end of his life. Let him call to mind daily those most weighty words of Our Lord and Savior: *Memo mittens manum ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.*	6. Let each one remain in the vocation to which he has been called until the end of his life. Let him call to mind daily those most weighty words of Our Lord and Savior: *Memo mittens manum ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei.*
Should anyone, however, leave the Congregation he shall not be entitled to claim any compensation for the time he has remained therein nor to take with him any goods except those that the Superior of the house will judge to be appropriate.	[11] Nevertheless, should anyone leave the Congregation he shall not be entitled to claim any compensation for the time he has remained therein, no matter what office he may have held, no matter what gain he may have gotten for the Society. He is entitled, however, to take with him those immovable goods the ownership of which he had reserved to himself on entering into the Congregation. But he shall not be entitled to demand of the Superior any account	9. Nevertheless, should anyone leave the Society he shall not be entitled to claim anything for himself for the time he spent therein nor to take with him anything but what the Superior General will judge to be opportune. He shall, however, recover his full right over the immovable, as also the movable, goods the ownership of which he had reserved to himself on entering into the Society. But he shall not be entitled to claim any fruits, nor demand any account of their	7. Nevertheless, should anyone leave the Society he shall not be entitled to claim anything for himself for the time he has spent therein. He shall, however, recover his full right over the immovable, as also the movable, goods the ownership of which he had reserved to himself upon entering into the Society. But he shall not be entitled to claim any fruit, nor demand any account of their administration for the time he has remained in the society.

	of the fruits and of the administration of the same for the time he lived in the Society, except when special terms had been agreed upon with the Rector Major.	administration for the time he has remained in the Society, except when special terms had been agreed upon with the Rector Major.	
11. If it should happen that a new house is to be established elsewhere, an agreement regarding matters spiritual and temporal should be reached with the bishop of the diocese in which the prospective house is to be opened.	[Transferred to chapter on "Particular Houses"]	[----------]	[----------]
12. The members who are assigned to open a new house shall not be less than two in number, and of these at least one shall be a priest. Each house shall be independently responsible for the administration of its own goods, but always within the limits laid down by the Superior.	[Transferred to chapter on "particular Houses"]	[----------]	[----------]
13. It is the Superior's prerogative to admit candidates to the novitiate, to accept novices for profession or to dismiss them, as he may think best in the Lord. But he shall not dismiss anyone from the house without first consulting the Superiors [of the community] to which [the individual] belongs.	[Stages III-V (Gb, Ls, Ns): omitted]	[----------]	[Stages VI-VIII (Q, T, V): substituted by chapter on "Novitiate"]
14. The obligations which each member takes upon himself by the profession of vows do not bind under pain of sin, except when the	[Stages II-V (Do, Gb, Ls, Ns): transferred to "Obedience"]	[----------]	[Stages VI-VIII (Q, T, V): transferred to the end of the Constitution]

natural, divine or ecclesiastical law may be violated, or when [the matter is] expressly commanded by the Superior under [the vow of) holy obedience.



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mossi dal desiderio di mutar vita, si recassero ad ascoltarli.

7. Similmente si adopereranno a diffondere buoni libri nel popolo usando tutti quei mezzi, che la carità cristiana inspira. Finalmente colle parole, e cogli scritti cercheranno di porre un argine all'empietà e all'eresia, che in tante guise tenta di insinuarsi fra i rozzi e gli ignoranti. A questo scopo devono indirizzarsi le prediche, le quali di tratto in tratto si tengono al popolo, i tridui, le novene e la diffusione dei buoni libri.

II.

FORMA DI QUESTA SOCIETÀ.

1. Tutti i soci vivono in comune stretti solamente dal vincolo della Carità fraterna e dei voti semplici, che li unisce in guisa da formare un cuor solo ed un'anima sola per amare e servire Iddio colla virtù dell'ubbidienza, della povertà e della castità, e coll' esatto adempimento dei doveri di buon cristiano.

2. I chierici ed i preti, benchè abbiano fatti i voti, potranno ritenere i loro patrimoni o benefici semplici; ma non li potranno amministrare, nè goderne i frutti, se non secondo la volontà del Rettore.

3. L'amministrazione dei patrimoni, dei benefici, e di quanto si porterà in Congregazione, spetta al Superiore generale il quale

19 – "Form of the Salesian Society" in the printed Italian edition of the Salesian Constitutions published in 1877

II. Articles 1 & 2 of the Chapter on Form

As indicated in our earlier discussion, the chapter on the Form of the Society underwent significant revision at the hand of the Roman authorities throughout its development, especially through the striking of Article 2 (on "civil rights") and the transfer of other articles to different chapters. The present discussion will deal especially with Articles 1 and 2.

Article 1 is foundational and defines the religious consecration of the Salesian in community. The article underwent some expansion in its last section between 1858 and 1864, after which it remained practically unchanged.

Article 2 was likewise foundational in Don Bosco's intention, as it defined the Salesian's full membership in the civil life of his society, conceived as fully compatible with his religious consecration. Don Bosco clung to this provision in the face of repeated objections, until it was removed before approval in 1874.

These two articles represented the twin foundations of which Don Bosco often spoke and which he attributed to Pope Pius IX as the source.[1]

1. Article 1: Religious Consecration for the Exercise of Charity

Three early texts of Article 1 are selected for comparison because they represent Don Bosco's original insight before presentation in Rome for approval.

[Component elements are set off with lower case Roman numerals in square brackets.]

[1] For example, in his petition addressed to Pius IX in 1864, referring back to 1858 when he presented the idea of a religious society to the pope, Don Bosco wrote: "Your Holiness, you yourself saw fit to lay down its foundations (*La medesima S.V. degnavasi di tracciarne le basi*)." [Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 228 (Document 2)] In a memorandum addressed to Archbishop Riccardi di Netro in 1867, Don Bosco wrote unambiguously: "The Holy Father traced [for us] the ground plan of a religious society in which the members were to be true religious before the Church and at the same time remain free citizens before the civil authority." [*Società di S. Francesco di Sales* [1867]: MS. in Don Bosco's hand in *ASC* D472, *FDBM* 1,925 A12-B3, *IBM* VIII, 809-811 (omitted in *EBM*).

***Ar* (1858) Form, Art. 1**	***Do* (1860) Form, Art. 1**	***Gb* (1864) Form, Art. 1**
1. [i] All the gathered-members lead the common life [ii] bound only by fraternal charity and by the simple vows, which bind them together to form one heart and one soul, [iii] in order to love and serve God	1. [i] All the gathered-members lead the common life [ii] bound only by the bond fraternal charity and the simple vows, which unite them to form one heart and one soul, [iii] in order to love and serve God [iv] by the virtue of obedience, of poverty, and of holiness of life.	1. [i] All the gathered-members lead the common life [ii] bound only by the bond of fraternal charity and the simple vows, which unites them to form one heart and one soul, [iii] in order to love and serve God [iv] by the virtue of obedience, of poverty, of chastity, and by the perfect fulfillment of the duties of a good Christian.[2]

As may be seen, in his successive re-writing Don Bosco tightened up *section [ii]* to emphasize unity: "bound only by the *bond* of fraternal charity and the simple vows, which *unites* them to form one heart and one soul (1864)." In the 1860 and 1864 drafts, the article was expanded by the addition of *section [iv]* specifying "the virtues of consecration" that enable the members to love and serve God. This section in 1864 underwent minor modifications and one expansion ("by the exact performance of the duties of a good Christian," rephrased in the subsequent Latin texts with "by a genuinely Christian way of living."

Analysis of the Components of Article 1

Section [i] develops the idea of community already broached in Article 1 of the chapter on Purpose. One should note the unusual term "gathered-members" (*congregati*). The word harks back to the equally unusual phrase in the former article, "It is the purpose of this congregation to gather together [as] its members [...]" In various memorandums Don Bosco states that in 1858 the group of oratory workers was divided into two branches: those who "gathered" to live in community, and those who did not. Thus, in the historical sketch of 1874 we read:

> Some who had a vocation remained [in residence at the Oratory] to swell the ranks of the nascent congregation. In the year 1858 several priests, seminarians, and laymen as well, formed the group of those who lived in community and observed what basically were the rules of the Salesian Society.[3]

[2] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 82.

[3] Braido, *Cenno istorico*, in *Don Bosco per i giovani*, 117-118.

The 1877 document entitled "Salesian Cooperators:" is even more explicit:

> [In 1858] the Congregation was divided into two branches, or rather families. Those who believed they had a vocation and were free joined together to live in community [...]. The rest, that is, the laymen [Ms.; in *IBM*: "externs"] continued to live in the world with their own families, while at the same time working on behalf of the oratories.[4]

This was the situation *before* Don Bosco went to Rome in 1858 to seek Pius IX's advice regarding the congregation. Back from Rome, in the Historical Sketch serving as introduction to the first constitutions (see earlier Chapter 7), Don Bosco was able to state that a group was already living in community. He writes: "Fifteen people at present profess these rules: 5 priests, 8 seminarians, and 2 laymen."[5] And the gathered-members had their counterpart either in the extern-members (for whose affiliation Don Bosco included a special set of rules in the constitutions of 1860), *or* in the wider group of oratory workers (later, Cooperators).

Section [ii] describes the nature of this community. It is a *communion* created by *fraternal charity and the vows*. Both forces act together to form a *bond* that unites the gathered-members *as one heart and one soul*.

The reference here is to the Jerusalem apostolic community as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

> Now the whole group of those who believed was of one heart and one soul and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. – All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possession and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.[6]

These Scriptural texts depict a community living as one heart and one soul, bound by mutual love and common sharing of goods. This description of the Christian community of Acts, even though from a social viewpoint it may be regarded as a short-lived experiment, has traditionally served as a model

[4] Ms. in *ASC* A2300406: Cooperatori 3(1), 2-3, *FDBM* 1,886 E8 - 1,887 A2; edited in IBM XI, 84-86 and *EBM* XI, 73-75 [in need of correction].

[5] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 70.

[6] Acts 4:32 and 2:44-45 (New Revised Standard Version).

of the religious life, so that the citation from Acts is attested in a number of constitutions. In Don Bosco's case it reflects a deeply rooted conviction as well as a theology of religious community. Its first attested reference is to be found in his Church History (1845) where he speaks about the lifestyle of those early Christians.[7] And of the hermits of the desert, he writes: "They were obedient to their superiors like little children, and lived united as one heart and one soul."[8] He has recourse to this text from Acts some twenty times before 1858, always with reference to religious community.

The image is reinforced by the blunt way in which Don Bosco phrased the foundational Article 1 of the chapter on Poverty in the earliest drafts, barely tempered in subsequent editing.

***Ar* (1858) = *Do* (1860), Poverty, Art. 1**	***Gb* (1864), Poverty, Art. 1**
1. The essence of the vow of poverty [as practiced] in our congregation lies in leading the common life regarding food and clothing, and in not keeping anything under lock and key without the superior's special permission.	1. The observance of the vow of poverty [as practiced] in our congregation lies essentially in being detached from all earthly goods. This we will try to achieve by [leading] the common life regarding food and clothing, and by not keeping anything for our own use without the superior's special permission.[9]

As may be seen, the Salesian community envisaged by Don Bosco was to be a no-nonsense replica of the apostolic community.

The stock phrase in *Section [iii]*, "in order to love and serve God," comes from the penny catechism. There in answer to the question "Who created you?" the phrase defined the purpose of human existence. Here it expressed the double purpose of religious life as well: love and service. Don Bosco seems to assure his Salesians that by being part of a community living in communion and in consecration for the mission the purpose of their human existence was also fulfilled.

With *Section [iii]* the description of the Salesian religious community might be regarded as complete. Don Bosco has already mentioned the vows as a factor in the bond, and that seemed enough in 1858. But in the drafts of 1860 and 1864, with *Section [iv]* he wished to emphasize the role of the *virtues*

[7] *Storia Ecclesiastica per uso delle scuole*, compilata dal Sacerdote Gioanni Bosco (Torino: Tipografia Speirani e Ferrero, 1845), 34, in *Opere Edite* I, 75.

[8] *Ibid.* 129 and 287.

[9] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 100.

of obedience, poverty, and chastity. It is as though Don Bosco feared that the term "vows" might be taken in a purely juridical sense. Hence, the stress is placed on the "virtues," to convey the idea of generous commitment and availability. Just as the vows by their binding force, together with fraternal charity, are the means of communion, so the virtues of obedience, poverty and chastity are means of consecration for the achievement of the goals of religious life, the love and service of God. In addition, in the draft of 1864 he wished to suggest a further means of consecration, "the perfect fulfillment of the duties of a good Christians." In subsequent Latin texts, he interpreted this concept to mean "a genuinely Christian way of living (*accurata christiana vivendi ratione*)." This indeed is what the phrase "duties of a good Christian" meant: the program of the Christian life including worship, prayer, moral conduct, etc., traditionally inculcated by the Church.

Virtues of Religious Consecration and Preeminence of Obedience

The role assigned to obedience is to be noted. The three vows-virtues of religious consecration are always given in the same order: obedience, poverty and chastity. Don Bosco on many occasions by the spoken and the written word exalted chastity as of supreme importance for the spiritual life of the individual, and (in an educational setting in particular) of the utmost necessity for both educators and pupils. However, with reference to the structure of religious life, and of the Salesian community in particular, he saw obedience as the primary virtue in religious consecration.

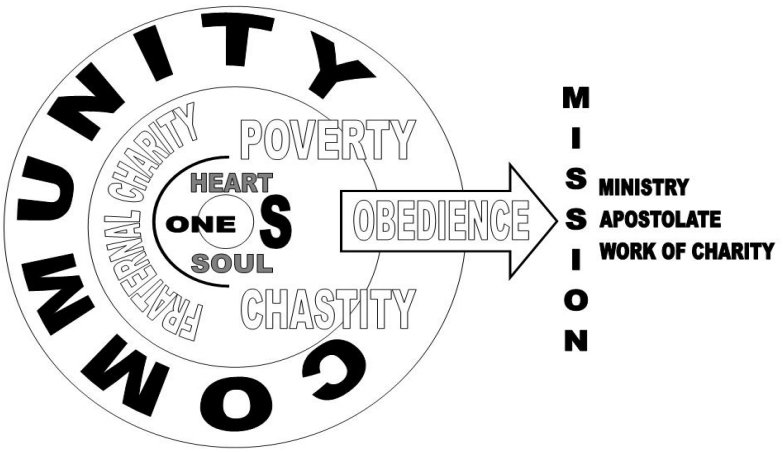
P. Stella, in discussing the "Dream of the Diamonds," which Don Bosco had at San Benigno on the night of September 10-11, 1881, points out that although Don Bosco had often exalted chastity as the most *beautiful* virtue, "he wrote that obedience was the first and the foundation of all the other virtues, even in religious life."[10] In this dream a Gentleman (representing the Salesian society) appears wearing a diamond-studded cope, each diamond bearing the name of an important virtue. Obedience precedes poverty and chastity, and in the final revision of the dream narrative Don Bosco re-locates it in the place of honor on the cope (center back). This is because in his view

[10] Pietro Stella, *Don Bosco's Dreams* (New Rochelle, NY: Salesiana Publishers, 1996), 29-30, with notes 40 and 41. For this statement Stella refers to Don Bosco's *The Companion of Youth* (*Il giovane provveduto*, 1847, 13), and to the *Biographical Memoirs* (*EBM* IV, 554; VI, 556; VII, 417; IX, 419, etc.), where indeed Don Bosco makes this point.

obedience (especially under the aspect of "virtue" extending beyond the canonical field of the vow) figures not only as a means of consecration together with poverty and chastity, but also as the chief religious structure whereby the consecrated person becomes "available" for the mission or work of charity. If poverty effects exterior consecration, and chastity interior consecration, obedience makes consecration perfect through availability for the work of charity.

Charity although "*ultimum in executione*" is "*primum in intentione*." In Don Bosco's thinking, charity is both the special purpose of religious life and, in its zealous exercise, the means *through* which the general purpose (Christian perfection) may be realized. Obedience, which governs the availability of the consecrated person, holds a key position because through it the Superior ("the Community") directs the consecrated person to the work of charity. And this finally becomes the means of personal holiness.

Graphic Illustrating the Structure of Religious Consecration in Salesian Community for Mission:



Community and Mission – Salesians live in Community, and through fraternal charity and the vows form a Communion: *one heart and one soul.* Obedience, Poverty and Chastity serve also as the virtues for religious consecration, to love and serve God. The Superior Provides animation and leadership, while through Obedience the Salesian becomes available for the Mission (Ministry, Apostolate, Work of Charity).

Spiritual Value of Community

Religious community "as communion" is a truly significant aspect of Don Bosco's understanding of religious life, one that is as rooted in tradition as it is novel. He had laid down that the general purpose of religious life for the Salesian, Christian perfection or holiness, was to be achieved *though* the exercise of charity. If this were taken superficially, then community would appear to serve merely as a "base of operation," or "staging area," having no "sanctifying" value in itself. By defining community as communion created by the bond of fraternal charity and the vows, Don Bosco views it as a value *in itself*, the value that the cenobitic tradition (familiar to Don Bosco) clearly expressed. In Don Bosco's conception, community as communion becomes a true source of spiritual energy for the attainment of both the general and the special purpose of religious life. Fraternal charity with its spiritual inspiration, and the vows by their binding power, produce a unity in heart and soul that fosters the spiritual life and lends supports to individual commitment.

In Don Bosco's "Introduction" to the "official" Italian editions of the constitutions of 1875 and 1877, such concepts and themes receive extended development.[11]

2. Article 2: Civil Right[s]

The Concept of "Civil Right(s)"

When Don Bosco in an audience of March 9, 1858 first broached to Pius IX the idea of forming a society to continue the work of the oratories, the Pope is reported to have said to him:

> It is necessary that you should establish a society with which the government cannot interfere; but at the same time you must not be satisfied with mere promises, otherwise you would never be sure of your subjects, nor could you count on them for any length of time.[12]

[11] P. Braido (a cura di), *Don Bosco Fondatore: "Ai Soci Salesiani"(1875-1885)*; Introduzione e testi critici (Roma, LAS, 1995). Pp. 36-46 of Braido's introduction are devoted to a study of Don Bosco's ideas of the Salesian religious community.

[12] G. Bonetti, *Don Bosco's Early Apostolate* (1934) 356; edited in *EBM* V, 561. See our earlier discussion of these texts in connection with the founding of the Salesian Society (in Vol. 3, Ch. 9).

Here, the Pope, after having listening to Don Bosco's (unreported) idea of the Society, is credited with giving Don Bosco advice on two necessary requirements: the Society should be such as to elude government interference, and its members should take vows, not simple promises. Pius IX's reported words lead us to believe that Don Bosco had spoken of a Society that was a union of free citizens bonded to Don Bosco by simple promises and united for a charitable undertaking. This essentially is the idea that Don Bosco developed from his conversation with Minister Urbano Rattazzi in (May?) 1857. Rattazzi, speaking of how the work of the oratories might be continued, is reported to having advised Don Bosco to get a group together, imbued them with his spirit, and train them for the work.

It seemed strange to Don Bosco that Rattazzi, who had authored the law of suppression of religious corporations, should advise him to establish precisely such a congregations. But the Minister explained:

> It should not be a society that has the character of mortmain,[13] but one in which each member keeps his civil rights, submits to the laws of the State, pays the taxes, and so forth. In a word, the new Society, as far as the Government is concerned, would be nothing more than an association of free citizens, united and living together, for the same charitable purpose. […]
>
> No constitutional or regular Government will oppose the founding and development of such a society, just as it does not prevent, but rather promotes, commercial, industrial and other similar companies. Any association of free citizens is allowed as long as its purpose and actions are not opposed to the laws and institutions of the State.[14]

In 1864 Don Bosco wrote that Pius IX had laid the foundations (*basi*) for the society[15]–in fact that the Pope himself in 1858 had traced out "its plan." He quoted the Pope as saying:

> This Congregation […] must have vows to serve as a bond of unity in spirit and works. These vows, however, should be simple, and such as are easily dissolved […]. This Society, moreover, should be a true religious congregation in

[13] The term "mortmain" (meaning etymologically "dead hand,") refers to an inalienable possession of property by an ecclesiastical or other corporation; example might be a religious order that owned large, inalianable holdings, paid no taxes and was otherwise unprofitable to society.

[14] Bonetti, *St. John Bosco's Early Apostolate* (1934), 345.

[15] Don Bosco's Letter of Petition to Pius IX, February 12, 1864, Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 228-229; *IBM* VII, 621; English translation in Chapter 3 above.

> the eyes of the Church and at the same time such as to guarantee its members freedom and protection against jeopardy from civil laws. This means that in the eyes of the civil authority each member should enjoy the protection of the law like any other citizen.[16]

Compare this 1864 statement with the 1858 statement quoted above. The Pope, as far as we know, made no direct reference to "civil right(s)," But Don Bosco clearly construed the Pope's statements as descriptions of the *form* of the Society, for he credits Pius IX with establishing the twin foundations of the Society, hence, its form: "simple vows" and "civil right(s)" (rights and duties of citizenship).

Accordingly in Don Bosco's constitutions Article 2 of the Chapter on Form provided that the members should retain their civil right(s) even after making their vows. This article (and provision) appears, in spite of objections, in all drafts of the constitutions (Ar - 1858, Do - 1860, Gb - 1864, Ls - 1867, Ns - 1873) until forcibly removed before the definitive approval.

Selected Texts on Civil Right(s) (from Ch. on Form, Art. 2)

The article was expanded in successive drafts to specify some of the consequences of retaining civil rights, albeit with the added provision that the member cannot dispose of his goods except in the manner laid down by the Rector Major. However, the essence of the article pertaining to retention of civil right[s] remained unchanged until 1874, when the article was removed, re-written in terms of "radical dominion" and "use," and transferred to the chapter on the Vow of Poverty.

***Ar* (1858), *Do* (1860), Art. 2**	***Gb* (1864), *Ls* (1867), Art. 2**	***Ns* (1873), Art. 2**
No one on entering the congregation, shall, even after making his vows, forfeit his *civil right*, Therefore he retains ownership of his goods, and the power of succession and of receiving bequests, legacies, and gifts. [Stage *Do* adds:] But for as long as he remains in the congregation [...]	No one on entering the congregation, shall, even after making his vows, forfeit his *civil rights*. Therefore he retains ownership of his goods, and he can also succeed into [ownership of] someone else's goods. But for as long as he remains in the Society [...]	No one on entering the congregation, shall, even after making his vows, forfeit his *civil rights*. He shall therefore pay his taxes as the laws prescribe, he can validly and licitly buy, sell, make a will, succeed into [ownership of] someone else's goods. But for as long as he remains in the Society [...][17]

[16] *Breve notizia*, 1864, in *IBM* VII, 892 (omitted in *EBM*).

[17] Motto. *Cost. SDB*, 82.

The retention of civil right(s) as a constituent of the form of the Society was unacceptable to the Holy See, because a decision had been made at the highest level not to make any concession to the "usurping" liberal State, especially after Minister Rattazzi's laws of suppression of religious corporations and since the forcible ending of the Pope's temporal power. Such decision was also a rejection of the juridical principles of the liberal State.

The principles of liberal jurisprudence by which the State operated were clear: the civil right of individual citizens originated with, and was guaranteed by, nature; the State could not interfere with it. Corporate right on the contrary originated with the State, and the State alone had the power and the right to approve a corporation and allow its existence, and religious corporations (such as religious congregations) were no exception.

The Church, however, claimed to possess a juridical order of its own (Canon Law) independent of the State, by which for example it could set up a religious corporation.

Don Bosco, having received "enlightenment" on these principles from Minister Rattazzi himself, decided that the Salesian Society was not to be a corporation of any kind–not one set up by the State because approval would be in doubt, nor one set up by the Church because it would be liable to suppression. Hence, the Society would be an association of free citizens living together and committed to Don Bosco for a charitable humanitarian work. In spite of this Don Bosco hoped to obtain the church's recognition as a *religious* society.

The cardinals of the Special Congregation did finally approve the Society, but not before forcing its constitutions into the traditional mold of the Church's canon law, by eliminating the "civil right" clauses, and by re-writing the provisions regarding ownership in the traditional format of the vow of poverty.

These two foundation articles, taken together, are a powerful expression of the form of the Society, as Don Bosco conceived it. We have here a compact group of people gathered and living in communion, united as one heart and one soul by the bond of fraternal charity and the simple vows, living in consecration through poverty and chastity, and available and ready for the mission through obedience. They come together not as a juridical organization, a corporation either secular or religious, but as an association of free citizens who choose to devote themselves and their resources to the work of charity.

3. The Vows: the Pope's Second Foundation

When the Pope in 1858 emphasized the necessity of vows (not simple promises) as the second foundation of the Society, he certainly meant the canonical simple vows that would make the Society and true religious congregation in the eyes of the Church, that is, an ecclesiastical corporation under the juridical system of the Church. As such they were to remain totally under the Pope's control.

But in the chapter on the Form of Society an article empowered the Rector Major to dispense from the vows, a provision that was removed before approval. This may be seen from the following texts.[18]

II *Do* (1860) & III Gb (1864)	**V *Ns* (1873)**	**VI *Q* (1874) – Approved Text**
10. The vows bind the individual for as long as he remains in the Congregation. Those who leave the Congregation either for a good [personal] reason or in consequence of a prudent decision by the Superiors can be released from their vows by the Superior General of the Master-House.	7 Everyone is bound by his vows for as long as he remains in the society. Should anyone leave the society either for a good [personal] reason or through a prudent decision by the Superiors can be released from his vows by the Superior General.	5. Everyone is bound by his vows. No one can be released from vows, whether temporal or perpetual, except through dispensation from the Supreme Pontiff or through dismissal from the Society.

Don Bosco's Understanding of the Pope's Second "Foundation"

In view of the above, the question may be asked: How did Don Bosco interpret the reported words spoken by Pius IX in connection with the second foundation, "These vows, however, should be simple, and such as are easily dissolved?" That the Pope was referring to the traditional simple, public vows (as opposed to solemn vows) can hardly be doubted. Don Bosco, however, may have understood "simple" and "easily dissolved" as common qualifiers. Then, how would such vows differ from simple promises?

On the other hand, it is worth noting that Don Bosco's novel concept of religious commitment appears to be akin to the doctrine set forth by Antonio Rosmini in the 1820s. Don Bosco's contacts with Rosmini and the Rosminians could have influenced Don Bosco's own formulation, albeit with a turn reflecting the socio-political context of the liberal revolution in the1850s.

[18] Motto, *Const. SDB*, 86-87.

Don Bosco used the term "civil right[s]" to describe a situation in which individual religious exercised their rights (such as private ownership) and their duties (such as paying taxes) as "free citizens." The Salesian Society, as a union of "free citizens" was not a religious corporation and owned nothing.

Rosmini used the term "legal ownership" (*dominium legale*) to describe a similar situation, one in which individual members retained legal ownership (not use) of their goods, and his congregation owned nothing. Before the civil law the member of the Institute of Charity would appear to own as any private citizen would; and the vow (of poverty) by which the member bound himself to surrender to his superior the right to dispose of his goods could be simple and *private*, that is, a matter between him and his superior. Thus the vow, like any private agreement, could conceivably remain secret; and if it became public knowledge, it would have been by accident and not by its very nature.[19]

Thus Rosmini's idea that the vow could be simple and in the nature of a private agreement could have affected Don Bosco's interpretation of the pope's expression quoted above–that "the vows should be simple and easily relaxed." This in turn may account for Don Bosco's position with regard to both temporary and perpetual vows, over which he claimed control.

One should also bear in mind that Rosmini's concept of religious poverty found it place within a complex philosophical, theological and juridical system elaborated out of an intense personal spiritual experience. The Institute of Charity was to be poor with the most perfect kind of poverty; it was to own nothing, and was not to be a corporation either secular or religious, set up according to the juridical system of either State or Church. This type of poverty in Rosmini's thinking was the corresponding pole to charity. It reflected a perfect love, understood as total openness to God, full trust and surrender to him and his loving Providence in complete "indifference" and total availability. Collective religious poverty, as the sign of charity and of surrender to God, in Rosmini's system figured as the Christian response to current philosophical-juridical theories that founded human society on utility and materialism, that is, on the sum of individual and collective egoism and

[19] Pietro Stella, "Le costituzioni salesiane fino al 1888," in *Fedeltà e Rinnovamento. Studi sulle costituzioni salesiane*, ed. by Joseph Aubry and Mario Midali (Roma: LAS, 1974) [15-54], 25. [Stella, *Costituzioni*]. Stella quotes a letter in which Rosmini outlines his view. [*Epistolario completo* II (Casale Monferrato 1887), 219].

greed, which inevitably led (as in the case of Cain and Babel) to hatred, strife and confusion.[20]

Nowhere does Don Bosco make reference to Rosmini's doctrine of religious life; nor does he theorize about poverty. He just indicates in simplest terms its role of vow and virtue as a builder of community and fraternal charity. The Rosminian inspiration, however, is unmistakable, and the "civil right" clause figures not as mere strategy for survival but as a component of a profound spiritual insight regarding religious life.

Don Bosco's Continued Claim that He Could Dispense from Vows

Don Bosco voiced his opposition to triennial vows on a number of occasions. His views in the matter not only challenged traditional practice but also ran athwart of the constitutions that he himself had written.[21] The early constitutions, in all stages (I-VIII), provide for at least two terms of triennial vows, as may be seen from the pertinent article in the chapter on Admissions.

I. *Ar* 1858 Ms Ital **II. *Do* 1860 Ms Ital** **IV. *Ls* 1867 Print Lat**	**III. Gb 1864 Ms Ital**	**V. *Ns* 1873 Print Lat** **VI. *Q* 1874 Ms Lat** **VII. *T* 1874/75 Pr Lat** **VIII. *V* 1875 Pr Ital**
4. The vows are made for three years and renewed for another three. After this 6-year period, one is free either to continue to renew his vows every three years or to make them in perpetuity–that is, to bind himself to observe his vows for life.	4. The vows are made for three years and renewed for another three. After this 6-year period, one is free either to continue to renew his vows every three years or to make them in perpetuity–that is, to bind himself to observe his vows for life. But no one is admitted to perpetual vows before he has completed 24 years of age.	5. (7.) These vows are made for a 3-year period. After three years, with the previous consent of the Chapter, one may renew them for another three-year period or make perpetual vows–that is, bind himself by vows for life. No one, however, shall be admitted to holy orders as a member of the Congregation (*titulo congregationis*) if he has not already made perpetual vows.

Constitutions notwithstanding, Don Bosco expressed doubts about the usefulness of triennial vows, and in the same breath claimed the power to dispense from all vows.

[20] Stella, *Costituzioni*, 25.

[21] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 172-173 (chapter on admissions, art. 4 [5 or 7]).

In the general conference held in 1875 during the second spiritual retreat at Lanzo, the session of September 23 was devoted to admissions. Ceria notes Don Bosco's known position in the matter: "As far as I am concerned, I can hardly see any difference between perpetual and triennial vows since I may dispense also from perpetual vows if one is no longer suitable for the Congregation."[22]

To those who thought that this power of the superior should not be publicized, for such knowledge might lead to abuses, Don Bosco replied:

> I do not think that for the moment any trouble would arise on that account. On the contrary, I think it might be a good thing if [our] people were aware of this. It would reassure candidates who might otherwise be apprehensive at the prospect of vows for life and of possible serious difficulties that might arise in the future. Obviously a dispensation from vows is granted only for a serious reason and not just to gratify a whim of the individual. But if a serious difficulty should arise, I believe there would be no harm in knowing that a dispensation can be obtained.[23]

In the Alassio conference of February 1879, he made an even clearer statement on the subject. Barberis reports:

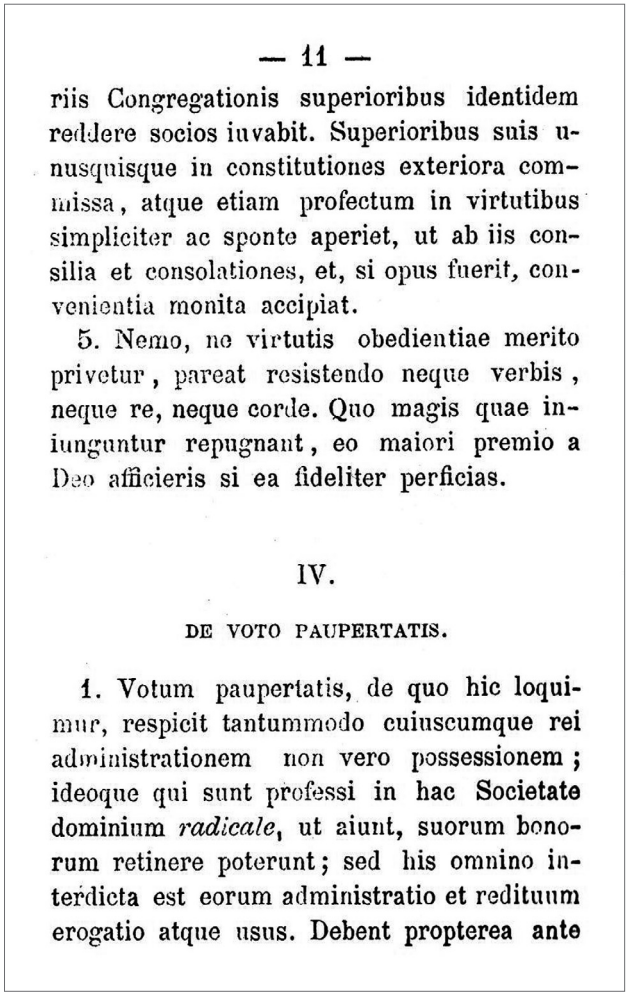
> When the admission of some who were applying for triennial vows came up for discussion, Don Bosco took the opportunity of reiterating his viewpoint: "Triennial vows hold too tempting a prospect for young men, and many eventually give in. If, on the other hand, they make their perpetual vows, their minds are at rest with no further thoughts [of leaving]. I settled for triennial vows, because I had a different idea of the Congregation, for I meant to establish something a lot different than what was finally approved. We were forced into this mold, and that's the end of it (*ci costrinsero a far così, e così sia*). But, as matters stand, triennial vows leave one too open to temptation. If a candidate has the required qualities and disposition, he should make perpetual, not triennial vows.[24]

Ceria quotes an earlier statement made by Don Bosco to Fr. Barberis and Fr. Guidazio on October 18, 1878, to explain why he was opposed to triennial vows:

[22] *EBM* XI, 222-223, with Ceria's comments. The minutes of this conference are not available to this writer.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Alassio General Conference, Session 2, February 7, 1879, Barberis Report with Minutes of the Superior Chapter, Notebook II, 76-77, *FDBM* 1878 B5-6.



— 11 —

riis Congregationis superioribus identidem reddere socios iuvabit. Superioribus suis unusquisque in constitutiones exteriora commissa, atque etiam profectum in virtutibus simpliciter ac sponte aperiet, ut ab iis consilia et consolationes, et, si opus fuerit, convenientia monita accipiat.

5. Nemo, ne virtutis obedientiae merito privetur, pareat resistendo neque verbis, neque re, neque corde. Quo magis quae iniunguntur repugnant, eo maiori premio a Deo afficieris si ea fideliter perficias.

IV.

DE VOTO PAUPERTATIS.

1. Votum paupertatis, de quo hic loquimur, respicit tantummodo cuiuscumque rei administrationem non vero possessionem; ideoque qui sunt professi in hac Societate dominium *radicale*, ut aiunt, suorum bonorum retinere poterunt; sed his omnino interdicta est eorum administratio et redituum erogatio atque usus. Debent propterea ante

20 – "Vow of Poverty" in the official, printed Latin edition of the Salesian Constitutions published in 1874

I went along with triennial vows because my original plan was to found a Congregation that would assist the bishops. Since this was not possible and I was forced to do otherwise, a three-year commitment is now a hindrance more than a help.[25]

[25] *EBM* XIV, 29-30, with Ceria's extended comment.

Ceria also quotes what appears to be Don Bosco's final disposition of the matter in a Good Night of September 5, 1879:

> I must inform you that this is the last time that vows will be made for three years. From now on, anyone making vows must make them in perpetuity. Experience has shown that triennial vows are too serious a temptation for some to cope with. After living one year in the congregation [as a novice] one should know whether God is calling him to it and whether he has enough strength to persevere.[26]

At the Second General Chapter, Don Bosco commented on a situation created by triennial vows. A Salesian seminarian named Galvagno had just passed away. Don Bosco (out of a somewhat dubious theology) urged the directors to notify the confreres of the circumstances of this death, so that they might draw a lesson. As reported, Don Bosco said:

> He was a good person, but was extraordinarily attached to his mother, who was very poor. She expected her son to help her financially and therefore she was opposed to his continuing in the Congregation. The son, weak as he was and wanting to help the mother, lacked the courage to take perpetual vows, and at the expiration of his triennial vows did not apply for renewal. But the Lord [...] by this death wished to give us all a lesson: that he who provides food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field does not abandon those who leave everything behind, family included, in order to follow him; and that, on the contrary, he frustrates the hopes of those who rely on people and things rather than on him. In this case, the son was punished with dying without vows; and the mother was punished with being deprived of the son on whom she had pinned her hopes.[27]

III. The Vow of Poverty

In discussing Article 2 of the chapter on the form of the Society we noted that the provision for civil rights and references thereto were removed or transferred to other chapters. What pertained to ownership and administra-

[26] *EBM* XIV, 275-276. Ceria notes, however, that Don Bosco did not enforce his own ordinance strictly, and triennial vows continued to be made.

[27] General Chapter II, Session 7, September 7, 1880, Barberis Minutes, Notebook I, 60-61, *FDBM* 1858 B8-9.

tion of property was re-written in traditional juridical form and transferred to the chapter on Poverty. For purposes of comparison we transcribe selectively early texts of this chapter (1858-1864) side by side with the re-written and approved text of 1874 in the following table.

1. Selected Texts for Comparison

[Refer also to texts of the chapter on Form of the Society, above]

I (1858) Ms *Ar* Rua Italian **II (1860) Ms *Do* Boggero Italian** **III (1864) Ms *Gb* Bosco Italian**	**VI (1874) *Q* Ms Berto Latin**
1. The essence of the vow of poverty [as practiced] in our congregation lies in leading the common life regarding food and clothing, and in not keeping anything under lock and key without the superior's special permission. *[Text of 1864, Gb:]* The essence of the vow of poverty [as practiced] in our congregation lies essentially in being detached from all earthly goods. This we will try to achieve by [leading] the common life regarding food and clothing, and by not keeping anything for one's own use without the superior's special permission.	
[None]	1. The vow of poverty [as practiced] in our congregation [*apud nos*] has to do [only] with the administration of property, whatever it may be, and not with its possession. Those, therefore, who have made the vows in this Society can retain the so-called *radical* ownership [*dominium radicale*] of their goods; but the administration and the disposal and use of their revenues is absolutely forbidden to them. Moreover, before taking the vows, they must cede, even if only in a private form, both the administration, and the *usufruct* [revenues] and use thereof to anyone they wish, hence also [*ac etiam*] to their own Congregation, if they think they would like to do so. To this cession they may also attach the condition that it may be at any time revocable; but still the professed cannot in conscience use the right of revocation, without the consent of the Holy See. All the foregoing must likewise be observed with respect to those goods which [the associates] may acquire by inheritance, after they have made their profession.

[None]	2. Nevertheless, the [professed] members can freely dispose of the ownership, either by will-and-testament, or (with the Rector Major's permission) by some public act *inter vivos* [during their life time]. In this latter case, the concession which they have made of the administration, *usufruct* and use, shall cease, unless it is their desire that the concession should, notwithstanding the cession of ownership, still continue in force for a further such length of time as they may be pleased to specify.
[None]	3. The professed, moreover, shall not be forbidden to perform, with the Rector Major's permission, all those acts in respect of property that the laws prescribe.
[None]	4. The professed are not allowed to appropriate or reserve to themselves anything that they have acquired either by their own industry, or by the means that the Society places at their disposal; but everything must be contributed to the community's store for the common benefit of the Society.
2. It is part of this vow [that the members should strive] to keep the[ir] rooms in the simplest possible style, seeking to adorn the heart with virtue, and not to ornament either the[ir] person or the walls of their rooms.	5. It is part of this vow [that the members should strive] to keep the[ir] rooms in the simplest possible style, seeking with all their might [*summopere*] to adorn the heart with virtue, and not to ornament either the[ir] person or the walls of their rooms.
3. Let no one, either in the house or out of it, keep any money in his possession or deposited with others, for any reason whatsoever.	6. Let no one, either in the house or out of it, keep any money in his possession or deposited with others, for any reason whatsoever
[None here, but see art. 1 (text of 1864, *Gb*) above]	7. Finally, let each one keep his heart detached from every earthly thing. Let each one [truly] seek to live the common life in all respects, as regards food and clothing; and let him not keep in his possession anything whatsoever, without the superior's special permission.
4. When a member needs to travel, leave on a mission or go out for ministry, the Superior shall provide whatever is necessary. [*condensed ad sensum*]	[Removed]
5. It is forbidden to lend money or things either to those in the house or to outsiders. [*condensed ad sensum*]	[Removed]
6. Offerings given to members must be handed in to the Superior of the Congregation. [*condensed ad sensum*]	[Removed]

2. Comment

The articles of the chapter on Poverty were maintained practically unchanged through all the stages of revision up to the text presented for definitive approval in 1873. The Cardinals of the Special Congregation practically re-wrote the chapter before approval in 1874. They inserted Articles 1-4 that basically re-define the vow of poverty in traditional juridical terms, and eliminated the practical "down-to-earth" description of the vow-virtue given by Don Bosco in his own Article 1.

Article 1 reflected an austere life style, Don Bosco's and of his early group, that was marked by extreme frugality and deprived even of the most basic comforts. True, in spite of the tremendous fervor that inspired it, it could not be continued for long or become the norm for all, and it had eventually to be tempered. But Don Bosco, though regretting this falling off from the first fervor, made it a legacy for his followers by enjoining the asceticism of "Work and Temperance"–a program aimed at fostering community on the one hand and, on the other, solidarity with working people and the poor.

Chapter 10

EARLY CONSTITUTIONAL TEXTS–IV THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE AND PRACTICES OF PIETY IN THE EARLY CONSTITUTIONS

Summary

I. The Vow of Obedience
   1. Selected Texts
   2. The Vow of Obedience in Don Bosco's Understanding with Special Reference to the Text of 1860 (Stage III)
   3. Constitutional Text of 1860 on Obedience and Its Sources
   4. Exercise of Authority by the Superior
II. Chapter on the Practices of Piety
   1. Selected Texts
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I. The Vow of Obedience

For purposes of comparison and discussion we select only significant stages of the constitutional text, namely, the following: Stage II (*Do*), totally under Don Bosco's control; Stage III (*Gb*), first text presented in Rome, mostly under Don Bosco's control; Stage VI (*Q*), approved text exhibiting a number of corrections by the cardinals before approval.

1. Selected Texts

II (1860) *Do* Ms Boggero, Italian	**III (1860) *Gb* Ms Bosco, Italian**	**VI (1874) Ms *Q* Berto, Latin**
1. The prophet David would beseech God that He would give him light to do His holy will. Our Divine Redeemer, moreover, has assured us that He came not to do His own will, but that of His heavenly Father. It is in order that we may be sure of doing the holy will of God that we make the vow of obedience.	1. The prophet David would beseech God that He would give him light to do His holy will. Our Divine Redeemer, moreover, has assured us that He came not to do His own will, but that of His heavenly Father. It is in order that we may be sure of doing this holy will of God in all our actions that we make the vow of obedience.	1. The prophet David would earnestly beseech God that He would teach him to do His holy will. The Lord, our Savior, has assured us that He came down to earth not to do His own will, but that of His Father in heaven. This is the purpose of the vow of obedience, namely, that we may be all the more certain of doing the holy will of God.
2. This vow binds us not to apply ourselves except to those things which each one's superior judges to be conducive to the greater glory of God and the welfare of our own soul.	2. This vow binds us not to apply ourselves except to those things which each one's superior judges to be conducive to the greater glory of God and the welfare of our own soul and of neighbor, in accordance with the rules of this society.	[Removed]
3. The observance of this vow does not oblige under pain of sin, except in matters that are contrary to the commandments of God and of holy Mother Church, or contrary to the order of Superiors specially given under obedience	3. The observance of this vow does not oblige under pain of sin, except in matters that are contrary to the commandments of God and of holy Mother Church, or contrary to the order of Superiors given with the following formula, "I command you by the vow of obedience."	[Rewritten and transferred to the end of the Constitutions]
4. The virtue of obedience gives us the assurance that we are doing God's will. As the Savior says, "Whoever listens to you, listens to Me; and whoever rejects you rejects Me."	4. The virtue of obedience gives us the assurance that we are doing God's will.	2. The virtue of obedience gives us the assurance that we are doing God's will.
5. Let each one then look on his superior as a father, and obey him unreservedly, promptly, cheerfully, and humbly.	Let each one be submissive to his superior and look to him in all things as a loving father; let him obey him unreservedly, promptly, cheerfully, and humbly, as the person who in that command expresses the very will of God.	Let each one then obey his superior and look on him in all things as a most loving father; let him obey him unreservedly, promptly, cheerfully, and humbly, intimately persuaded that in that command the very will of God is expressed.

6. Let no one be anxious to ask for any particular thing or to refuse it; but when one thinks that a particular thing is harmful or necessary, let him respectfully mention the fact to his superior and accept his decision with resignation as from the Lord.	5. Let no one be anxious to ask for any particular thing or to refuse it; but when one knows that a particular thing is harmful or necessary, let him respectfully mention the fact to his superior, who will take care to see to [the member's] need.	3. Let no one be anxious to ask for any particular thing, or to refuse it; but when one knows that a particular thing is harmful or necessary, let him respectfully mention the fact to his superior, who will take great care to see to [the member's] needs.
7. Let everyone place great confidence in his superior and let no secret of the heart be kept from him; let him openly manifest his conscience to him whenever he should be asked or he himself feels a need to do so.	6. Let everyone place great confidence in his superior and let him keep no secret of the heart from him; let him openly manifest his conscience to him whenever he thinks this will redound to the greater glory of God and the good of his own soul.	4. Let everyone place great confidence in his superior; hence it is good that the members frequently give an account of their external life to their higher superiors especially. Let each one with simplicity spontaneously manifest to his superiors external faults against the constitutions as well as his progress in virtue, so that he may receive from them counsels and comfort, and, if needs be, appropriate admonitions.
8. Let everyone obey without any sort of resistance, either in deed, or in word, or in heart. The more repugnant the thing commanded is to him who does it, the greater will be his merit before God for having obeyed.	8. Let everyone obey without any sort of resistance, either in deed, or in word, or in heart. The more repugnant the thing commanded is to him who does it, the greater will be his merit before God for having obeyed.	5. Let everyone obey without any sort of resistance, either in deed, or in word, or in heart, lest he lose the merit of the virtue of obedience. The more repugnant the thing commanded is to him who does it, the greater will be his merit before God for having obeyed.
9. No one may send out mail without the permission of his superior, or of his superior's delegate. Likewise, incoming letters will be handed over to the superior who may read them if he so judges fit.	[Transferred to "Internal Government of the Society]	[----------]

2. The Vow of Obedience in Don Bosco's Understanding With Special Reference to the Text of 1860 (Stage III)

What follows is an adaptation of Francesco Motto, "La figura del superiore salesiano nelle Costituzioni della Società di San Francesco di Sales del 1860," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 2 (1983:1) 3-53.

Reference is made to Giovanni Bosco*, Costituzioni della società di S. Francesco di Sales [1858]-1875*, a cura di Francesco Motto (Istituto Storico Salesiano, Roma - Fonti, Serie prima, 1. Roma: LAS, 1982). [Motto, *Cost. SDB*]

Our aim is to look at some articles of the early Salesian constitutions in the chapter on the Vow of Obedience. Here Don Bosco expresses his view of religious obedience and of the authority of the director in the local Salesian community. This will help us understand Don Bosco's thought on religious authority in context.[1]

For this purpose we take the constitutional text of 1860 as a starting point rather than the approved text of 1874 for the following reasons. This text, signed by Don Bosco and 25 others and submitted to Archbishop Fransoni for approval, represents the *first full* statement on the subject. Moreover, Don Bosco maintained this text, with only slight modifications, up to 1873 (Stage V, Ns). Before approval in 1874, the Roman Congregation's revision consisted chiefly in the removal of article 2 (as redundant?) and more importantly of the provision for a manifestation of *conscience* (in Article 7). A few lesser modifications were also introduced.

The literal meaning of the articles on obedience is easy enough to ascertain. We can also easily establish the literary provenance of the wording of some of these articles, since Don Bosco used constitutions of other religious orders. But even though similar to, or identical with, the models in wording, these articles evince the presence of a distinctive religious approach to obedience in the early Salesian community. This is the "spirit" of Salesian obedience, and this "spirit" cannot be completely described in a constitutional text. Therefore, although we are concerned with the *text* of the constitutions (that on "Obedience"), we will have to refer to other Salesian sources (earlier, contemporary or later) for an understanding of the *spirit* of the texts. This is further justified by the fact that constitutional texts define only the basic structure of religious forms–which must be complemented and interpreted in the light of the life of the community and its living tradition.

[1] In recent years the very notions of superior and of authority have come under fire. Calling authority into question may perhaps be seen as a reaction against impersonal or even abusive ways of exercising authority. But such questioning has been motivated also by a new understanding of authority and by an evolution in the way in which the interpersonal relationship between superior and confreres is understood. This directly affects both thought and action of director and confreres in the Salesian community. Hence, after Vatican II, *Perfectae caritatis* (No. 3) and *Ecclesiae Sanctae* (Nos. 11-14), the new constitutions of religious communities while speaking of authority and obedience they also speak of freedom, cooperation, consultation, co-responsibility and leadership.

3. Constitutional Text of 1860 on Obedience and Its Sources

We first give a description of the text of 1860 to provide a context for the articles on obedience and authority. Then we will examine the articles on obedience for a literal-historical interpretation, with reference to their literary sources.

The Ms. of the 1860 Constitutions

After early collaborative experiences, Don Bosco focused on gathering a group that would continue the work of the oratory. He immediately thought of setting down rules–a "regulatory structure" (*piano, progetto di regolamento*), as he called it).[2] To this end, he used existing models, that is, constitutions of other congregations, but he also incorporated what was pertinent from the two earlier sets of regulations: the regulations for the Oratory and those for the Home attached to the Oratory (*Casa annessa*).[3] Above all, he sought to express his own experience as priest and educator in the setting of Valdocco.

The first drafts of the constitutions are pervaded with a deep spirit of charity. Their ascetical (rather than juridical) tone reflects the spirit of the ancient monastic rules, rather than the constitutions of modern congregations. Subsequent juridical overlays introduced to bring them into conformity with canonical legislation had the effect of dulling the original tone. The 1860 Ms. shows little juridical development because, the Salesians being so few, Don Bosco presided over the group as father over a family. At this stage, the draft does not include the chapter on "Local Houses;" and likewise individual offices in the congregation (such as that of the local director) remain undefined. But the spirit stemming from the normative "charismatic" experience of Valdocco made up for this failure.

[2] Up to the approval of the constitutions, Don Bosco used the terms rules, constitutions, regulations, statutes and regulatory structures without distinction. In present-day common usage also, rules and constitutions are synonymous.

[3] For the Regulations of the boys Oratory: *ASC* D4820101 *Regolamento dell'Oratorio*; "official" text in P. Braido, *Scritti sul sistema preventivo nell'educazione della gioventù* (Brescia: La Scuola, 1965), 363-399; *IBM* III, 86-92 (*EBM* III, 64-72 and 441-458). For the Regulations of the House: *ASC* D4830107 *Regolamento per le case della Società di S. Francesco di Sales*; "official" text in P. Braido, *Scritti*, 400-457; *IBM* IV, 735-755 (*EBM* IV, 377-378 and 542-559). This second set of regulations underwent many changes from early drafts in 1852-54 to publication in 1877.

Not counting the Preamble and the Historical Summary (Chapters 1 and 2), and the form for profession (Chapter 14), the 1860 constitutions counted 87 articles. These are gathered in 11 short chapters: Purpose, Form of the Society, Vows of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity, Internal Government, Other Superiors, Admission, Practices of Piety, Religious Habit, and Externs. In spite of obvious deficiencies, the 1860 text reveals Don Bosco's essential concept of religious life: his view of the apostolate, his spiritual doctrine, his vision of community and his understanding of the purpose of Salesian religious life, of Salesian formation, of Salesian religious consecration through chastity and poverty, of the role and practice of obedience, and more.

(For a discussion of the preeminence of Obedience see Ch. 9 above.)

Articles on Obedience and Authority and Their Sources

In the constitutions of 1860 the chapter on "Obedience" (*Del voto di obbedienza*) contains 9 articles of which the first 8 only are considered here. Article 9 (on sending and receiving letters) is a mere external ordinance. The text (Ms. *Do* by Boggero) is given above in English translation.

These 8 articles, in which Don Bosco is concerned with the *virtue* no less than the *vow* of obedience, may be divided as follows:

(1) Articles 1 and 4 are devoted to biblical, moral, and religious considerations and motivations of religious obedience. (2) Articles 2 and 3 deal with its canonical aspects. (3) Articles 5, 6, 7 and 8 focus on the manner or style of the practice of Salesian religious obedience.

(1) Biblical, Moral, Religious Considerations and Motivations (Articles 1 & 4)

Art. 1. The example of David (Psalm 119) and of Jesus (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38...) show the deeper meaning and motivation of the *vow* of obedience, and hence of religious authority. The concept and content of the vow of obedience are clearly expressed: to obey is (as explained subsequently) to do the will of the superior *perceived by faith as* the concrete and immediate *expression of the will of God*. Hence obedience is the surest means of doing God's will, and of attaining to holiness and salvation.

The article is modeled on a similar article in the constitutions of Cavanis' Schools of Charity, but only in part. Whereas the model speaks only of Jesus, Don Bosco includes David (hence of both Old and New Testaments). Moreover, Don Bosco, taking inspiration from the Gospel of John, empha-

sizes that obedience *guarantees* doing the will of God. This last idea is repeated in Article 4.

Art. 4. It reflects the same theological position with respect to the *virtue* of obedience. Hence Don Bosco makes no distinction between the foundation of the vow and that of the virtue. He seems to disregard a purely canonical (external) carrying out of legitimate orders. Moreover, by quoting Christ's words, "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever despises you despises me" [Luke 10:16; Cf. Matthew 10:40; John 13:20], he equates the religious superior to the Apostles in relation to Christ

This last element is paralleled in the constitutions of Cavanis' Schools of Charity, and it is in fact attested in earlier constitutions, for example those of the Clerks Regular (Saint Cajetan, 1480-1547). However, in subsequent drafts for unknown reasons (perhaps, lest the comparison appear presumptuous) Don Bosco omits these words.

(2) Canonical Aspects of the Vow of Obedience (Articles 2 & 3)

Art. 2: Article 1 defined the *foundations* of the vow; Article 2 defines the *object* of the vow, and hence also the legitimate parameters of the superior's authority.

The 1860 draft reads simply: "*This vow binds us to apply ourselves solely to those things which the lawful superior judges to be conducive to the greater glory of God and to the good of our own soul.*" In other words, the Salesian is obliged to obey his religious superior in everything. But in commanding the superior must be guided by one criterion: that in his judgment the command will promote the greater glory of God and the spiritual good of the individual confrere.

In earlier drafts, Don Bosco had added, "*In particular the vow calls for the observance of the provisions contained in the regulations of the house, which have for several [years] been in force in the Home attached to the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales.*"

Did these words merely designate a special area of obedience by the confrere, or were they meant also as an *additional criterion* restricting the area of command by the superior? Did they mean that the superior in judging what was for the greater glory of God and the good of the individual's soul was to be guided by the regulations of the house (hence, with greater reason, by the constitutions, see below.)

It is noted that when adapting the formula of profession from that of the Society of Jesus (for the text of 1860), Don Bosco eliminated the words in his source, "according to the constitutions of said Company." He simply wrote:

"I make the vows [...], and I pray you, [my superior], to feel free to command me without any restriction (*volermi senza riserbo comandare)* in anything you may judge to be for the greater glory of God and for the good of souls."

However, almost immediately, in reworking the text of Article 2, Don Bosco included the criterion that the Constitutions must set the parameters of religious command and obedience. Thus the text of 1864 reads: "This vow binds us to apply ourselves solely to those things which the lawful superior judges to be conducive to the greater glory of God and to the good of our own soul and of that of neighbor, *in accordance with the rules of this Society*." Later he rephrased: "*in accordance with the prescription of these constitutions*" This is the reading up to and including the draft of 1873, after which the Roman Congregation removed the whole article.[4]

In 1864, Don Bosco corrected the formula of profession in the same way (command and obedience in accordance with the constitutions) to comply with Savini-Svegliati's observation 10 (discussed in Ch. 3 above).

In any case, the institutional parameter of the superior's command in the 1860 Salesian constitutions are wide enough. For example Article 1 of the chapter on "Other Superiors" provides that "The duties of the other superiors shall be assigned by the rector [major] as need demands." What is said of the rector major at the center is applicable also to the director in a particular house. Need, that is, the demands of the work of charity in a particular house, sets the parameters of command and obedience. As he himself states in the Historical Summary (Chapter 2 of the early constitutions), Don Bosco's own *earliest* experience as leader in oratory work had lain in that direction, as opposed to subsequent more democratic phrasing. We read in the Historical Summary:

1858 (*Ar*)	**1860 (*Do*)**	**1864 (*Gb*)**
They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise to devote themselves solely to such activities as would, *in their superior's judgment*, redound to the glory of God and to the benefit of their own souls. They regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior.	They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise to devote themselves to such activities as *were judged* to redound to the glory of God and to the benefit of their own souls. They regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior.	They did not bind themselves by any formal vow; they merely made a simple promise to devote themselves to the education of young people, and to such ministerial activities as would redound, *in their judgment*, to the greater glory of God and to the benefit of their own souls. They regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior

[4] Article 2 has no parallel in other constitutions. It seems to be Don Bosco's own creation.

The 1864 text is more democratic ("in their judgment"), though they "regarded Fr. John Bosco as their superior."

Art. 3 expresses the canonical provision that, *in itself*, no sin is committed by not obeying. Guilt of sin is incurred only when in disobeying one infringes on natural, divine, or Church law, or when the command is given in virtue of the vow of obedience.[5]

Don Bosco's probable model is again the parallel article in the constitutions of Cavanis' Schools of Charity. But instead of "*under pain of sin*" (*sub obligatione peccati*), Don Bosco prefers to say "under pain of guilt" (*sotto pena di colpa*, *sub culpa*). Above all he omits, as alien to his spirit, Cavanis' provision that the disobedient subject is liable to such punishment as the superior may assess.

After the 1873 draft, this article was transferred to the end of the constitutions as generally applicable to all provisions found in them.

(3) Style of Salesian Obedience (Articles 5, 6, 7 & 8)

After proposing the faith foundations (Arts. 1 & 4) and the juridical aspects (Arts. 2 & 3) of religious obedience, in the next 4 articles, Don Bosco presents the Salesian style of command-obedience, that is, the concrete configuration of the Salesian superior-subject relationship.

Art. 5 states that obedience ought to be: (1) *filial*, because the superior is "a father" (in later drafts, "a [most] loving father"); (2) *total*, because a truly committed religious does not pick and choose, does not discriminate between what is commanded and what is only recommended, and is not influenced by circumstances of time, place, etc.; (3) *prompt*, because putting off acting diminishes obedience; (4) *cheerful*, because it is prompted by generosity of the heart and a desire to please God; (5) *humble*, because it implies laying aside one's will and choosing God's will discerned by faith in the superior's command.

The style of obedience described in Art. 5 echoes phrases that are traditional in religious constitutions. It is directly modeled on a parallel article in the constitutions of Cavanis' Schools of Charity, ultimately echoing the phraseology of the Jesuit constitutions.

[5] Savini-Svegliati Observation 13 (1864) called for the removal of this last clause of Art. 3. Don Bosco did remove it. See Appendix to Ch. 3 above.

SDB 1860	Schools of Charity	Soc. of Jesus
Let each one therefore look on his superior as a father, and obey him completely, promptly, with a cheerful disposition, and with humility.	Therefore let [the confreres] revere the superior, whoever he may be, as a father; let them be obedient to him completely, promptly, cheerfully and with due humility.	[...Let the confreres] nourish toward [the superior] inner reverence and love. They should obey not just by the material execution of his commands, but completely, promptly, with good spirit, and with due humility.

In spite of the traditional character of the expression, however, these qualities resonate deeply with Don Bosco's own heart and mind, as may be seen from Art. 6.

Art 6 deals with a situation in which the confrere may be faced with an irksome or hurtful command. First the general principle is stated with force: "Ask for nothing, refuse nothing." It inculcates a *peace of mind* and a *trust* in obeying by which nothing is *demanded* and nothing is *refused*. But the exception or "concession" that follows immediately encourages constructive dialogue with the superior, when necessary–but in a spirit of trustful final submission, a submission "in the Lord" that calls for a spirit of faith.

The principle, "Ask for nothing, refuse nothing," reflects the spirit if not the letter of St. Francis de Sales. Don Bosco's immediate models, however, seem to have been articles in the Cavanis and in the Vincentian constitutions.

Don Bosco, 1860	Cavanis' Schools of Charity	Vinc. Congr. of the Mission
Let no one be anxious to ask for any particular thing, or to refuse it; but when one thinks that a particular thing is harmful or necessary, let him respectfully mention the fact to his superior and accept his decision with resignation as from the Lord.	The religious custom of asking for nothing and refusing nothing is retained in principle. However, if someone thinks that something is either harmful or necessary, let him discern before the Lord whether he should or should not have a word with his superior. He should moreover have a disposition of [holy] indifference regarding the superior's decision whatever it may be. Then, so disposed, let him present the matter to his superior, and let him be convinced that God's will is expressed in that of the superior. Once this is expressed, let him promptly accept it.	[To strengthen obedience] we maintain the religious custom of asking for nothing and of refusing nothing, except when one sees that something is either harmful or necessary. Then he will discern before God whether or not he should make the matter known to the superior. He should maintain a disposition of [holy] indifference regarding the superior's decision. So disposed, he may present the matter to his superior, in the certainty that God's will lies in the superior's decision. As soon as this is made known to him he should trustfully accept it.

Don Bosco is guided by his models, but not slavishly. It is significant that he omits the requirement that a confrere engage in a period of discernment or examination of conscience before entering into a dialogue with his superior. Evidently Don Bosco thought that fatherliness on the one hand and trust on the other would prompt an immediate encounter "in the Lord," in a context of faith.

Art. 7 increases the charge of the previous article. It calls on the confrere to place "great (in a subsequent draft, 'the greatest') trust" in his superior, and even to make manifestation of conscience to him–spontaneously in a situation of need, or as demanded by the rule: "Let everyone place great confidence in his superior and let no secret of the heart be kept from him; let him *openly manifest his conscience* to him whenever he should be asked or he himself feels a need to do so."

A similar provision calling for trust in the superior even to the point of keeping nothing from him, not even secrets of conscience, is found in the constitutions of such earlier congregations as Cavanis' Schools of Charity, the Vincentians and the Jesuits.

Cavanis' Schools of Charity	**Vinc. Congr. of the Mission**	**Society of Jesus**
Let each confrere freely and with a prompt and cheerful heart surrender to his superior the disposition of himself and of all the things that he has received for his use. Nor should he keep anything from his superior, not even his conscience; rather he should often give an account of it to him.	Each confrere with all sincerity and devotion shall give an account of his conscience to his superior or to someone delegated by him, with the form in use in our Congregation. This manifestation should be made at least every three months, taking advantage of the time of spiritual retreats, and whenever the Superior sees a need for it.	Each confrere should freely place himself and all his things at the superior's disposal in a spirit of true obedience. He should not keep anything from his superior, not even his conscience.

Manifestation of conscience to the superior was a common practice in earlier religious communities. But by 1860 the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars began to speak clearly against such practice.[6] (1) One reason for this was to prevent the invasion by the superior of the sacramental area reserved to the confessor. (2) Another was to prevent the possibility of a misguided

[6] Cf. the *Observations* recorded for the years 1858-1861 in *Collectanea*, 830-858.

spiritual direction. (3) Yet another was to forestall serious and painful situations arising especially in communities of women, or when the superior was a layperson.

In early constitutional drafts in Italian, Don Bosco appeared inclined to follow Roman directives, and in fact abolished the *obligation* of the manifestation of conscience. For instance in the draft of 1864 (Gb), instead of enjoining on the confrere a manifestation of conscience "*whenever he should be asked* or he himself feels a need to do so," he provided for a manifestation, "*whenever he thinks* it will redound to the greater glory of God and the good of his own soul." [7]

But in subsequent drafts he returned stubbornly to his position, which he maintained until the constitutions were submitted for definitive approval (1873-1874). At that time, the Bianchi-Vitelleschi observation No. 7 rejected the manifestation of conscience:

> The manifestation of conscience prescribed [in these constitutions] is inadmissible. It might be retained as a free choice of the member, but then only if it is restricted to the external observance of the constitutions and to progress in virtue."[8] The final approved text [1874] read: "Let everyone place great confidence in his superior; hence it is good that the members frequently give an account of their external life especially to their higher superiors. Let each one with simplicity and spontaneity manifest to his superiors external faults against the constitutions as well as his progress in virtue, so that he may receive from them counsels and comfort, and, if needs be, appropriate admonitions.

[Additional Comment on Article 7–Reason and Meaning]

While respecting the Church's ordinance regarding "conscience," Don Bosco nevertheless continued to call for "full trust" in the confreres' relationship to their director. In Session 9 of General Chapter II (1880), Don Bosco had "things to say" on the unity of direction in the Society at all levels, and more specifically on the relationship between confreres and their director in a local community. As reported by Barberis, he stressed the importance of the manifestation in the following terms:

[7] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 96.

[8] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 244. For the Bianchi-Vitelleschi observations and Don Bosco's response see earlier Ch. 6.

> All confreres should regard their director as a loving father, as an elder brother, appointed to the office for the sole purpose of helping them to do their work well. Let them not hide anything from him, whether good or bad, rather let them show themselves to him just as they are. Everyone must be convinced of this, that a school or a house will run smoothly only when the confreres in their various capacities live and work as one in heart and soul. This obviously is not possible in practice if the confreres do not make their director the center of the whole operation and do not fully open their hearts to him.[9]

It should be noted that Don Bosco called for a manifestation of *conscience* not principally with "spiritual direction" in view, and certainly not out of a desire to invade either the privacy of the person or the sacramental area. (In this latter respect, it will be remembered that in Salesian communities the director was the regular confessor of confreres and boys until the Holy Office abolished the practice by the 1901 Decree *Quod a suprema*.)

Calling for such total trust was coherent with Don Bosco's concept of religious obedience. The fact that Don Bosco placed this provision under Vow of Obedience would indicate that Don Bosco conceived it as part of the structure of obedience. He viewed the vow of obedience as the religious structure whereby a person, consecrated in poverty and chastity, made himself/herself totally available to the superior for the work of charity. It would then be coherent for the superior to know in strictest confidence what this person was really like, so that he/she might be properly "deployed" for the work of charity.

Obviously, this may be coherent at an ideal level, but perhaps not workable in practice. Hence, the Church saw fit to scale down the practice in her concern for the person.

Art. 8 calls for trusting obedience as described in preceding articles, without any resistance in *deed*, in *words*, or in the *heart*, even in things that are repugnant.

This article may again have been modeled on a similar constitution of Cavanis' Schools of Charity.

[9] GC II, S. 9, Sept. 9, 1880, Barberis, *Transcribed Minutes*, Notebook I, 70, *FDBM* 1858 C6.

Don Bosco, 1860	Cavanis' Schools of Charity
Let everyone obey without any sort of resistance, either in deed, or in word, or in heart. The more repugnant the thing commanded is to him who does it, the greater will be his merit before God for having obeyed.	Let [the confrere] not find it repugnant [to obey nor let him resist] whether in deed or in mind or in heart. In this way he will make greater strides in self-denial, his purity of intention will deepen, and his devotion in divine service will grow more fervent.

The ideas of "repugnance" and of "non-resistance in deed, word (mind), or heart" occur in both texts. But the theological reflection is different. For Cavanis such obedience has an ascetical purpose; for Don Bosco, it makes one more pleasing to God (it increases merit).

The Jesuit constitutions asked the member to obey "as a corpse would" (*perinde ac cadaver*), an image that Francis of Assisi had long before used to describe Franciscan obedience.[10] Don Bosco does not use this image (too crude?) but in effect says the same thing.

Conclusion to the Presentation of Articles 1-8

The basic statements of Articles 1-8 may be summarized as follows. The superior is God's representative for the confreres under his authority. This is the sole foundation for his authority and for their obedience. Confreres therefore must always obey promptly, willingly, and without any reservation, in spite of "reason" to the contrary (e.g., the superior's personal deficiencies).

It is important to note that the idea of co-responsibility in decisions is totally alien to these articles. Decisions are the superior's responsibility only, though always within the framework of the constitutions. In spite of the opening for "dialogue' allowed in Art. 6, the superior is fundamentally autonomous vis-à-vis the community of confreres. The members of the community are "subject" to authority. By statute they are "inferior" vis-à-vis the "superior." They are therefore bound to obey the superior, who, however, is asked to be fatherly in the exercise of his authority within the limits of the constitutions. To expect co-responsibility, democracy, etc. would be anachronistic.

[10] Studies on the origin and meaning of this phrase ("as a corpse would") in Jesuit and Franciscan constitutions are referred to in Motto, *art. cit.*, 23, note 67.

4. Exercise of Authority by the Superior

We have thus far presented the content of the articles that describe the command-obedience structure in the Salesian constitutions, and at the same time illuminate the figure of the Salesian superior (director). We have cited Don Bosco's "sources" and observed where he is following the tradition and where he breaks new ground. We are thus in a position to attempt an interpretation of the role of the director (and the structure of obedience) in the Salesian community, as it emerges from the constitutions of 1860.

This means that we have to answer four questions: (1) Epistemological basis: *What is the social context* of the texts, for an interpretation of the Salesian superior? (2) Theological reference: *On what grounds* does the Salesian superior command? (3) Community-mission parameters: *What* is the field of the Salesian superior's power to command? (4) Style: *How* does the Salesian superior command?

We shall address these questions in order.

Epistemological Criteria for an Interpretation of the Texts in Context

We have already pointed out that in our texts the relationship superior-confrere, or authority-obedience is essentially vertical. Obviously authority and obedience within a religious community is a "unified field," one reality, one joint means for the attainment of the one purpose, the exercise of charity. But the texts mostly stress the duty of the confrere to obey the superior. The latter has a monopoly on thought and decision. The confreres are cast in the role of faithful doers, as instruments impelled by the will of the superior. And the superior's job is to animate the confreres so that the observance of the rules for the work of charity, or (as Don Bosco would prefer to say) the fulfillment of duty, becomes internal discipline and freely given commitment.

Moreover, the physical closeness of superior and confreres in a Salesian community seems to reinforce the subordination of the latter to the former, through a pressure that extends even into the private life of the individual confrere. It is a fact that the constitutions of 1860 do not project the image of a "democracy," nor even perhaps of a "constitutional monarchy" (to use inappropriate political terms). The image projected is that of authority working from on high downward to obtain internal as well as external compliance, claiming all responsibility, control, and right to affect the action and even the

consciences of the members. The confreres' one responsibility is "to obey."

However, the above general statement of the situation must be further specified, and must receive correction from other considerations.

(1) Personal Criterion

First, we should note that the fact that in Don Bosco's design all power is placed in the hands of the superior is owed in part to a mode of thinking inherent to the social, political and religious life of the nineteenth century. "Submission" was constitutive of the culture at the time, a religious axiom, a tenet inherited from the age of absolutism.[11]

In the second place, we must keep in mind that this form of government reflects also the situation of the early Salesian community. This has to do with the kind of personnel Don Bosco had at his disposal. He lacked true collaborators. Most of Don Bosco's "men" were mere boys, his own youngsters, not really equipped for the difficult educational work he had on the drawing boards. For many years he carried the load by himself. As Barberis writes in his chronicle, "All other congregations were founded with the cooperation of learned and knowledgeable people, who joined the founder as helpers and were in effect participants in the founding. This was not the case among us– all of us were Don Bosco's pupils."[12] The few adult helpers that joined Don Bosco worked in total dependence on him and within the sphere of action defined by him.

One may note, however, that as the number of able and educated Salesians increased with the passing of time, collegiality in government also improved, both at the general and local levels. This development took place also in response to prodding from the Roman congregation. Thus, in further drafts of the constitutions, the power of the superior was counterbalanced by a council, and tempered by the right of ballot of the councilors in important decisions.[13]

But even then all responsibility for the community and its work and for each individual confrere rested on the superior. He is answerable to God for

[11] Paternalism in government, spawned in peculiar historical junctures, prevailed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Pius IX fostered it in the Church. Cf. J. Courtney Murray, cited in Motto, *art. cit.*, 25, note 70.

[12] *ASC* A0000107 Barberis, *Cronachetta* 2, Notebook 7, 57, edited in *EBM* XIII, 159.

[13] Cf. articles in the constitutions from 1867 on, in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 153, 165 and 167.

the confreres and their work, assuming that the latter have been obedient. And as far a he himself was concerned, as documents show, Don Bosco tried to retain centralized control long after the founding era.

For example, in his minutes of General Chapter I (1877), Barberis reports:

> Don Bosco always presses for increased powers of the rector major. This will make it possible for him to guide the congregation single-handedly and with total control. He hates to be confronted at very step by other people's claims of authority and privilege, and to have to tread so cautiously before taking any decision[14]

Don Bosco, as reported, spoke in similar terms at General Chapter II (1880):

> The Rev. Don Bosco strongly emphasized this point: directors, and provincials too, should carefully hold the principle that command, *as well as jurisdiction*, is vested in one person alone. Hence every one should strive to uphold this authority and to keep everything under the Rector Major's unified direction (*tener legata bene ogni cosa al Sup. Maggiore*).[15]

Don Bosco wanted such centralized control also at the local level. At another session of General Chapter II, he is quoted as saying:

> For the smooth running of the Congregation, it is important that [in each house] everything and everyone be centered on the director; that every director have an understanding with his provincial in everything; and likewise each provincial with the rector major. If we succeed in operating by this principle, we may rest assured of having put the running of our Congregation on a solid basis.[16]

This being the case, Don Bosco's concept of the Salesian superior and of the command-obedience relationship (both at the general and local level) must be understood in the context of his concrete personal experience, that is, of the whole oratorian experience of the founder and of the early Salesian

[14] *ASC* D578, General Chapter I, Barberis, *Transcribed Minutes*, Notebook II, 204-205.

[15] General Chapter II, Session 1, September 3, 1880, Barberis, *Transcribed Minutes*, Notebook I, 8, *FDBM* 1857 C3. Whatever is implied in this Don Bosco's statement about "jurisdiction," it is a fact that canonically jurisdiction is vested also in local "superiors."

[16] General Chapter II, Session 9, September 9, 1880, Barberis, *Transcribed Minutes*, Notebook I, 74, *FDBM* 1858 C5.

community. Official statutes alone run the danger of projecting a purely authoritarian and paternalistic image of the Salesian superior. In other words, the interpreter of a constitutional text cannot neglect looking into its historical and social origins, that is, into how it was formed and how it developed through the experience of the founder and in the context of a certain community.

This is all the more imperative for the reason that the Salesian constitutions reflect at every step concrete real life situations. There is no real *literary* continuity between the early regulations of the oratory and of the home (*Casa annessa*) and the first constitutions. In delineating the image of the Salesian superior in 1859-1860, Don Bosco (even though making use of sources) took inspiration and content from his own experience. He was actually describing himself with his strong personality–the dedicated educator and a father in the midst of young people who had perhaps never experienced the concern of a father. The style by which he himself had become a pervasive household reality at the Oratory was now to be recreated in all future superiors of the congregation. The pattern of his life was to be more normative than his theology.[17]

(2) Institutional Criterion

To the *personal* interpretative criterion another should be added, a criterion that may be dubbed "institutional." This refers to the institution of the Valdocco Oratory. We have already mentioned that the image of the Salesian superior in the constitutions should be seen in the context of the early Salesian community. This reference should be enlarged to comprise the whole institution of the Oratory. Brief articles of a juridical-moral character can express this criterion only implicitly for the most part, but Don Bosco has also provided express references both within the constitutions,[18] and in documents outside the constitutions.[19] The Oratory as a unique non-repeatable historical event under the founder's sole personal direction is presented by Don Bosco as a charismatic point of reference and as the norm for all future

[17] Cf. P. Brocardo, *Direzione spirituale e rendiconto* (Roma: LAS, 1965), 150.

[18] Cf. the summary history of the congregation (Ch. 2 in the early constitutions) and additional historical references throughout the text [Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 62-70].

[19] E. g. *"Considered in itself, the purpose of [this society] is to continue what has been in effect at the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales for the past 20 years or so."* [Memorandum of 1864, *Cose da notarsi*, in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 229; given in English translation in our earlier Chapter 3].

Salesian foundations. This is what gives substance and meaning to the meager text of the constitutions.

Theological Foundation of the Superior Authority

While allowing that the constitutions describe authority-obedience as a vertical hierarchical structure, one must not overlook the very important spiritual character of the relationship and the context of faith in which it is to be understood. After all, we are speaking of *religious* obedience. The juridical component of the structure is inserted into a faith context, in which conscious and free reference to God's will removes obedience not only from the secular sphere but also from the sphere of *mere social effectiveness*. This latter consideration (social effectiveness) looks on authority as necessary for the management of the religious community, and on obedience (submission to the rules) as the price one has to pay for a good community life. Without a doubt, fidelity to the spirit simply cannot do without fidelity to the rule; but this in turn implies that the rule should be interpreted in the light of the spirit, or it is demoted to a mere collection of dos and don'ts.

Now, this vision of faith, itself a component of a theology of religious life, could only be hinted at in the scant phrases of theological inspiration imbedded in a largely juridical-ascetical text. Hence, for a proper assessment of Don Bosco's thought on the theological foundations of the structure "authority-obedience," we must look beyond those few references.[20]

(1) Theocentric Dimension and Christological Orientation

The glory of God and the salvation of souls constituted the all-encompassing program of Don Bosco's life and work. This recurring motif and its variations need no documentation. This and other such expressions of faith running through the constitutions support also the authority-obedience relationship. Nor is this oft-repeated expression mere stereotype. The first fundamental article of the chapter on the form of the society clearly makes the point that religious life would have no meaning apart from its theological inspiration. Article 1 of the draft of 1860, chapter on Form of the Society, reads:

[20] For detail cf. P. Stella, *Don Bosco: RO&S*, 409-414; F. Desramaut, *Don Bosco and the Spiritual Life*, 192-194.

> All the members lead the common life united only by the *bond* of fraternal charity and of the simple vows, a bond that unites them as one in heart and soul, so that they may *love and serve God* by the [practice of the] virtues of obedience, poverty, and a saintly moral life.[21]

"To love and serve God" is an addition that Don Bosco made in his own hand to the model he was using (the Cavanis constitutions). In the basic catechism the expression defined the purpose of human life (why we were created). Here Don Bosco uses it to describe the purpose of religious life as well.

The theocentric orientation of the constitutions is affirmed right at the start, in the first two articles of the chapter on the Purpose of the Society. There the Salesian is bidden to make perfection (that is, a religious life totally pleasing to God) to consist in the imitation of the pastoral charity of Christ. For Don Bosco the journey of "religious perfection" (spiritual life of a religious) entails acceptance of God's will, imitation of the "virtues" of Christ, perfect practice of all virtues, and service of neighbor through the work of charity.[22] The two articles read:

> 1. The purpose of this society is to gather together its members, priests, seminarians, and laymen too, for the purpose their self-perfection by imitating the virtues of our divine Savior, especially by [the practice of] charity toward poor young people.
>
> 2. Jesus Christ began by teaching and doing. So, too, shall the members begin by acquiring perfection through the practice of internal and external virtues and though acquisition of knowledge; then they shall endeavor to work for the good of neighbor.[23]

Don Bosco, as a man of action rather than a theoretician, thought of love of God and love of neighbor as of two sides of one coin, and he aimed above all at creating within his institutions a true spirit of pastoral charity for the service of young people and the poor. The heart of community life is the Gospel ideal of fraternal charity by which confreres (including the director) live together in a spirit of simplicity, mutual support, compassion, goodness, sharing joys and sorrows–in communion: "one in heart and soul."

[21] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 82 (Draft of 1860, *Do*).

[22] Cf. Stella, *DB:RO&S*, 199-219; Desramaut, *DB and the spiritual Life*, passim. Don Bosco, like other nineteenth-century founders, makes no distinction between perfection and holiness (we might say, genuine spiritual life) [Cf. Stella, *DB: RO&S*, 446].

[23] Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 72 (Draft of 1860, *Do*).

Christ is the model proposed to the Salesian for imitation: model of virtue, of doing and teaching, of charity toward the young, of perfect obedience to God's will.[24] The emphasis is ascetical-moral, rather than theological: thus Don Bosco does not refer to the "mysteries" of Christ and their doctrinal implication. In this respect the only mystery proposed is Christ's coming to earth in perfect obedience to God's will, and to do God's will. Don Bosco proposes for imitation the *virtues* of Christ. But this should not be understood to refer to virtues as distinguished in theological treatises: theological, cardinal, supernatural, natural, personal, social, etc. What he proposes for imitation is Christ's way of living, speaking and acting, that is, a total, ascetical, moral imitation, with stress on Christ's pastoral charity.

(2) Ecclesial Dimension

Loving and serving God, seeking and doing God's will, is left to the individual to discern responsibly. But, since human prudence is subject to failure, reliable guidance, such as is provided by the Church, is required.

In Don Bosco's and in nineteenth-century theology, Christ offers to humanity the Catholic Church in its hierarchical constitution precisely as teacher and guide. Hence, Salesian religious life, especially in the matter of purpose, form, and mission, has an ecclesial dimension.

To conclude, this section (theological foundations of authority-obedience) makes the point that seeking and doing God's will is the core of religious life and of holiness. The commands of the superior, who himself as superior must seek and do God's will, manifest God's will to the confreres engaged in the work of charity. The practice of the constitutions approved by the Church give the confrere assurance that he is doing the will of God. This is imitation of the virtues of Christ, who came to do God's will and to minister to the young and the poor.

Community-Mission Content of the Superior's Authority

(1) The Superior, Center of Unity for the Member's Personal Holiness and for the Community's Apostolic Mission

The constitutions clearly place the Salesian superior at the head of the community. Don Bosco was concerned about unity of aims, spirit, and meth-

[24] These references appear in the early constitutions [Cf. Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 72, 58, 92].

od, and was convinced that efficacy in the work of charity and fidelity to inspiration from on high, could be maintained only through that unity. So in the constitutions the superior stands at the top of the community structure, as the center and catalyst of unity.[25] He is center and catalyst of unity by reason of the breadth of the mandate he has received, of the duty enjoined on him of being the perfect observer of the rules, and of being placed as guardian and interpreter of the rules and of the Salesian tradition. His job then is to unite all the confreres to himself and among themselves, and animate them toward achieving the double common goal: the salvation of one's soul, and success in the mission.

As indicated above, factors of a personal, social, psychological and spiritual order stand at the base of such a formulation of authority-obedience in the constitutions. Unity was one of Don Bosco's highest priorities in the early days (1848-1849): "Two things I must have: a free hand and people who are totally at my disposal."[26] In a sermon after the approval of the society (1869) Don Bosco said: "We have chosen to live together in unum [as one]. What does this mean? Briefly, it means first, that we must be one as a body; secondly, that we must live as one in spirit; and thirdly, that we must be united in obedience [...]."[27] Don Bosco made the same point repeatedly in later years. Expressing his dissatisfaction with the situation at the Oratory, he said:

> The director's job is to command. He should therefore be familiar with the regulations that pertain to his office and no less with those that pertain to others in their various jobs. There must be one sole center of command. There has been a gradual breakdown in this unity of direction. [...] Let this unity be restored as of old: one man at the helm. [...] Let one person, the director, be in charge.[28]

[25] Cf. J. Aubry, *Il direttore salesiano secondo la nostra tradizione, in General Chapter XXI,* Contributo di studio allo schema III (lithographed. Rome, 1977), 59-126. For a shorter version of the same, cf. J. Aubry, *Rinnovare la nostra vita salesiana oggi*, 2 (Torino: LDC, 1981), 32-51.

[26] E. Ceria, *Annali* I, 9 (words reported as spoken by Don Bosco in 1849 against a proposal to federate the Turin oratories).

[27] *ASC* A025: *Prediche*, March 12, 1869. Cf. conference edited in *EBM* IX, 267-271, where the words are: "We have chosen to live *in unum*, together. What does living together mean? Briefly it means *in unum locum*, *in unum spiritum*, *in unum finem agendi*–unity of abode, of spirit, and of purpose."

[28] Meeting of the superior Chapter, June 30, 1884, Lemoyne, *Minutes*, 14b-15a, *FDBM* 1880 D6-7; also *EBM* XVII, 166-168.

This raises the question whether Don Bosco saw obedience as an end in itself, as a means of self-discipline and of advancement in perfection. The constitutional articles certainly show that he saw spiritual value in acts done out of obedience. But it seems that in his mind the Salesian superior commands not in order to curb the human and foster the spiritual in his confreres, but *in view of the mission*, of the work of charity. Likewise Don Bosco's proverbial gentleness and affability, as well as his practical sense, discourage a too literal an interpretation of certain expressions in the articles on obedience. In his Confidential Advice to Directors he writes:

> Try never to order your subordinates to do things beyond their strength or contrary to their inclinations. Rather, do your best to favor each one's tendencies by preferably assigning tasks you know to be more to their liking. [...] In giving orders always be kind and considerate. Let there be no threats, anger, and, least of all, coercion through what you say or do. [...][29]

It appears that the strictly ascetical view of obedience (as death-to-self), as also such ascetical practices as the chapter of faults in use in older religious communities, were alien to his thinking and moral sense.

(2) The Superior, First to Obey God and the Rule

The constitutions as a whole, and particularly the articles on obedience, speak of the confrere's obedience to the superior. The whole thrust is to call the confrere to see obedience as God's will through faith.

But a careful reading will reveal more: (1) The superior is not free to command or not to command. He must command what the constitutions prescribe for the attainment of the mission. (2) Although the constitutions grant great powers to the superior, the superior has only the powers given to him under the constitutions. (3) The powers of the superior, before being defined by the constitutions, are defined by a living tradition identified with Don Bosco and the Oratory. Only when the Holy See approved the rule, did Don Bosco clearly put the superior completely under the rule. (4) After the approval of the constitutions the living tradition must be preserved for their correct interpretation.

After the approval of the Society (1869) and after the approval of the

[29] *EBM* X, 452.

constitutions (1874) Don Bosco engaged in a sustained catechesis through conferences in which obedience was the prime theme. In these addresses, Don Bosco speaks of the Rector Major as the incarnation of the rule. Then he continues:

> What we have said about the rector major in reference to the whole Congregation applies also to each director in his own house. He must be united to the rector major, and all the members of his house must be united to him. Also, he must embody the rule. The rule, not he, is to be the symbol of authority. [...] Always talk to your confreres in this manner: "These things have to be done. It is imperative that everyone should do his part because the rule calls for it. [...]"[30]

When Don Bosco announced to the confreres by circular letter of 1885 that Fr. Rua was to be his vicar, he wrote:

> The Vicar has the special charge of seeing to it that, after I am gone, those that will follow will be faithful to the traditions that have guided us up until now. The traditions I am speaking of are the practical norms that help us understand, explain and faithfully practice the rule. They form the spirit and the life of our Pious Society.[31]

Under God's law (which is the absolute norm), under the laws of the Church (as guide-posts on the way), and under the constitutions and the living Salesian tradition the distinction of superior-inferior loses it polarity as both become "subject" to higher authority.

Salesian Style in the Exercise of Authority by the superior[32]

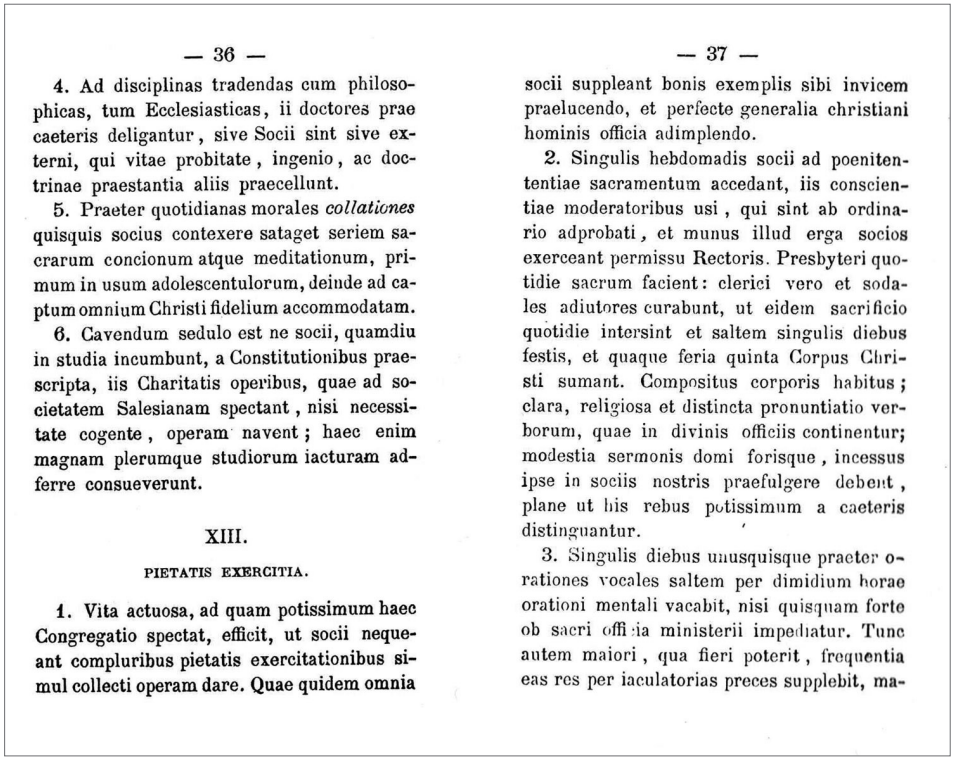
Although, as a man of his times and in line with his models and official juridical formulations, Don Bosco wrote fairly formal and functional articles on obedience, his own style of exercising authority cast them in a completely different light.

(1) Don Bosco wanted the Oratory community of Salesians and boys to be a family, imbued with his brand of "family spirit." The educational method

[30] Annual Conference of St. Francis de Sales of 1876, in *EBM* XII, 62.

[31] *EBM* XVII, 257.

[32] Motto gives considerable space to the matter of "Style." Here only the main points are summarized.



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4. Ad disciplinas tradendas cum philosophicas, tum Ecclesiasticas, ii doctores prae caeteris deligantur, sive Socii sint sive externi, qui vitae probitate, ingenio, ac doctrinae praestantia aliis praecellunt.

5. Praeter quotidianas morales *collationes* quisquis socius contexere sataget seriem sacrarum concionum atque meditationum, primum in usum adolescentulorum, deinde ad captum omnium Christi fidelium accommodatam.

6. Cavendum sedulo est ne socii, quamdiu in studia incumbunt, a Constitutionibus praescripta, iis Charitatis operibus, quae ad societatem Salesianam spectant, nisi necessitate cogente, operam navent; haec enim magnam plerumque studiorum iacturam adferre consueverunt.

XIII.

PIETATIS EXERCITIA.

1. Vita actuosa, ad quam potissimum haec Congregatio spectat, efficit, ut socii nequeant compluribus pietatis exercitationibus simul collecti operam dare. Quae quidem omnia

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socii suppleant bonis exemplis sibi invicem praelucendo, et perfecte generalia christiani hominis officia adimplendo.

2. Singulis hebdomadis socii ad poenitentiae sacramentum accedant, iis conscientiae moderatoribus usi, qui sint ab ordinario adprobati, et munus illud erga socios exerceant permissu Rectoris. Presbyteri quotidie sacrum facient: clerici vero et sodales adiutores curabunt, ut eidem sacrificio quotidie intersint et saltem singulis diebus festis, et quaque feria quinta Corpus Christi sumant. Compositus corporis habitus; clara, religiosa et distincta pronuntiatio verborum, quae in divinis officiis continentur; modestia sermonis domi forisque, incessus ipse in sociis nostris praefulgere debent, plane ut his rebus potissimum a caeteris distinguantur.

3. Singulis diebus unusquisque praeter orationes vocales saltem per dimidium horae orationi mentali vacabit, nisi quisquam forte ob sacri offi ia ministerii impediatur. Tunc autem maiori, qua fieri poterit, frequentia eas res per iaculatorias preces supplebit, ma-

21 – "Practices of Piety" in the official, printed Latin edition of the Salesian Constitutions published in 1874

(preventive system) was the basis. The Oratory was a home, where spontaneity and freedom reigned. Of this we have many contemporary testimonies, such as the Letter from Rome of 1884.

(2) Don Bosco (and after his example, every Salesian superior) exercises authority as a father, brother, and friend. This style unites human and Christian motivations in one expression of love and concern.

II. Chapter on the Practices of Piety

The chapter on Piety is lacking in Stage I (*Ar*, 1858). It was first introduced in Stage II (*Do*, 1860). For comparison and discussion we select the following texts: Stage II (Do, 1860). Stage III (Gb, 1864) and Stage VI (Q, 1974).

1. Selected Texts

II (1860) *Do* Ms Boggero Italian	**III (1864) *Gb* Ms Bosco Italian**	**VI (1874) *Q* Approved Text (Calligr. Berto Latin)**
1. The active life to which our society is committed deprives its members of the opportunity of engaging in many practices in common. They shall [accordingly] endeavor to make up [for this lack] by mutual good example and by the perfect fulfillment of the general duties of a Christian.	1. The active life to which our society is *mostly* committed deprives its members of the opportunity of engaging in many practices in common. They shall [accordingly] endeavor to make up [for this lack] by mutual good example and by the perfect fulfillment of the general duties of a Christian.	1. The active life to which our society is *mostly* committed deprives its members of the opportunity of engaging in many practices in common. They shall [accordingly] endeavor to make up [for this lack] by mutual good example and by the perfect fulfillment of the general duties of a Christian.
2. Each associate [*socio*] shall receive every week the sacrament of penance [administered] by a confessor designated by the rector.	2. Each associate [*socio*] shall receive every week the sacrament of penance [administered] by a confessor designated by the rector.	2. The associates [*socii*] shall receive the sacrament of penance every week [administered] by a confessors who are approved by the ordinary and who exercise that ministry toward the associates with the Rector's permission.
[None]	The priests shall celebrate holy Mass every day; and when unable to do so they shall endeavor to assist at Mass. Seminarians [*chierici*] and coadjutor brothers shall assist at holy Mass daily and shall endeavor to receive holy Communion at least once a week.	The priests shall celebrate holy Mass every day. Seminarians [*chierici*] and coadjutor members [*sodales adjutores*] shall take care to assist at the Sacrifice daily, receive the holy sacrament of the Eucharist at least on all Sundays and holy days [*diebus festis*] and every Thursday.
Personal composure [*compostezza della persona*], a clear, devout, distinct pronunciation of the words of the divine offices, modesty in speech, looks and gait both inside and outside the house, ought to be the distinctive characteristics of our gathered-members [*congregati*].	3. Personal composure [*compostezza della persona*], a clear, devout, distinct pronunciation of the words of the divine offices, modesty in speech, looks and gait both inside and outside the house, ought to be the distinctive characteristics of our gathered-members [*congregati*].	Personal composure [*compostezza della persona*], a clear, devout, distinct pronunciation of the words contained in the divine offices, modesty in speech, looks and gait both inside and outside the house, ought to be so outstanding in our associates [*socii*] that particularly by these [traits] they are to be distinguished from others.
3. Every day there shall be no less than half-an-hour of mental and vocal prayer [to amount to half-an-hour jointly], except when one is prevented [from doing so].	4. Every day there shall be no less than half-an-hour of mental and vocal prayer [to amount to one hour jointly] unless one is prevented [from doing so]	3. Every day each one, besides [offering] vocal prayers, shall devote no less than half-an-hour to mental prayer, unless one is prevented [from doing so] by the calls [*esercizio*] of the sacred ministry.

[None]	In that case he shall make up [for such failure] by more frequent ejaculations and by directing to God with greater fervor and love [*intensità di affetto*] those labors that keep him from the ordinary exercises of piety.	In that case he shall make up [for such failure] by ejaculatory prayers, as frequent as possible, and by offering to God with greater fervor and love those labors that keep him from the prescribed exercises of piety.
4. Every day the third part of the Rosary of Mary Most Holy shall be recited, and some time shall be devoted to [*si farà un po'*] spiritual reading	5. Every day the *coadjutors* [*coadiutori*] shall recite the third part of the rosary of Mary Most Holy and shall devote some time [*faranno un po*] to spiritual reading.	4. Every day the third part of the Rosary of the Immaculate Mother of God shall be recited, and some time shall be devoted to [*si farà un po'*] spiritual reading.
5. Friday in every week shall be kept as a fast in honor of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.	6. Friday in every week shall be kept as a fast in honor of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.	5. Friday in every week shall be kept as a fast in honor of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
6. The last day of every month shall be one of spiritual retreat. Each one shall make the exercise for a happy death, disposing all his affairs both spiritual and temporal as though he had to leave the world and set out for eternity.	7. Every month there shall be a day of spiritual retreat, during which each one shall make the exercise for a happy death, disposing all his affairs both spiritual and temporal as though he had to leave the world and set out for eternity.	6. On the last day of every month each one, leaving all temporal cares aside, shall recollect himself and shall make the exercise which is customarily made [to prepare] for a good death. He shall dispose all his affairs both spiritual and temporal as though he had to leave the world and set out on the way to eternity
[None]	8. Every year each one shall make a spiritual retreat that he shall conclude with his annual confession. Every one before being received into the Society shall devote a few days [*qualche giorno*] to a spiritual retreat and shall make a general confession.	7. Every year, each one shall [make a] retreat for about ten, or at least six, days so that he may attend solely to prayer [*pietati*]; and when these are over, he shall purify himself duly [*se rite abluet*] by his annual confession of sins. Before being received into the Society, *and before taking vows*, all shall devote ten days to a spiritual retreat and shall purify themselves [*sese purgabunt*] by a general confession.
7. The Rector shall have the power to dispense from these practices those individuals, and for the time, that he will judge best in the Lord.	9. The Rector shall have the power to dispense from these practices those individuals, and for the time, that he will judge best in the Lord.	[8. Provision for dispensation removed]
8. [Suffrages (Mass and holy Communion) for a deceased	[10. Suffrages (Mass and holy Communion) for a deceased	[8. Suffrages for a deceased Salesian, 10 Masses offered]

Salesian by the whole congregation.]	Salesian by the whole congregation.]	
9. [Suffrages for a deceased parent of a Salesian in that particular house.]	[11. Suffrages for a deceased parent of a Salesian in that particular house.]	9. [Suffrages (Mass and holy Communion) for a deceased parent of a Salesian in that particular house.]
[None]	12. On the death of the Rector [Major] all the members of the Congregation shall offer up *double* suffrages [for two reasons:] (1) out of gratitude for the pains and labors sustained in the government of the Society; (2) for his release from the pains of Purgatory of which we may have been the cause.	10. On the death of the Rector [Major] all the members of the Congregation shall offer up suffrages [for two reasons:] (1) out of gratitude for the pains and labors sustained in the government of the Society; (2) for his release from the pains of Purgatory of which we may have been the cause. ["*Double*" is omitted.]
[None]	[None]	11. [Suffrages for all deceased Salesians on the feast of St. Francis de Sales]

In Stages VII (1874/5, T Pr Latin) and VIII (1875, V Pr Italian), which Don Bosco edited officially for the Salesians, he added the following two articles:

> 12. Every one shall especially take the following two things to heart: (1) Let each one carefully avoid contracting habits of any kind, even in things that are indifferent; (2) Let each one keep his clothes, bed, and room clean and proper. Let all shun stupid affectation and ambition with all their might. Nothing adorns a religious more than holiness of life by which he becomes an example to others in all things.
>
> 13. Let each one be ready to suffer, if necessary, heat, cold, thirst, hunger, toil, and contempt, when this contributes to the greater glory of God, the spiritual good of others, and to the salvation of one's own soul.

The exhortations contained in both articles hark back to the foundation articles of the chapters on Purpose, Form and to those of Practices Piety (as discussed below) in that they call for a genuine, interior, personal religious consecration and for a persevering, undeterred commitment and dedication to the mission.

2. Practices of Piety: Primacy of the Active Life

The Exercise of Pastoral Charity and the Prayer Life of the Salesian

To explain the spirituality of the Salesian Cooperators Don Bosco would later write:

> This Association might be regarded as a traditional Third Order; but with this difference, that whereas *there* perfection was made to consist in exercises of piety, *here* the main purpose is the active life and the exercise of charity toward neighbor, especially toward young people at risk.[33]

This very principle underlies the chapter on the Practices of Piety of the Salesian Constitutions.

The constitutions of 1858 made no mention of practices of piety (the prayer life of the Salesian community). Apparently Don Bosco saw no need of specifying what was already in use. The chapter was added in 1860, and it underwent some development in 1864 and thereafter.

The structure of the chapter is worth noting. In the draft of 1860, it began with two foundational articles–three in the draft of 1864. These foundational articles were followed by specific provisions: for daily vocal and mental prayer, for daily rosary and "some" spiritual reading, for a Friday fast, for a monthly retreat (exercise for a Happy Death), for the Rector's power to grant dispensations from practices as he saw fit, and for suffrages for deceased Salesians and parents of Salesians. An article on the yearly spiritual retreat was added in 1864.[34]

Foundational Articles

We give here in translation for comparison the texts of 1860 and 1864, and mark the various components with Roman numerals for easy reference.

[33] Bosco Giovanni, *Cooperatori salesiani, ossia un modo pratico per giovare al costume ed alla civile società* (San Pier d'Arena: Tip. Salesiana, 1876), in *Opere Edite* XXVIII, 260.

[34] The Salesians made their retreat together with the boys until 1866; from this date on separate regular retreats were conducted for Salesians at the newly acquired house of Trofarello [*EBM* VIII, 198-201].

***Do* (1860) Piety, Art. 1 and 2**	***Gb* (1864) Piety, Art. 1, 2 and 3**
1. [i] The active life to which our society is committed deprives its members (*membri*) of the opportunity of engaging in many practices in common. They shall [accordingly] endeavor to make up [for this lack] by mutual good example and by the perfect fulfillment of the general duties of a Christian.	1. [i] The active life to which our society is *mostly* committed deprives its members (*membri*) of the opportunity of engaging in many practices in common. They shall [accordingly] endeavor to make up [for this lack] by mutual good example and by the perfect fulfillment of the general duties of a Christian.
2. [ii] Each associate (*socio*) shall receive every week the sacrament of penance [administered] by a confessor designated by the rector.	2. [ii] Each associate (*socio*) shall receive every week the sacrament of penance [administered] by a confessor designated by the rector. The priests shall celebrate holy Mass every day; and when unable to do so they shall endeavor to assist at Mass. Seminarians and coadjutor brothers shall assist at holy Mass daily and shall endeavor to receive holy Communion at least once a week.
[iii] Personal composure (*compostezza della persona*), a clear, devout, distinct pronunciation of the words of the divine offices, modesty in speech, looks and gait both inside and outside the house, ought to be the distinctive characteristics of our gathered-members (*congregati*).	3. [iii] Personal composure (*compostezza della persona*), a clear, devout, distinct pronunciation of the words of the divine offices, modesty in speech, looks and gait both inside and outside the house, ought to be the distinctive characteristics of our gathered-members (*congregati*).

At first glance, these articles appear altogether unusual as an introduction to a chapter on Practices of Piety. However, they are totally consonant with Don Bosco's understanding of religious life. I called these articles foundational; they in fact function as an infrastructure supporting the prayer life of the Salesian community. A brief comment on each section will bear this out.

(1) Section [i] expresses the top-priority that Don Bosco wishes to give to the *active life*–meaning, not the "busy" life but a life dedicated to the apostolate, to the exercise of Christ-like pastoral charity. Stella remarks:

> Herein is contained a certain innovation in the traditional doctrine of religious life. Since religious life is a state of perfection, it should show forth the sign [of it] in terms of a greater individual and collective commitment. Now the sign to which Don Bosco attaches fundamental value is "the active life" which takes its inspiration from charity and its demands. To liturgical celebration and other forms of prayer [exercises] he seems to attach only a subordinate value, and one that might be overridden to allow for *the eager and fruitful exercise of charity towards neighbor.*[35]

[35] Stella, *Costituzioni*, 34.

I said above that the *active life* that is given priority is not simply the *busy life*, but *a life dedicated to the apostolate*. The difference should be emphasized. In recent spiritual writings, *social action* is sometimes mentioned as a contemporary prayer form. *Social action* as a prayer form ought not to be equated with the "work *is* prayer" syndrome, repeatedly rejected as "activism" in the history of Christian spirituality.

Prayer in the form of *social action* is understood to be primarily evangelical in the full sense of the term. It is the implementation of the exhortation of Jesus and of the apostle Paul to constant prayer.[36] It is meant to be another manner of praying for the coming of the Kingdom of God, for the realization of God's Will, for the necessary daily bread, for deliverance from the evil that enslaves humanity. Thus social action entails the proclamation of the gospel in its fullness, including the alleviation of human misery.[37]

Don Bosco's insight prioritizing the active life is even more explicit in that it calls for imitation of Christ's pastoral charity. One of the resolutions taken at his ordination voiced his commitment at the beginning of his priesthood; "I will not shrink from suffering, from striving, nor even from humiliations, whenever it is a question of saving souls."[38] In Article 1 of the chapter on Purpose he writes that for the Salesian holiness is achieved "through the imitation of the virtues of our Divine Savior, especially in [the exercise of] charity toward poor young people."[39]

If then the prayer forms of the community are secondary, even though important, they might be reduced in number and length to allow full scope to the primary and essential, the exercise of charity.

Article 1 of the chapter on Form (discussed in earlier Ch. 9) underscored the importance of community and of the means whereby God is loved and served. Here Don Bosco commends two jointly contributing factors: *mutual* good example and performance of the duties of a good Christian (an expression used already in Article 1 on Form, text of 1864). The two are closely related, and function almost like a hendiadys. Mutual good example arises out of a lifestyle and a manner of acting and speaking that provide moral and

[36] Cf. Lk 18:1; 1 Thess 5:17.

[37] Cf. Lk 7:22 (Jesus' ministry on behalf of the sick and the poor).

[38] Francesco Motto, *Memorie dal 1841 al 1884-5-6 pel Sac. Gio. Bosco a' suoi figliuoli salesiani (Testamento spirituale)* (Piccola Biblioteca dell'ISS, 4, Roma: LAS, 1985). See Vol. 1, Ch. 15 of this series

[39] Text of 1860 (*Do*) in Motto, *Cost. SDB*, 72 (as discussed in earlier Chapter 8).

spiritual support through solidarity. It builds up and strengthens community as Don Bosco conceived it–it unites confreres in common purpose, fuels fervor and creates a prayerful atmosphere. The performance of "the duties of a good Christian" that is, living by a program of Christian life based on the teaching and faith experience of the Catholic Church, works to the same effect, for it expresses a personal commitment to the love and service God.

(2) In Section [ii] priority is next given to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which is here set down as a *foundation*, not merely as "a practice of piety." It is the means of on-going conversion and the sign of a life of grace.

It is worth noting that in the draft of 1860, Don Bosco makes no mention of the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. Clearly its daily celebration is taken for granted. He introduced it in 1864: daily celebration of, or attendance at, the Eucharist, with communion at least once a week for the seminarians and brothers. Placed advisedly in Article 2, the Eucharist parallels the sacrament of reconciliation as a *foundation*, not merely as a "practice." Together they form a binomial expressing reconciliation and grace for the individual and for the Salesian community.

(3) Lastly, in Section [iii] priority is given to a series of qualities or characteristics that identify one as a Salesian. Don Bosco seems to want to say that before any practices of piety or prayers are undertaken, the Salesian must be a Christian gentleman, as well as a prayerful and devout person, and act like one. He should give evidence of this fact by habitual exemplary deportment: by the way he prays, speaks and behaves.

Single Practices of Piety

Following the foundations, four articles specify a few and simple practices of piety.

(1) Daily mental and vocal prayer is the first to be mentioned. The constitutions of 1860 provided for only half-an-hour of mental and vocal prayer jointly. Either following advice, or on second thought, Don Bosco extended the period to one hour jointly. Thus in the draft of 1864 Don Bosco wrote:

> 4. Every day there shall be no less than *one hour* of mental and vocal prayer [jointly], unless one is prevented from it by the calls [*esercizio*] of the sacred ministry. In that case he shall make up [for such failure] by more frequent ejaculatory prayers and by directing to God with greater fervor and love [*intensità di affetto*] those labors that keep him from the ordinary exercises of piety.

The call of the "sacred ministry" takes precedence.[40] And moreover the Salesian is not required personally to make up this practice later. The "making up" is in the form of his prayerful union with God and greater fervor while he is engaged in the ministry or apostolate.

Savini-Svegliati Observation 8 of 1864 suggested that more than one hour should be provided for common prayer, but nothing came of it. The approved text of 1874 has half-an-hour of one and half-an-hour of the other, everything else remaining the same.

(2) Other practices of piety are: the third part of the Rosary and *some* spiritual reading daily; Friday fast in honor of the Passion; monthly spiritual retreat in which an Exercise of a Happy Death is made.

As noted above, the provision for a yearly spiritual retreat appears for the first time in the draft of 1864. The Bianchi-Vitelleschi Observation 21, and later the cardinals of the special commission, demanded longer spiritual retreats, as may be seen by comparing the writing of 1864 with the approved text of 1874.

***Gb* (1864) Piety, Art. 8**	***Q* (1874) Piety, Art. 7**
8. Every year each one shall make a spiritual retreat, which he shall conclude with an annual confession. Every one before being received into the Society shall devote a few days (*qualche giorno*) to a spiritual retreat and shall make a general confession.	7. Every year, each one shall [make a] retreat for about ten, or at least six, days so that he may attend solely to prayer (*pietati*); and when these days are over, he shall duly cleanse himself through an annual confession of sins. Before being received into the Society [as novices], and before taking vows, all shall devote ten days to a spiritual retreat and shall shrive themselves through a general confession.

The Rector's Power to Dispense

A last important article granted the Rector [Director] the power to dispense from the practices of piety *as he saw fit*. It read simply: "The Rector shall have the power to dispense from these practices those individuals, and for the time, that he will judge best in the Lord."

[40] "Sacred ministry," taken literally, has only the priests in view. And indeed the lay component of the Society does not receive much attention in these constitutions. But clearly Don Bosco's intention is to speak of the demands of the Salesian mission in all its forms (ministry, apostolate, work of charity).

The article provides for "dispensation" pure and simple. Nothing is said about making up the practice of piety in question. Again, and this is obviously the intention of the article: priority is given to the exercise of charity, the mission.

In 1873 the Bianchi-Vitelleschi Observation 27 rejected this unusual provision, though the authorities thought it referred only to the annual spiritual retreat. Don Bosco hastened to assure them that it referred to *all* the practices of piety. The provision was promptly thrown out before approval in 1874.

3. Closing Comment on the Chapter on the Practices of Piety

These constitutions on community prayer, in all their leanness, emphasize that the Salesian religious must establish a spiritual foundation if personal and community exercises of piety are to mean anything. In addition, the active life of the ministry or apostolate has priority over all exercises. Finally, the added power of the superior to dispense *outright* completes the picture. The picture is that of a religious truly stripped down for the engagement. This Salesian religious is indeed bound to community by charity and vows, but he is totally available for the apostolate, at any time, unencumbered even by exercises of piety. *The eager and fruitful exercise of charity toward neighbor* has absolute priority.

III. General Conclusion

Our examination of some chapters of Don Bosco's constitutions has underscored certain features that go beyond mere juridical tradition and mere norm, and that reveal Don Bosco's deep spiritual insights into the nature of religious life. These features were novel in his time and remain novel in our time, even after Vatican II.

The dominant feature to which he accorded absolute priority is pastoral charity exercised in imitation of the love of Christ the Good Shepherd. This fervent and active charity, as an extension of the saving work of Christ and of the Church, stands out as the most distinctive characteristic of the Salesian Society, the "oratorian congregation" established on behalf of the young, especially the poorest and most neglected.

Don Bosco expressed the purpose of the Salesian Society not in terms

of "ministry," "apostolate," or "mission," or any other theological concept, but in terms of "practical exercise of the love of neighbor." This is the theological virtue of charity that manifests itself in a life of service to the needy. Likewise, with respect to the community life of the members, he conceived it as a family united by practical love–not merely bonded by socio-juridical ties, but living in "communion." He cited the example of the early Christian community, as described in Acts 2 and 4, united as "one in heart and soul." Certainly, Don Bosco conceived the life of communion of the members as a theological and spiritual value in itself, but always in function of the "practical exercise of charity toward neighbor."

An idea common among the people, and given currency in the anticlerical press, was that religious (monks) and the clergy at large were idle and sterile persons, living off holdings and benefices that remained unproductive ("mortmain") for society as a whole. By contrast, Don Bosco meant to present to the people a new and "modern" model–the religious who was also a free citizen exercising his right of association for the work of charity. Religious *exercises* (practices of piety) were of the simplest kind and subordinate to the demands of the apostolate. Prayer and right intention were to accompany and sustain the exercise of charity, "for the Salesian was to be a "contemplative in action."

Don Bosco was no theoretician of the religious life, though it is fair to say that his insights went deeper that any theorizing. In line with his practical approach to the matter, he spoke of religious life with the guidance of favorite authors like St. Alphonsus and Alfonso Rodríguez. By such practical yet profoundly insightful approach Don Bosco was able to create a "modern" type of religious, as defined in simple and modern constitutions, albeit finally cast in the Tridentine mold.