

APPENDIX N.2
TO DEEPEN THE FORMATION
OF COOPERATOR CANDIDATES

FORWARD

(Please read this page)

This second set of themes is made up of lessons for formative meetings in line with the formation method proposed by the GUIDELINES.

The majority of these lessons have been developed by the Cooperators of the Sicilian Province (Italy) and used by them in the formation of Cooperator aspirants.

We consider them useful for the initial formation of the Cooperator according to the demands and orientations presented in the GUIDELINES.

Each lesson proposes a thematic unity which can be developed in one or several meetings, according to the needs and dynamism of the group in formation.

It is of particular importance to keep in mind the objectives that are proposed in the GUIDELINES for each section.

The most vital thing is not the development of the theme, taken literally, but to make of such development a part of an interior journey, in line with the proposed objectives and in dialogue with life.

Each theme includes a number of practical questions whose aim is to let the theme become part of our daily life. The way the practical aspects of a particular theme were put into practice should be evaluated before tackling the next theme. Only in this way the formative process starts from life and returns to life.

We believe it is important to recommend that anyone who takes part in the course of formation be given in each meeting the theme that is to be developed in the next. The purpose is to give each participant the chance to develop it at home, in a personal way, consulting the suggested texts. The next step consists in sharing his/her reflections with the others.

Very best wishes!

The Members of the World Consulting Body

N.B.: Re: The translation of this document into English.

English is not my first language. This will account for all the imperfections and mistakes you will find in this translation. I know it is for internal use only, so bear with me.

If some good soul finds time and willpower to correct the errors, she/he is humbly requested to send a corrected copy to the Central Executive Secretariat in Rome.

The Translator

FIRST PART

A COMMITTED LAY PERSON IN SOCIETY AND IN THE CHURCH

(Lessons 1-10)

Lesson n. 1

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Biblical references

1. «Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth". So God created man in his own image in the image of God he created him» (Gen. 1,26-27).

2. «What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honour. Thou has given him dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet» (Sal. 8,4-6).

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Man created in God's image.
- Man, an individual unity of multiple dimensions (physic, psychophysic, intellectual, moral, spiritual).
- Originality and uniqueness of every human person.
- All human beings are different, but all are equal in dignity (equality and brotherhood)
- Man and woman: equality in difference.
- Man a social being, made to relate with others.
- Man's "sanctuary": his conscience.
- Freedom in choosing what to be and what to do.
- Man's worth is in what he is, not in what he has.
- Man's dignity to be respected, in no matter what situation or condition (personal, economic-social, cultural).
- Man's dignity, often trampled and therefore in need of promoting it.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 12;16;17;35.

2. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, nn. 5;37.

3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 1701-1709; 1718-1719; 1730-1734;1776,1782; 362-368;369-372.

Questions for reflection

1. In today's culture, what other ideas about man are there? To what extent do they respect the "dignity" of the person?
2. In our environment, which culture prevails, that of being or that of having? How can we promote the "culture of being"?
3. Which forms of discrimination regarding persons are there present in our environment? What can be done to overcome them?
4. In the environment where we live is human dignity trampled? In what ways? Which personal and communal interventions should be done to obtain full respect for the dignity of each person?

Lesson n.2

A NEW DIGNITY THROUGH BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Biblical references

1. «Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you» (1 Pt. 1,3-4)
2. «Jesus answered: "Truly, truly I say you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"» (Jn. 3,5).
3. «For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ» (Gal. 3,27).

References to RAL

Art. 2/1

Pointers for the development of the theme

- In Baptism man is

- * incorporated and conformed to Christ.
- * regenerated to a "new life" in the Spirit.
- * made participant in the priestly, prophetic and royal ministry of Christ.
- * reconfirmed in the Spirit through the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- * enriched with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- * made a witness to the faith through the gifts of nature and of grace.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, n. 11.
2. John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, n. 14
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 1262-1273; 1302-1305.
4. Official Commentary to RAL, pages 46-47.

Questions for reflection

1. Are we fully conscious of what Baptism and Confirmation mean for our lives?
2. What awareness is there in the faithful of our Parish communities regarding the demands of Baptism and Confirmation in so far as their life of faith is concerned? How can we make this awareness grow?
3. How is the preparation for Baptism and Confirmation taken care of in our parishes? Could it be better planned and put into practice?
4. Why do so many young people after Confirmation let things go instead of being more present and participate more in the life of their parish community? What kind of post-Confirmation pastoral work could be fostered?
5. Are Baptism and Confirmation perceived and lived as an ecclesial event, that is of interest to the whole Christian community? Or, on the contrary, are they perceived as an event of personal and family interest alone? What could be done so that the celebration of these sacraments be an ecclesial event, involving the whole community?

Lesson n.3

FOLLOWING CHRIST TODAY

Biblical references

1. «A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another» (Jn 13, 34-35).
2. «You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and to be trodden under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid» (Jn 5,13-14).
3. «Then Jesus told his disciples: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life would lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it"» (Mt 16,24-25).
4. «I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh» (Jn. 6,48-51).

References to the RAL

Art. 7

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Man's need for deep meaning and a final goal for his existence.
- Christ reveals to man his own identity and the sense of History.
- Christ proclaims "a new life", source of the fullness of man's salvation.
- Christ gives himself to man and offers him this "new life"
- Man's answer: a serious and convinced decision for Christ.
- Man commits himself to conform his life to the teachings and values of the Gospel.
- This commitment implies to live one's Christian vocation out of love, to give oneself to others and to work for the realization of God's Kingdom.
- It implies also to nourish one's faith by means of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as by means of the Sacraments.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 10; 22.
2. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 8.
3. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, nn. 18-19:22 ;27, 34.
4. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn. 436-440.
5. Official Commentary to RAL, pages 96-97 (7.2)

Questions for reflection

1. What place does Christ occupy in our life? For us, to be a Christian is a superficial fact or a life option?
2. Does faith in Jesus Christ give meaning to our experience, to our options? Does it affect our values?
3. How do we live the commands that Jesus taught us? What place does our vocation to love and to give ourselves to others have in our life's plan?
4. What deficiencies do we find in our experience of faith? How can we make it grow and make it more alive?
5. What are we doing to bring Christ to others?

Lesson n.4

THE CHURCH: GOD'S PEOPLE, CHRIST'S BODY

Biblical references

1. «For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and were made to drink of one Spirit» (1Cor. 12,12-13).
2. «Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good» (1Cor. 12,4-7).
3. «As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct» (1Pt 1,14-15).

References to RAL

Art. 27/2

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The baptized person becomes a member of the Body of Christ.
- All baptized persons make up the Body of Christ, the Church.
- The Church according to Vatican II.
- The Church, a body with many members.
- One body, different members.
- In the Church: equal dignity for all baptized persons.
- All are called to holiness (Don Bosco: "It is God's will that all of us become saints").
- Daily life, where holiness is built.
- The beauty of holiness.
- The Church: a people in communion.
- The Holy Spirit, the source of communion.
- An organic communion: diversity and complementary of gifts and of ministries.
- A missionary communion.
- All are called to be apostles.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, nn.7; 40.
2. Vatican Council II, Apostolicam Actuositatem, nn.2-3.
3. John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, nn.16; 19.
4. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.770-776; 781-795.
5. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, page.301 (27.4).

For our reflection

1. How do our ecclesial communities envision the Church?
2. Is the idea that the Church is a thing of the priests much spread in our environment? How can this be overcome?
3. What type of communion is there among the People of God in our parish community? What can we propose to make communion grow?
4. What idea is there, in general, regarding sanctity? (Make a survey among those who are active in the parish). How can we present to the people, and particularly to the young, the beauty of holiness?
5. How can we make grow among the faithful the awareness of the duty for all to be "missionaries"?

Lesson n.5

THE LAY PERSON'S VOCATION

Biblical references

1. «And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him» (Col. 3,17).
2. «And God blessed them, and God said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth"» (Gen. 1,28).
3. «Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. he who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing» (Jn. 15,4-5).

References to RAL

Art. 4/2; 7.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Lay, an ambiguous term.
- The lay person in the Church: from a negative definition to a positive one.
- The secular "character" of the lay person
- Secularity: neither "clericalization", neither break between faith and life.
- Called to sanctify in the midst of the world.
- The autonomous value of secular realities.
- The task of Christian animation of secular realities.
- Participation in the life and mission of the Church.
- Lay spirituality.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, nn.4; 7; 17-19.
2. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, nn.31-36.
3. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, nn.2; 9; 15; 17; 28-29.
4. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.897-905.

5. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, page.66 (4-3)...

Questions for our reflection

1. What forms of secularism (the degeneration of secularity) are present in our environment?
2. Among lay people, what kind of awareness is there of the fact that world realities are the place where lay sanctification takes place? What can we do to make this awareness grow?
3. Which human activities, which secular realities are in greater need of Christian animation in our environment?
4. Which values should lay people witness to and promote to animate the various temporal realities from the Christian point of view?
5. Which deficiencies do we observe in the formation of the lay people regarding their vocation of animating temporal realities in a Christian way ?

Lesson n.6

THE LAY PERSON IN THE FAMILY

Biblical references

1. «Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh» (Gen. 2,24).
2. «And God blessed them, and God said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth"» (Gen. 1,28).
3. «So they are no longer two but one. Whoever therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder» (Mt 19,6).

References to RAL

art. 8-9

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Communion: a typical way of relating in family life.
- The task of building a "community of persons".
- Deep conjugal communion, made of gratuity, of full sharing, of total donation, of fidelity.
- Communion in the family in a larger sense: attention to children and elders.
- Fecundity in the couple and responsible parenthood.
- To procreate is to cooperate with God the Creator.
- _ Generosity in giving life.
- Respect for incipient life: no to abortion.
- Educative responsibility: rights and duties of the parents.
- The integral formation of the children.
- For Salesian Cooperators, an infallible method: the "preventive system".
- The family: a community open to society and to the Church.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes, n.50.
2. Vatican Council II, Gravissimum Educationis, n.3.

3. John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, nn.17; 19-21; 26-28; 30; 36-39; 43-44; 50; 52-53.
4. John Paul II, Letter to Families, nn.7-9.
5. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.1638-1648;1652-1654;1655-1658.

Questions for reflection

1. Which problems and difficulties, according to our experience, affect directly or indirectly today's family?
2. Which forms of moral support could be proposed and promoted in favour of the family at civil and Church levels?
3. What is being done and what could be done in our ecclesial communities to give value to a couple's period of engagement, as a special time to mature humanly and at the level of faith?
4. Which pastoral initiatives concerning the family are carried out in the parish? What else could be done?
5. Is there a family public Bureau in the territory ("Consulting Bureau"). Could its services in favour of the family be improved?
6. Is there in the territory a "private" family Bureau of Christian inspiration? Which activities does it carry out? Which difficulties and problems does it face?
7. Is there any kind of birth control law. How is it being applied? What can be done in this field?

Lesson n.7

THE LAY PERSON AND WORK

Biblical references

1. «And God bless them, and God said to them: "Subdue the earth and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth". And God said: "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food"» (Gen. 1,28-29).
2. «In the sweat of your face you shall at bread» (Gen. 3,19).
3. «For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: if any one will not work, let him not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busy-bodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living» ("Thes.3, 10-12).

References to RAL

Art. 10

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Human work, a participation in the work of God the Creator.
- Man, the subject of work.
- Technical growth and the risk of alienation.
- Work, something good for man.
- The disgrace of being unemployed.
- Solidarity in work and participation in the life of the enterprise.
- Work at the service of man.
- Work as service: industriousness and competence.
- Work and prosperity, which kind of development?
- The negative effects of 'superdevelopment'.
- Production of goods and styles of life.
- The just function of profit.
- No to exploitation of workers. Retributive justice.
- Organisms that safeguard the rights of workers.

- The ownership of the means of production and the fact that earthly goods are for all.
- Work and environment: the ecological question.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes, nn.35; 64; 69; 71.
2. Vatican Council II, Lumen et Gentium, n.36.
3. John Paul II, Laborem Exercens, nn.5-6; 8-9; 18-20; 25.
4. John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, nn.28; 34.
5. John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, nn.31-32; 34-37; 41; 43.
6. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.2427-2428; 2431-2436.
7. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 121-128 (10).

Questions for reflection

1. In our environment, is work seen and lived as a service to man? Do other "ethical" views of work prevail?
2. How can we make grow and mature the worker's professional conscience? What could be done in the ecclesial community in this sense ?
3. Which "rules", not coherent with the dignity of work and of the worker, are there? How can they be corrected?
4. In our environment are there forms of exploiting the workers? Which? How can they be eliminated?
5. How does unemployment affect our neighbourhood? Which initiatives could be taken, at the level of civil society and of ecclesial groups, to favour, specially among the young, the orientation to work and insertion in it? Which initiatives could be taken to create new occupational opportunities?
6. Is our "style" of life coherent with a view of authentic development or should it be corrected? What can we do, in our ecclesial communities, to educate ourselves and others to the promotion of true development?
7. Does not the solution of the "ecological problem", beyond any political option, require also coherent personal and family options? In this sense, which contributions can movements and groups of opinion make?

Lesson n.8

THE LAY PERSON AND THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REALITY

Biblical references

1. «Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied» (Mt. 5,6).
2. «Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God» (Mt. 5,9).
3. «Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven» (Mt. 5,10).
4. «Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's» (Mt. 22,21).

References to RAL

Art. 11.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- No disdain but esteem for politics.
- Length and breadth of the term "politics".
- All must participate in political activity, according to different titles and at different levels,.
- The spirit of service in the management of public matters.
- To form a personal political conscience: to read the social facts and problems in the light of some guiding principles.
- The exercise of charity through political action and social institutions.
- Justice, the first form of charity.
- The promotion of common good.
- Communal goods.
- Preferential option for the poor.
- Old and new forms of poverty; "post-materialistic" forms of poverty.
- Solidarity, the new name for development.
- Interdependent nature of development.
- A "world agreement on development".

- A dynamic and positive vision of peace.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nn.26; 75.
2. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n.8.
3. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, nn.42.
4. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nn.15-18; 26; 38-39; 42.
5. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, nn.40; 52.
6. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.1898; 1903; 1905-1912; 1913-1917; 2437-2449.
7. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 129-143 (11).

Questions for reflection

1. According to our experience, what level of political consciousness and of involvement is there among the Catholics in the management of public matters ?
2. What is being done and what could still be done, on the part of the community and of the ecclesial groups, to favour the maturation of political awareness and to foster a more incisive and coherent participation of the laity in political realities?
3. At the different levels (local, regional, national), are public matters being administered in the spirit of service or rather according to other motives? What initiatives can the citizen take to make grow the moral level of political life.
4. Which incoherences or unfulfilled duties do we find in the administration of our city? Which problems should be faced? Which needs should be taken care of? Let us try to give our own contribution of ideas and let us try to arouse interest for these things in public opinion.
5. Which situations of poverty, in our surroundings and in our country, question us and demand public interventions? Which solutions can be proposed? Can ecclesial communities do something in this respect?
6. Are there immigrants in our locality? How are they welcomed? Which problems or difficulties do they meet? Can our living together with them improve?
7. Which care is taken of the needs of the underdeveloped countries in our political options ?

Lesson n.9

THE LAY PERSON IN THE LOCAL AREA AND LOCAL CHURCH

Biblical references

1. «You shall not oppress your neighbour or rob him» (Lev. 19,13).
2. «And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself» (Mt. 22,39).
3. «If any one says, "I love God", and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen» (1Jn. 4,20).
4. «For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many» (Mk. 10,45).
5. «For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; and to them he said 'you go into the vineyard too, and whoever is right I will give you'. So they went (Mt. 20,1-4).

References to RAL

Art. 17-18)

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Social and anthropological meaning of "environment/local area".
- Interactive relationship between the person and her environment/local area.
- Complexity of what environment/local area implies.
- Types of environment/local area.
- Structures and services in the local area: health, assistance, scholastic and cultural services, sportive and leisure time, social communication, etc.
- Structures and specific services for children, the young, families, elders.
- The commitment of the lay person so that the structures and services of the local area be for man's good and in his service.
- Certain organisms and volunteer groups (civil and ecclesial) answer particular needs.
- The local Church: diocese and parishes.
- Co-responsibility of the lay person in the pastoral action of the ecclesial community.
- Unity and variety of pastoral action.

- Participation of the lay person, according to his/her talents and personal situation, in the pastoral activity of the ecclesial community.
- Personal and group forms of participation.
- Contribution of the lay person to the growth of communion in the community.

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, nn.10; 16-19.
2. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, nn.25-26; 27-29.
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.906-913.
4. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 206-209 (17.1-17.3); pages 213-227 (18).

Questions for reflection

1. How do we evaluate the quality of the services that are being offered within our local area? Could their quality be improved? What could be done in this line?
2. Which are the needs of our community that the existing structures and services in our area are not able to answer? Why? Which solutions could we think of at public level? What ecclesial commitment do these solutions require?
3. Is there a need for other specific structures and services? For whom? Can we do something in this line at the level of creating public opinion or initiating some political action? Is there a need for a concrete practical commitment?
4. Which level of co-responsibility and participation is there among the lay faithful in the life and apostolate of our local Church? Which initiatives can we propose in our parish to favour a more mature and convinced participation on their part?
5. Do you personally have a commitment in your parish community or in some ecclesial structure? How do you carry it out? Could you do more and better according to your attitudes and talents?
6. Which associations, groups or movements are there present in our ecclesial communities? What activity do they carry out? Would it be opportune to establish new ones? For what pastoral needs or solidarity demands?
7. How do pastoral Councils of our parishes function? What kind of lay presence is there and what is their contribution to the elaboration of pastoral plans?

Lesson n.10

THE COOPERATOR, A LAY PERSON IN THE SALESIAN FAMILY

Biblical references

1. «And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me"» (Mk. 9,36-37).
2. «So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish» (Mt. 18,14).

References to RAL

Forward: art. 1; 2/1; 3; 5.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The Salesian Cooperator is a lay person who takes inspiration from Don Bosco's apostolic plan of action.
- Don Bosco: a life in the service of the young.
- Don Bosco: a promoter of apostolic forces in the service of his plan for saving the young.
- Don Bosco, the Founder of SDB, FMA, Salesian Cooperators.
- The Salesian Family: a family of apostles of the young united by spiritual links.
- The Salesian Cooperators are lay persons/secular priests or deacons, gathered into an association, who share Don Bosco's charism.
- The Salesian Cooperator gives everywhere "special attention to young people in need" (RAL, art. 7).

Documents to consult

1. Don Bosco, R.D.B., I; III.
2. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, nn.2-4.
3. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 33-42 (1); pages 68-78 (5.1-5.4).

Questions for reflection

1. Which dangers menace the young in our neighbourhood? Which are their needs, their different "poverties"?

2. How do young people live in the poorest suburbs? Do they go to school? Are there many drop-outs? How do they spend their free time? Are there appropriate structures for them to spend their leisure time? Who takes care of them?
3. What do public institutions do for the young of our neighbourhood, particularly for those who are more exposed to danger? Is there anything else that can be done for them? Let us elaborate an articulated plan, though simple and modest, and let us make public opinion and our city's public administration aware of it.
4. How do our ecclesial communities face up the needs and urgencies of the young? Which kind of "youth pastoral" is being carried out in the parishes and in the oratories? Which difficulties are encountered? Which proposals can we make to have a more efficacious and realistic "youth pastoral plan"?
5. Which volunteer groups care for the young in our neighbourhood? Which services do they offer? Can we collaborate with them or is there a need for us to organize our own?
- 6 Are you doing anything for the young? Is there anything else you could do?

SECOND PART

FOLLOWING DON BOSCO'S FOOTSTEPS

A) THE PREVENTIVE SYSTEM (Lessons 11-19)

B) THE SALESIAN SPIRIT (Lessons 20-27)

Lesson n.11

THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S EDUCATION

Biblical references

1. «Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it"» (Lk. 18, 15-17).

References to RAL

Art. 13/1; 14/1.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The young, "society's most delicate portion" (Don Bosco).
- Young people's natural "critical" phase of growth: the search for what is new, the need to experience, the search for identity, openness and uncertainty regarding the future.
- Youth: an age of crisis and of options. Growth demands in the preadolescent years as well as in those of adolescence and youth.
- Today's multiple educative (or non educative) agencies: school, peer group, movies, television, publicity, show world, etc.
- Dangers that in our days menace the growth of the young: immorality, violence, hedonistic consumerism, drugs, eroticism, lack of meaning in life, superficiality in relationships, etc.
- Young people with particular needs: the poor, those in the fringe of society, the micro-criminals, the dropouts or semi-illiterates, those who lack affection, the deprived of a happy family experience, etc.
- The need of a multiple educative commitment, on the part of society and of the Church, in favour of the young.
- Youth pastoral: to help the young build a plan of life through their encounter with Christ.

Questions for reflection

1. Which agencies influence the way of life and the choices of the young in our environment?
2. Which of these exercise a positive influence on them and which a negative one?
3. Which social forces are interested in the young in a positive way in our environment?
4. How do families perform their educative task? Are there civil or ecclesial groups that help them in the discharge of this task?

5. Do we think that the type of youth pastoral carried out in our ecclesial communities answers the demands and needs of today's youth? What deficiencies do we find in it? How can they be remedied?

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, n.46.
2. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, nn.35; 38-39; 40.
3. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, nn.14-15.
4. J.Aubry, *Cooperators of God*, pages 11-25.
5. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 170-174 (14.2).

Lesson n.12

DON BOSCO'S OPTION: TO PREVENT

Biblical references

1. «For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another» (Gal. 5,13)

References to RAL

Art. 14/2; 15/a.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The young people that were in danger in Don Bosco's time
- The educative alternative: the repressive or the preventive method.
- Don Bosco's option: the Preventive System
- To prevent: neither authoritarianism neither permissiveness.
- Negative effects of permissiveness and authoritarianism.
- To prevent (in the negative sense): to avoid that the young fall into negative dangerous experiences
- To prevent (in positive sense): to orient the young towards positive experiences of good, that will help them build themselves from within.
- To prevent by educating: an option very up-to-date and relevant for today's society.

Questions for reflection

1. Which mistakes are most commonly made in our days in the education of the young?
2. Why authoritarianism and permissiveness are not positive educative attitudes?
3. Which educative values are there present in the Preventive system?
4. Which demands do these two systems -the repressive (always authoritarian) and the preventive- impose on the educator?
5. Which commitments does the option of preventive education demand from the educator?

Documents to be consulted

1. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, n.8.
2. Saint John Bosco, *The Preventive System*.

3. Teresio Bosco, Don Bosco, pages 102-109.

4. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 175-179 (14.3); pages 182-186 (15.1-15.4).

Lesson n.13

THE GOAL OF THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS: HEALTH, WISDOM, HOLINESS

Biblical references

1. «You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect» (Mt. 5,48).
2. «For this is the will of God, your sanctification» (1Th. 4,3)
3. «Do you not know that your body is temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a high price. So glorify God in your body» (1Cor. 6,19.20).

References to RAL

Art. 14/1; 14/3.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Human person, a being of multiple dimensions (physical, psycho-affective, intellectual, moral, spiritual).
- To educate, from the Salesian point of view and in Salesian style, is to favour the harmonious development of all the dimensions of the person.
- To educate consists also in helping the young to find out and develop their personal gifts and talents.
- To educate consists, finally, in orienting the young person to build up, by means of his gifts and talents, a project of life that is in line with God's call to him?
- The goals of the educative process:
 - * "health": the physical welfare of the person;
 - * "wisdom": a way of life geared towards values;
 - * "holiness": the choice and commitment to a life happily centered on the love of God and of neighbour.
- Three goals, one aim: to succeed as human beings in this life and in the next.
- The youthful face of holiness: even minors in the Saint's list.

Questions for reflection

1. Which difficulties or resistances, even subjective ones, can an educator find in relation to an integral education of the young?
2. Which demands involve for the educator the task of an integral education of the young? Why?
3. Which dimensions of the person are very often neglected in the education of the young? Why?

4. In families, at school, in youth centres, in parishes, how is the vocational dimension taken care of?
5. At school, in the family, are the young being helped to discover their talents?
6. What general idea is there about holiness? Which difficulties are there to propose holiness to the young as the highest goal of their life?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Gravissimum Educationis*, nn.1-2.
2. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, nn.15-16; 19.
3. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, n.16.
4. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 179-180 (14.4)

Lesson n.14

PREVENTIVE SYSTEM: LOVING KINDNESS

Biblical references

1. «Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things» (1Cor. 13,3-7).

References to RAL

Art. 15/c

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Don Bosco and the pedagogy of the heart: make yourself loved.
- Let your love be perceived: to communicate love through concrete gestures.
- To love what the young love.
- To accept the young just as they are.
- To establish with them a relationship of esteem and trust.
- To be with the young, physically and spiritually.
- To share with the young, on the part of the educator, moments of recreation and joy.
- To instill trust in themselves.
- To create with the young an environment of openness, of relating easily and of joy.
- Attitudes and other things the educator should pay attention to:
 - * patience and kindness, auto-dominion and self-control of the instinctive reactions;
 - * preventive vigilance;
 - * affectionate closeness, but without morbid attachments;
 - * friendship with the young, but always as an educator.

Questions for reflection

1. Before being a methodology or a technique, "education is a thing of the heart", according to Don Bosco. He who does not love the person to be educated, cannot be an educator. What do we think of this affirmations?
2. It is not enough to love, Don Bosco used to say; it is necessary that the boys feel they are loved. What are the things the educator should keep in mind to let the young feel his affection?
3. Which difficulties do the adults find in trying to be close to the young, to love what they love?

4. Which attitudes of the educator can favour an educative relationship with the young? Which attitudes may hinder it?
5. How can the adult help the young to acquire trust in themselves?
6. To put into practice loving-kindness requires from the educator (parent, teacher, animator, catechist) interior effort and some particular attitudes. Which of these do we still need to mature or acquire?

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, n.12.
2. Saint John Bosco, Letter from Rome.
3. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 87-90.
4. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 189-190 (15.5.3).

Lesson n.15

THE PREVENTIVE SYSTEM: REASON

Biblical references

1. «Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord» (Eph. 6,4).

References to RAL

Art. 15/a

Contents to developed

- Attention to problems and needs of young people, to their world.
- Attention to the different phases of development of young people and to their personal problems concerning growth.
- Capacity and effort of dialogue with young people.
- To educate the young to have critical sense and to make personal, convinced and motivated options.
- To educate the young to dialogue, helping them to free themselves from being conditioned by conformism and consumerism.
- To develop in the young the capacity to discern good from evil, to discern the positive and negative consequences of human behaviour.
- To give importance to whatever is positive in their experiences and in persons.
- To be able to understand and discover the attitudes and personal interests of the young and to favour their development.
- To encourage creativity in the young and the expression of their personal capacities and talents.
- To stimulate in them the spirit of industriousness, habits of work, openness to others (in groups and out of groups), sense of duty and of the common good.
- Methodology: non violent correction (no to punishments).
- Making appeal to the personal and interior resources: to orient not by imposing but by means of dialogue and the formation of conscience.

Questions for reflection

1. Do the way things are today in the family and in educational environments favour dialogue between adults and young people?

2. What is it that helps to establish a relationship of dialogue among educators and young people today?
3. Which attitudes does the educator need most to make easier the dialogue with the young?
4. Which difficulties are we encountering in educating and liberating ourselves and the young from the conditionings of conformism and consumerism?
5. Which attitudes in the educator do not favour creativity and the development of aptitudes and personal interests in the young?
6. Let us be sincere: are we able to dialogue with the young? In what ways do we have to change for the better to acquire a greater and mature capacity for dialogue?

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, nn.10;16/d.
2. J.Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 92-93.
3. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 187-188 (15.5.1).

Lesson n.16

PREVENTIVE SYSTEM: RELIGION

Biblical references

1. «Remember the Lord our God all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk the ways of wrongdoing» (Tb. 4,5).
2. «Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"» (Jn. 14,6).
3. «Jesus said to them: "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst"» (Jn. 6,35).

References to RAL

Art. 15/b.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- To stir and cultivate the religious sense of life.
- To educate the young to be aware of the presence of God in creation and in their life experience.
- Catechesis in the family and in the parish: to guide the children to discover God's goodness, love and mercy.
- Efficacious moments of catechesis and spiritual direction: the "good night" and the "parolina all'orecchio".
- To nourish in the young a living faith, as personal adhesion to Christ and his Gospel where man can find the answer to his questions, the sense of life, the real reasons for his commitment and the joy of living.
- To stir and develop in the young a mentality of faith: to be able to see, judge and evaluate things with Christian discernment.
- To educate the young to encounter Christ personally and to seek his Grace through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and of the Eucharist.
- To instil in the young trustful and filial devotion to our Lady.
- To help the young discover and live the communal dimension of faith in the Church, People of God in communion.
- To propose to the young meaningful experiences of service, of volunteer work, of giving themselves to others.
- The need for educators (and parents) who are witnesses to the faith.

Questions for reflection

1. What place does the religious education of the children occupy, in general, in the families?
2. How can we stir up the religious sense of life in children and boys today?
3. Besides catechesis, what other moments, occasions, experiences of daily life can be used to advantage to form in the young a "mentality of faith"?
4. Which proposal of faith is being offered to the young through catechesis and religious formation in our ecclesial communities? Is it a living proposal that becomes part of their experience and it is able to enlighten it?
5. Are there offered to the young, in our ecclesial communities, strong moments of spirituality and meaningful experiences of witnessing and service? Which initiatives could we propose in this sense to the young in our environment?
6. Is, in general, the insertion of the young in ecclesial communities problematic? Does it not depend also on the fact that when they participate in church activities they do not experience that the Church community is really alive and truly fraternal?

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, nn.11; 16/c; 19.
2. Don Bosco, *R.D.B. IV/4*.
3. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 188-189 (15.5.2).

Lesson n.17

AN EVER NEW AND ORIGINAL SYNTHESIS

Biblical references

1. «But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants"» (Lk. 15,16-17).

Reference to RAL

14/1, 15.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Salesian educational optimism: in every young person there is something good (Don Bosco talked about "a point accessible to good") from where the educational activity can start.
- The young person is the subject of education: the educational action is in function and according to the needs of every young.
- Reciprocity in the educative action: also the educator has something to learn from the person being educated.
- No repetition, but industriousness, fantasy and inventiveness, from the part of the educator, in the commitment of educating the young.
- The trinomial reason-religion-loving/kindness: criteria and guidelines to which to turn but not a list of fixed rules.
- Reason-religion-loving/kindness: indispensability and "co-essentiality" of the three elements for the preventive system to be efficacious.

Questions for reflection

1. Do we share Don Bosco's educational optimism? Or are we convinced that certain young people cannot be recuperated on the educational level?
2. Which are, in general and according to our experience (though we know that each boy is to be taken individually), "the accessible points to good", from which to start the education of the young?
3. What are the consequences for the educator, even on the organizational and practical level, of the conviction that the young person is the "subject" of education?
4. Which resistances can the educator find to understand and plan the educational activity on the basis of interpersonal relationship, open to reciprocity?

5. How can the risk of repetitiveness in the education of the young, as well as in any other kind of relationship, be avoided?

Documents for consultation

1. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, n.17.
2. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 94-95.
3. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 170-173 (14.2.2-14.2.2.1); pages 182-186 (15.1-15.4).

Lesson n.18

THE EDUCATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Biblical references

1. « And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him» (Lk. 2, 39-40).

References to RAL

Art. 9/c, 14/1, 17/b-c.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Not only good individual educators but also a good educational environment.
- Family spirit, climate of the educational environment.
- The family, the first educational environment.
- The school, a community that educates.
- The oratory, an environment for establishing contact.
- The oratory: multiplicity of activities and of groups, but with the same educative style.
- The oratory: importance of the co-responsible action of collaborators and animators.
- Animators, structures and environments for the young in the parish.
- Youth Centres outside ecclesial structures.
- The "oratorian heart": to bring the climate and oratorian style to any environment open to the young.

Questions for reflection

1. Which elements contribute to the creation of an educational environment (persons, structures, rules, initiatives, meetings, etc.)?
2. What is "family spirit" and how do we create it in a given environment?
3. To what extent are the parents aware of the fact that the family is the first educational environment for the young? What can we do in our communities to help parents become aware of this truth? How can we help them put into practice this educational responsibility of theirs?
4. What contribution, besides that of the teachers, can the parents make so that the school become evermore "a community that educates"?

5. What importance does the structure and the persons (the animators) have in the Salesian "oratory"?
6. Which initiatives and activities can be programmed in other environments, open to the young, like parishes or elsewhere, to set up educational plans for the young with an "oratorian heart"?

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, Catechesi Tradendae, n.68.
2. John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, n.62/a-b.
3. John Paul II, Juvenum Patris, n.18.
4. Teresio Bosco, El Oratorio de Don Bosco, pages 8-16.
5. J. Aubry, The Salesian Spirit, pages 90-92.
7. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 210-212 (17.4-17.5).

Lesson n. 19

A VARIED APOSTOLATE IN THE AREA OF EDUCATION

Biblical references

1. «And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place: and to them he said: 'You go into my vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you'. So they went» (Mt. 20,3-4).
2. «For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me ... Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me» (Mt. 25,35; 25,40).

References to RAL

Art. 13; 16.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- A distinctive trait of "salesianity": everywhere attention to education.
- This attention becomes commitment, according to personal possibilities.
- The commitment to evangelize, in word and deed (witnessing).
- The commitment to form the young in a Christian way, specially the poorest, the most needy and the most abandoned, and to help them in their options of life with vocational criteria.
- The commitment to promote culture and healthy models of life in the different environments of social communication.
- The material, social, cultural and spiritual support to the most needy.
- Missionary collaboration for evangelization and human promotion in mission lands.
- The commitment to the spreading of the Salesian educational charism and the commitment to involve other persons

Documents to consult

1. Don Bosco, R.D.B., IV.
2. John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, nn.33-35;40-41;44.
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.2493-2495.
4. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 157-167 (13.1-13.10); pages 191-205 (16.1-16.12).

Questions for reflection

1. Do you feel inclined towards an apostolic commitment in the educational field? What contribution can you give in the educational apostolate?
2. What else could we do, in the environment we live, in favour of evangelization?
3. Are we Catholics involved in the fields of social communication and culture? Could we start in our environment some meaningful initiatives in this field?
4. What forms of missionary collaboration can we put into practice in our ecclesial communities?
5. What are we doing or can we do to reach out to the most needy and those in the fringe of society, and to help them grow?
6. Are there in our local area forms of volunteer work to sustain materially and morally all the persons and families most in need? Could we think of new ones and initiate them?
7. Which initiatives can be put into practice to make known to educators and families the Salesian educational system?

Lesson n.20

TO THE SOURCES OF THE SALESIAN SPIRIT

Biblical references

«Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one» (1Cor. 12,4-6).

References to RAL

Art. 26

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The Holy Spirit, the animator of the life of the Church and of the apostolate.
- Charisms: gifts of the Holy Spirit for the service of the mission.
- Foundational charisms: personal gifts that the Holy Spirit prolongs in history and enriches them until they become spiritual inheritances.
- The diversity of foundational charisms (that is of "founders" of religious families), a richness for the life of the Church.
- Salesian spirit: a manner of living our relationship with the Lord and with the others. It animates and gives orientation to our whole life.
- Salesian spirit: a manner of living our imitation of Christ, emphasizing some spiritual traits.
- A spirit that can be lived by religious and lay people as well.

Questions for reflection

1. What do we mean when we say that the Holy Spirit is the animator of the life of the Church and of the apostolate?
2. What place does our relationship with the Lord have in our life?
3. If the Holy Spirit is one, why are there different spiritualities in the Church?
4. In what sense are the different spiritualities a richness for the Church?

Documents to be consulted

1. Vatican Council II, Perfectae Caritatis, nn.1; 2/b.
2. Vatican Council II, Apostolicam Actuositatem, n.4/g.
3. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, n.4.

4. John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, nn.25-26.
5. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, n.24.
6. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn.797-800.
7. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 12-26.
8. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 287-293 (26.1-26.6).

Lesson n.21

THE SOUL OF THE SALESIAN SPIRITUALITY: APOSTOLIC CHARITY

Biblical references

1. «But seek first the his kingdom and his righteousness , and all these things will yours as well» (Mt. 6,33).
2. «Therefore do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or what shall we wear?. for the gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well» (Mt. 6,31-33).

References to the RAL

Art. 28.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Charity, source of Don Bosco's apostolic dynamism.
- Charity, the unifying element of the spiritual life and of the apostolic activity of the Salesian.
- Charity, a way of loving Christ, who wants to save everybody.
- Apostolate: the manner of working of the one who knows that he has been called and sent by the Lord.
- The Heart of Jesus, source of apostolic charity.
- The incarnation of Don Bosco's apostolic charity: "Give me souls and take away the rest".
- The sense of the urgency of God's kingdom.
- The sense of efficacy in the apostolate in the building up of God's Kingdom.
- To live and to work within an evangelical perspective: "look first for the kingdom of God".

Questions for reflection

1. Do we give value to our time, using it in doing good and in the apostolate, or do we rather let things go, without real commitment?
2. Are we aware of the fact that our omissions, our drawing back from the apostolate, put off the coming of God's kingdom?
3. What dimensions does our apostolic charity have? Do we nourish it at its source -the Heart of Jesus- or do we make it depend only on our motivations and human resources?

4. Do we experience joy in the "salvation" given to us by Christ? Do we feel the anxiety of communicating it to all men?

- 5. What obstacles do we encounter in our days when we try to "look first for God's kingdom"?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n.4/f.

2. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, n.9/b.

3. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 31-44;57-58.

4. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 304-312 (28).

Lesson n.22

A SPIRITUALITY OF ACTION AND OF UNION WITH GOD

Biblical references

1. «I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing» (Jn. 15,5)
2. «So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God» (1Cor. 10,31).
3. «Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth» (1Jn. 3,18).

References to RAL

Art. 27/3; 30/1; 30/3.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Don Bosco's untiring activity (and also the Salesian's).
- The mystic of apostolic work.
- Contemplatives in action.
- Union with God: intimate identification with his love and with his plan of salvation.
- Union with God: from moments of intimate encounters with the Lord in meditation and in prayer, we draw light and strength to do everything we are to do according to God's will.
- The joy of doing everything for the Lord.
- Sanctification by means of daily commitments.
- Work becomes prayer.
- Don Bosco's infallible rule: "work and temperance".
- Trust in Providence and in the help of our Lady.

Questions for reflection

1. Do we succeed in keeping together the demands of prayer and those of the daily commitments and of the apostolate, in our daily experience?
2. Which is the deep motivation of the Salesian untiring apostolic work? Which are the risks involved, if this deep motivation is lacking?
3. How are we to organize our day's activities so as to do everything for the Lord?

4. Don Bosco associated temperance and apostolic activity, why? What does temperance demand? Which difficulties do we encounter today to practice this virtue? What resolutions can we take in this field?

5. What did trust in God's Providence and in the motherly help of Our Lady mean for Don Bosco? What could it mean for us, today, ?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n.4/a-b.

2. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, n.5/a.

3. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 67-71;103-106.

4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn.1809;302-305;967-970.

5. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, page.300 (27.3.4);pages 319-322 (30.1- 30.2);pages 324-326 (30.4.1-39.4.2).

Lesson n.23

THE SENSE OF GOD'S FATHERHOOD

Biblical references

1. «And he said to him, 'Son you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found'» (Lk 15,31-32).
2. «I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep» (Jn. 10,14-15).

References to RAL

Art. 27

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Strong sense of the goodness and fatherhood of God in Don Bosco.
- The fatherhood of God: His "plan" of creation and of salvation.
- God's fatherhood: his eternal "activity" («my Father works always») in favour of the salvation of the world.
- God's fatherhood mirrored in Christ: good shepherd in search of the lost sheep.
- The fulfilment of God's love and fatherhood: the passion and resurrection of Christ.
- The source of all fatherhood is in God. There man can nourish his spiritual fatherhood.
- Don Bosco (and every Salesian) wants to imitate and be a sign of God's fatherhood for the young ("Bearer of God's love for the young").

Questions for discussion

1. How do we look at God? Do we contemplate his fatherhood, his father's love, who loves each one of us as a son?
2. Do we feel encouraged by God's fatherhood to be spiritual fathers to others in need?
3. Do we think it is possible for us to be signs of God's fatherhood towards the young? What spiritual progress does this require from us?
4. Do we allow ourselves to be questioned by the needs (not only material) of the most abandoned, weak and on the fringe of society young people?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, nn.2-3.
2. John Paul II, *Juvenum Patris*, n.4.
3. J.Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 40-56;59-62.
4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn.295-301;410-411;544-545.
5. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 297-299 (27.3.1-27.3.2).

Lesson n.24

THE SENSE OF THE ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY

Biblical references

1. «And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven» (Mt. 16,18-19).

References to RAL

Art. 18; 27/2.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Don Bosco's love for the Church.
- Don Bosco's idea on the Church as a whole: made up of multiple apostolic forces at the service of her mission.
- Fidelity to the Pope and his Magisterium.
- To make the Church grow: Don Bosco's commitment to vocations and the missions.
- The Salesian Cooperators: living members of the Church at the service of the local Church.
- Availability of the Cooperators for cooperation with the other ecclesial groups.
- Don Bosco's preoccupation with the unity of the Church.
- Don Bosco's preoccupation with the unity of the Salesian Family.

Questions for reflection

1. What is the Church for us? Do we feel we are the Church, her living members? Do we feel co-responsible for the life and the mission of the Church?
2. What does fidelity to the Pope and to his Magisterium demand?
3. What can be done, in groups and in ecclesial communities, to reinforce fidelity to the Pope?
4. Do we care for the life of our diocese? Do we know the pastoral directives of our bishop and do we make an effort to put them into practice?
5. Do we try to know how many and which groups, associations and movements exist in our diocese and which is their spiritual and apostolic identity? Do we try to grow in unity with them?

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, nn.18-19.
2. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 62-63; 76-79.
3. J. Aubry, *Cooperators of God*, pages 179-182.
4. *Official Catechism of the Church*, nn.880-883;886;888-892.
5. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 213-227 (18); pages 301-302 (27.4).

A STYLE OF LIFE

Biblical references

1. «Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you» (Mt. 5,3-12).

2. «And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good» (Gen. 1,31).

3. «Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also» (Mt. 6,19-21).

4. «Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea» (Mk. 9,42).

References to RAL

Art. 12.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- A style of life modelled after the Beatitudes.
- The humility of being a creature: the sense of God's creative action and of the goodness of creation.
- Respect for the laws and the values with which God endowed creation.
- Poverty: a style of simple life, opened to sharing.
- Poverty: no to consumerism, to luxury, to idolatry of things.
- Purity of heart: the virtue of chastity, in marriage and in celibacy.
- Respect and tact in our attitudes regarding the other sex.
- Sobriety in behaviour, gestures, words and way of dressing.
- Capacity for commitment, even in spite of difficulties, for the cause of non-violence and of peace.

- Faith in the priority of the spirit.

Questions for reflection

1. What style of life do we have? Do we examine it and confront it with the evangelical Beatitudes?
2. Does our style of material life agree with evangelical poverty? What importance do we give to things, money, career?
3. Are we ready to share what we have with the one in need?
4. How do we live our sexuality? Do we allow ourselves to be guided by the value of chastity? Are we respectful, in all our personal expressions, of the persons of the opposite sex and attentive to the limpidity of our attitudes and rapport.
5. Do we think that it is possible to educate the young today to the value of chastity?
6. Are we ready to commit ourselves to the cause of the Gospel, of peace and of justice, in spite of incomprehension and personal sacrifices?
7. Which personal sacrifices and difficulties do we encounter to live according to the Beatitudes? What can we do to overcome them?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, nn.4/g; 7.
2. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n.28.
3. Don Bosco, *R.D.B.* VIII/1.
4. J. Aubry, *Cooperators of God*, pages 182-191.
5. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn.299-301;306-308;1716-1717;1723;2544-2547;2337-2359.
6. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 144-156 (12.1-12.8).

Lesson n. 26

A STYLE OF ACTION AND OF RELATING

Biblical references

1. «Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your heart and your minds in Christ Jesus» (Phil. 4,4-7).

2. «For he who is not against us is for us» (Mk. 9,40).

References to RAL

Art. 30/1-2; 31.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Attention to the needs of persons and to the urgencies present in the local area.
- Spirit of initiative and creativity in the Salesian apostolate.
- Apostolic fantasy, but keeping the feet on earth.
- Pluralism, flexibility, effort at programming, commitment to evaluation.
- Availability for collaboration with all, but in the service of man's good.
- Openness to what is new and attention to the signs of the times.
- Attention to the person and to her deepest reality.
- Awareness of the importance of a climate of good rapport with the others: welcoming, being the first to approach the others.
- Effort to make people feel at ease.
- Attitudes of trust, of openness, of availability towards the others.
- Love for life and witnessing to joy.

Questions for reflection

1. The style of action and of relating is it only the fruit of temperament or can it also be acquired?
2. What is the source of an apostolic plan and how can it be carried out in Salesian style?
3. Are openness to what is new and attention to the "signs of the times, typical of the Salesian spirit, synonyms of indiscriminate modernism?

4. Is it possible to reconcile nostalgia for the past, Salesian spirit and apostolate.
5. What capacity of relating with others do we have? Which steps do we have to make still to be open, trustful, welcoming, available, ready to put persons at ease and to be the first to make the first move?
6. The Salesian does not relate superficially with the others. Do we make an effort, in relating with others, to be attentive to the person's deepest demands?
7. Are we persons who transmit to others the joy of living? Is our witnessing to the faith joyful? What is the source of Salesian joy and how can we make it more alive in us?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.4/a.
2. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, n.3.
3. J. Aubry, *The Salesian Spirit*, pages 72-76; 83-87; 93-96.
4. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, pages 327.327-332 (31.1-31.2.4).

Lesson n.27

STYLE OF PRAYER

Biblical references

1. «I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship» (Rom. 12,1).
2. «And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your father knows what you need before you ask him» (Mt. 6,7-8).

References to RAL

Art. 32/2-3; 33; 35.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The "liturgy of life" and the spirit of offering oneself to God.
- Importance of ejaculatory prayers.
- Few practices of piety -that was Don Bosco's desire- but much spirit of piety.
- Simple but deep prayers.
- A prayer that does not neglect popular piety (rosary, processions, novenas, etc.).
- Trustful prayer, centered on interior listening.
- A prayer that leads to do God's will.
- A prayer that helps in discerning what to be and what to do.
- Importance of listening and of meditating on the Word of God.
- Active participation in liturgy and frequency of the sacraments.
- Particular Salesian devotion to Our Lady.

Questions for reflection

1. Do we find it difficult to have time for prayer? Let us discern: does it depend on external difficulties, which do not depend on us, or does it depend on our lack of determination, at least at times?
2. What is it that prevails in our prayer: listening or petition? Do we know how to keep silence to let the Lord speak within us?

3. Does our prayer help us to understand God's will, to discern between the different elements of our experience?
4. Do we find it difficult to concentrate in liturgical prayer,? What can we do to participate in it in an active and alive manner?
5. Did we experience the spiritual advantage of meditating on the Word of God? How does it affect our daily experience?
6. Do we nourish our devotion towards our Lady? How does it affect our life?

Documents to consult

1. Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, nn.34; 66-68.
2. John Paul II, Christifideles Laici, n.16/f.
3. John Paul II, Juvenum Patris, n.20/d-e.
4. Catechism of the Catholic Church, nn.2559-2565;2705-2708;2711-2719;2743-2745;2659-2660.
5. Don Bosco, R.D.B. VIII/4.
6. J. Aubry, The Salesian Spirit, pages 99-113.
7. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 336-340 (32.2-32.3); pages 341-347 (33); 351-356 (35).

THIRD PART

ASSOCIATED LAY SALESIANS

(Lessons 28-32)

THE ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF THE SALESIAN COOPERATORS' ASSOCIATION

Biblical references

1. «Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them» (Mt. 18,19-20).
2. «By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another» (Jn. 13,35).

References to RAL

Forward; art. 6.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Don Bosco's efforts to found the Cooperators.
- The Salesian Cooperators: lay people associated to unite forces in the service of good.
- The approval, by the Holy See, of the Regulations written by Don Bosco and of the Regulations of Apostolic Life.
- Criteria of ecclesiality for lay associations.
- Ecclesiality of the Association of Salesian Cooperators:
 - * it proposes to its members a process that leads to sanctity (cf. RAL, art. 2; 12; 50);
 - * in it the members are formed and educated in the faith (cf. RAL art. 27-38);
 - * it educates to ecclesial communion and to fidelity to the Pope and to the bishops (cf. RAL art. 18);
 - * it encourages the members to a generous apostolic commitment in the Church (cf. RAL, art. 13-17);
 - * it invites the Cooperators to a responsible and active presence in society and in the promotion of justice and of the common good (cf. RAL, art. 7-11).

Documents to consult

1. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, n.30.
2. Don Bosco, *R.D.B. I; V/2*.
3. Decree of approval of the RAL by the Holy See.
4. *Teresio Bosco, Don Bosco*, pages 352-356.
5. A.C.S., *Official Commentary to RAL*, page.818 (6.1-6.6).

Lesson n.29

TO BECOME COOPERATOR

Biblical references

1. «For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building» (1Cor. 3,9).
2. «Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the spirit, serve the Lord» (Rom. 12,11).
3. «To the weak I became weak, that I may win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings» (1Cor. 9,22-23).

References to RAL

Art. 2; 7; 36; 39-40).

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Salesian Cooperator: a life of sanctification and apostolic commitment open to all.
- To be a Cooperator: a vocational choice.
- To become a Cooperator:
 - * love for the young and sympathy for Don Bosco;
 - * an adequate process of spiritual preparation;
 - * a serious and parallel formation process;
 - * meditated evaluation of one's call.
- Official request for admission to be part of the Association.
- The Promise: the assuming of a commitment in front of Don Bosco and of the Church.
- A commitment for life.

Documents to consult

1. Don Bosco, R.D.B. III.
2. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 43-54 (2.1-2.11); pages 361-366 (36.1-36.3); pages 38-391 (39.1-39.2); pages 394-399 (40.1-40.4).

Lesson n.30

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST AND IN DON BOSCO

Biblical references

1. «But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin» (1Jn. 1,7).
2. «And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to al as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts» (Act. 2,44-46).
3. «Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour ... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep» (Rom. 12,10-15).

References to RAL

art. 3; 5; 19; 20/3; 21-25.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The Cooperators: "true Salesians in the world".
- "United in one heart and in one soul".
- Participation in the life of the Association
- The sharing of personal resources in the diversity of situations and commitments.
- Mutual spiritual and material help.
- Economic solidarity within the Association.
- Openness of Cooperators to communion and collaboration with the other groups of the Salesian Family.
- Particular links of communion with the Salesian Congregation.
- Filial link of communion with the successor of Don Bosco.

Documents to be consulted.

1. Don Bosco, R.D.B. VI/1-3; II; V/3.
2. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 55-63 (3.1-3.5); pages 68-80 (5.1-5.5); pages 238-244 (19.1-19.5); pages 245-252 (20.1-20.7); pages 253-255 (21); pages 256-262 (22.1-22.3); pages 271-276 (24.1-24.4); pages 277-281 (25.1-25.4).

Lesson n.31

CO-RESPONSIBILITY IN SPIRITUAL AND APOSTOLIC GROWTH

Biblical references

1. «Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ» (Mc 10,42-44).

References to RAL

Art. 20; 37-38; 39;

Pointers for the development of the theme

- Sense of the usefulness of personal contribution to the life of the Association and to the growth of the other members.
- Co-responsibility in the common mission.
- Various forms of collaboration in formation, in the apostolate, in the internal organization, etc.
- Spirit of service and sense of responsibility in discharging associative responsibilities (concerning the Association).
- Mutual support among the Cooperators to be faithful to the call of the Lord.
- Personal responsibility for one's formation.
- Criteria for the ongoing formation of the Cooperators.
- Initiatives and formative moments in view of the common growth.

Documents to consult

1. Don Bosco, R.D.B. VI/4; VIII/2.

2. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 245-252 (20.1-20.7); pages 373-387 (37.1-38.3); pages 390-391 (39.2).

Lesson n.32

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION

Biblical references

1. «And Jesus called to him and said to them: "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant"» (Mk. 10,42-44).

References to RAL

Art. 23/1-2; 41-49.

Pointers for the development of the theme

- The organization is in function of communion and collaboration.
- Organizational flexibility in the Association.
- The fundamental associative nucleus: the Centre.
- Participated and co-responsible animation of the Centre: the Local Council.
- Composition and tasks of the Local Council.
- The other organizational levels of the Association in function of the animation and coordination of the Centres.
- Composition and tasks of the Provincial Councils.
- The spiritual animating role of the Delegates (SDB/FMA).
- Possible coordination at the national and regional level.
- The World Consulting Body: composition and tasks.
- The Rector Major, father of the Salesian Family, supreme Moderator of the Association.

Documents to consult

1. Don Bosco, R.D.B. V.
2. A.C.S., Official Commentary to RAL, pages 263-269 (23.1-23.5); pages 401-460 (cap.VI-49.3).

Lesson n.33

THE PROMISE

"You have not chosen me, I have chosen you
and I have chosen you so that you go and bear fruit
and your fruit be abundant" (Jn. 15,16)

References

RAL, art. 40

If you are convinced that you are also called to be holy and to be apostolic;
if Don Bosco's personality, his educational system and his spirituality attract you;
if you think that the Salesian mission is relevant in the Church and in society today;
if you wish to live the Salesian spirit and wish to cooperate, on your side and according to your life
situation, in the Salesian mission...

the time is ripe for you to assume a commitment in God's presence and in the presence of the
community.

It is your turn to take your **PROMISE**.

The **PROMISE** is not a formality.

It is a conscious deliberation to answer the Lord's call.

It is a convinced decision to try to sanctify one's life.

It is a responsible option to wish to cooperate in the building of God's Kingdom.

It is a choice to join other brothers and sisters so as to sustain each other in the common
commitment.

It is the choice of becoming part of the Salesian Family to share in its spiritual heritage and mission.

It is a personal option but it is also of concern for the ecclesial community. For this reason the
Promise is taken publicly.

But, is there a need for a promise - you may object - to commit oneself in the Church? Is it not
enough that one shares in its activities when one is able to?

The **PROMISE** is not a passport for collaboration. With the **PROMISE** you do not commit
yourself to "do something", but to be an authentic witness, to live your faith according to a spiritual
and apostolic point of view: the Salesian one.

You are called to do things but this depends on what you are. With the **PROMISE** you commit
yourself to be an apostle, a Salesian lay apostle. And to be an apostle does not consist in just "doing
something". Your identity is at stake and nobody should be afraid of his/her identity.

But, is it not enough - you could object further - to take inspiration from the educative system and
the Salesian spirit? Is it necessary to enter the Association?

Surely, it is not necessary. But, in Don Bosco's mind, weak strings, when joined together, become
very strong.

In the Association you will find so many brothers and sisters who have made the same choice, who
live the same spiritual and apostolic commitment. They will give you their spiritual and human
support, as you will give yours.

In an Association we enrich ourselves and animate each other. In an Association the spiritual and
human resources and means become patrimony of all.

Think about it, pray over it. Take advice from an SDB or an FMA Delegate or from a Cooperator.
Give yourself some time to think about it, but be not of those who never feel prepared!