

The best witness to Jesus!

For EAO Salesians, August 2014 is full of many meaningful events: the worldwide Salesian community starts celebrations for the 200th Birthday of Don Bosco on August 16 and after 15 years, and now in the 21st century, we finally welcome the Holy Father to the Asian continent. Following the WYD visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Australia (2008, July), Pope Francis is coming to our Region, this time too for another Youth Day event.

The five days of his visit to Korea (Aug 14-18) for the 6th Asian Youth Day and for the Beatification of 124 Korean Martyrs are inter-connected through the slogan of the 6th AYD: *Asian Youth, wake up! The glory of the martyrs shines on you!*

This occasion might be, for us Salesians, a strong invitation to walk the GC27 path of ‘Witnessing to the radical approach to the Gospel’.

If we really wake up with our youth to give thanks for the many thousands of martyrs in almost each particular Church, our life changes!

With admiration, deep gratitude and prayer through the intercession of the Martyrs we discover the roots and great gift of our faith in Jesus Christ. There are only a few hundred Martyrs in our region officially recognized by the Universal Church (China – 120 Saints, Vietnam 117 Saints, Japan 26 Saints and 388 Blessed, Korea – 103 Saints and 124 Blessed, Laos – soon to be 17 Blessed, Thailand – 7 Blessed, Oceania – 1 Saints and 5 Blessed, Philippines – 2 Saints, Myanmar – 2 Blessed). Yes, there are also ‘not-blood Martyrs’ who witnessed in very difficult ecclesial situation to Christ, like the first Australian Saint – Mary McKillop or the SVD missionary in China Saint Joseph Freinandemetz etc.

They are just the tip of the iceberg – a few hundred of many thousands who over the past 500 years have shed their blood as witness to God's great love! Who witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus more radically than the Martyrs?

St. Mary McKillop (8 August feast)

Let's take a look together with Asia's young people at the rich faith witness of our martyrs! Let's take advantage of the commencement to Don Bosco's Bicentenary celebrations to focus on our daily witnessing to Jesus amongst the young!

Yours in Don Bosco,
Fr. Václav Klement
Regional councillor EAO