

## **Listen to Serve**

Dear brothers and friends!

Heartfelt greetings from Rome, where we are busy trying to bring the General Chapter 27 to a successful end in a week's time. Thank you for all your prayers before and during the GC27.

From yesterday on our new General Council is complete with the arrival of Fr. Ivo Coelho (Formation Councillor) from Jerusalem. All in all, now Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime as the 10th successor of Don Bosco has thirteen (13) councillors (one fewer than Fr. Chávez). And we are very proud to have amongst us the first African confrere - Fr. Americo Chaquisse (Mozambican), with only 2.5 Italian confreres in the Council (Frs. Francesco Cereda, Stefano Martoglio and Natale Vitali - who was living and working as a missionary in Chile since 1975).

First of all I would like to share with you some personal insights after 50 days of the General Chapter experience. The whole 'Chapter community' breathes a very nice family spirit in daily life, well animated by different people (liturgy, communications, sports, secretaries, translators, infirmarians, document drafting). Among the main daily 'rituals' is the reading of the Gospel at the beginning of the Assembly and installation of the Bible on the main stage, sports animation by the Congolese 'chaplain' at the end of each lunch time, prayers and serious work in the commissions and personal reflections.

Apart of the whole 220+ confreres at the General Chapter, we were able to enjoy some special regional moments. There are some 'famous' speakers at this GC, among them also Fr. Lanfranco (CIN), Fr. Eli (FIN), Fr. Mariano (MYM), Fr. Alex (FIN), Fr. Boedi (ITM), Frs. Andy and Václav (RMG). Especially many deep, radical and joyful interventions from the CIN provincial were appreciated quite often (5 diamonds)!

We have already twice celebrated the EAO regional Eucharist and will continue until April 11. The new Rector Major will preside and all Councillors for the sectors will participate in our EAO Mass next Monday. During the election time we met a few times for our regional contribution to discernment and celebrated the new Regional Councillor and a few days later the Silver jubilee of profession (Br. Raymond Callo, FIN - Regional).

So all of us could appreciate the nice family spirit within our region, be interested in getting to know each other more, to link and try to share more among our 10 provinces and 4 delegations.

Now I'm handing over to the new Councillor for the Missions - Fr. Guillermo Basaños: multiple tasks, contacts and information about the sector (starting with Cagliari 11 newsletter, blog, AGORA on [www.sdb.org](http://www.sdb.org)) and slowly connecting to our main available EAO regional digital platforms:

<http://blogs.sdb.org/eao.php> (**EAO BLOG**);  
<http://agora.sdb.org/index.php?board=59.0> (**EAO Agora reserved area for sharing**)  
<http://www.bosconet.aust.com/pmwiki/pmwiki.php> (**EAO documentation website**)  
<http://sdl.sdb.org/cgi-bin/library> (**Salesian Digital Library**) - sections available in Bahasa, Burmese, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, Tetum, Thai and Vietnamese  
<http://eaosalesianbrothers.wordpress.com/> (**EAO Salesian Brothers, Manila**)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1576979272526655/> (**Salesians EAO region**)

Last week when my life changed overnight from the global attention and care for the missionary spirit in the Congregation, again to the beloved EAO region, I tried to figure out how to animate the Region more effectively. Indeed within the past 12 years, when I was elected for the first time as the Regional councillor, a lot of communication tools and approaches have significantly changed. And my conclusion? Probably the ***Cagliero11 newsletter effect*** suggests to me that the best way might be one "***Good Night " for all confreres in the EAO Region.***

In this first ***EAO regional 'Good Night'*** I would like to share just one of the General Chapter 27's key words - '**Listen**'.

Already the three-step method of GC27 discernment process (Listening - interpreting - way ahead) ***starts by listening*** to life as it is.

The new Rector Major Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime in his first homily (March 27) invited us many times: 'Listen to His voice today... Listening together to the Word of God helps us to go out of ourselves, to overcome our self-centredness and listen to the needs of other, especially to the young.'

Also the Rector Major emeritus, Fr. Pascual Chávez in his deep and passionate homily for the EAO members today: 'Everything depends, hinges on our ability to listen to Jesus and to accept him, and our willingness to make him 'Our Living Rule'. This is the only way our Salesian life can become relevant, credible, visible and fruitful (April 5).

I should honestly acknowledge that **a solid Salesian life and mission depends on the listening attitude in any sense of this term:** Listening is the start of any solid communication amongst us (community building, personal talk to the rector), listening is the basis of serious discernment (obedience), listening is the first step of Gospel proclamation (if we want to listen, first we should listen to others), listening is the first step of effective youth ministry (youngsters are strongly asking: 'Listen to us!'). To listen well is not easy!

Starting my service as the 'recycled' Regional councillor I'm asking you to pray for me especially to be a good listener to the all of 1400+ EAO confreres and many other Lay Mission partners, Salesian Family members and youth that I will meet during the next 6 years. The Chinese letter 'Ting - Listening' in the attachment is part of my personal plan of life for these six years!

In Mary Help of Christians and Don Bosco, yours

*Václav Klement*

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General Councillor for the EAO Region (2014-2020)