

East Asia – Oceania Region: Good Night Talk (2)

Vietnam, Ho Chi Min City, May 8

What does it mean for us 'to be a *Region*'?

Dear brothers and friends!

Heartfelt greetings from the Provincial house of Vietnam-Mongolia province, where I have just reached after participating in the EAO Salesian Cooperators Regional Congress (Manila, April 23-26) and after some days in the Korean province for the installation of the new Provincial Fr Stefano Yang, meeting the provincial council and visiting all three formation houses (Seoul - Dae Rim Dong, Neri and Kwangju). The first full month of my new service to the Congregation is over!

My personal feeling during the past few weeks following GC27 is of 'reconnecting' to our ten provinces after 6 years, and to some 1400+ Salesians within the great variety of situation and history, challenges and dreams!

In this second EAO regional 'Good Night Talk' **I would like to ponder the meaning of belonging to a Salesian Region.** What does it mean to be part of 'OUR REGION' - what gift does God offer each of us in this way?

In our Constitutions the 'Region' is called a 'group of provinces' (C. 154). What does it mean in concrete terms for each of us, living scattered across 22 often very distant countries of the vast area of East Asia and Oceania?

Probably C. 59 (World community) offers us a meaningful clue. It's about '**communion of spirit, witness and service** within the Universal Church'. In my humble opinion the Region is a concrete way for each Salesian to really live as a 'member of the Catholic Faithful' (member of the universal community of Jesus' disciples and missionaries) and as a 'Catholic = universal Salesian'.

A few days ago the Korean novices were checking my duties (R.136) as Regional Councillor: "**to foster a concrete and creative family sense in the relationships of confreres and provinces** among themselves and with the Rector Major and his council." So, it's about communion and relationship between confreres who don't necessarily meet each other personally. But at the same time regional life could bring a lot of inspiration, encouragement, solidarity, mutual help of prayer and resources. The Region opens our heart and mind to the world-wide Salesian community. This is the 'added value' also of our EAO region!

Allow me just three practical considerations: (1) *EAO vision - mission*; (2) *EAO as a communion of provinces* and (3) *praying for each other (25th day of each month)*.

(1) EAO vision - mission (growing together)

Twelve years after our EAO Region was born at the GC25 (AD 2002) I would once more like to share with you our regional '**Vision-Mission' Statement of the EAO Region:** (1st. ed Team Visit 2005 - Hua Hin; revised ed. 2013, November - Melbourne)

We envision (Vision)

East Asia - Oceania Region as a communion of Salesian Provinces, creatively faithful to Don Bosco's Charism and effectively collaborating with each other to be evangelizers of the young, especially those who are poor.

Thus, we commit ourselves (Mission)

▶ *to inculturate the Preventive System*

▶ *to cooperate in common projects such as formation, youth ministry, social communication, Salesian family and other (C) services*

▶ *to show solidarity and practical support in times of natural calamities that frequently occur in many places of the region*

▶ *to strengthen and deepen our communication with each other and to use the English language as the medium of communication*

The common EAO Vision-Mission could help us to focus more our common exchange!

(2) EAO as communion of provinces (sharing)

During the final week of General Chapter 27 there was a good opportunity to share among the 26 EAO participants in the GC about the future of our Region. In the first workshop we shared two simple topics: (1) What can we **offer** to the other EAO provinces? (2) What do we want to **receive** from other EAO Provinces (in terms of resources - human, spiritual or material; established experience; venue for meeting, opportunity for other province). It was a very enriching exercise. Most of us were quite surprised that the long list of offers was greater than the list of needs (Attachment).

I'm deeply convinced that the EAO communion of provinces has grown so much during the past 12 years, and still we can benefit from this mutual sharing among the ten provinces and four delegations.

(3) EAO as a communion of prayer (25th of each month)

During the 2014 EAO provincials meeting (Rome, April 10) a day was selected once a month to pray for the EAO region so that confreres of the province feel their belonging. It was scheduled for **every 25th of the month**, the day commemorating the martyrdom of St Louis Versiglia and St Callistus Caravario.

I'm deeply convinced that a true fraternal life always starts with mutual prayer. All of us were moved by the offer of CIN province requesting concrete prayer intentions from other EAO provinces for their senior confreres.

Please, help me to be a creative and constant servant of our Region as the Congregation wants! I'm entrusting all of us to the motherly care of Mary Help of Christians,

In Don Bosco, yours



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