

Message to AFW from the Salesian Brothers Congress

Ashaiman 12/13 December 2014

The Joy of our Salesian Call

We feel an ardent desire to rediscover the richness of our Salesian charismatic identity, the ONE vocation we all share, and to re-propose this gift first of all with our life style, with the joyous testimony of our faithfulness.

We are convinced that the difficulties that may surface in some of our communities and that may obscure the complementarity between Salesian Brothers and Salesian Priests are rooted in lack of clear Salesian identity. When we are less faithful to our spirit (second chapter of the Constitutions) we do not attract vocations and we do not even 'attract' each other in a bond of family spirit.

Preventive System as Spirituality

The Preventive System is first of all a path to holiness, a spirituality that we profess and that the Church expects from us as our original contribution. The Preventive System lived in our community relationship, in the way we interact with young people and laity, is the 'burning bush' where God is waiting for us. Let this be our gift to Don Bosco in his bicentenary and the gift we ask of him in prayer: to live what we promised and to practice the preventive system, in reason, religion and loving kindness first of all among ourselves.

Credible prophet of community life

Pope Francis is asking all Religious this year 2015 to be first and foremost witnesses of communion within the Church for the whole world. We recognize in our tradition as Congregation and AFW a great legacy of 'community building' handed over from our models (Artemide Zatti, Simon Srugi, Stephen Sandor) and AFW Brothers (Bro Papi, Bro Bill, Bro Philip Avuleteh...). We believe it is indeed a 'munus' (gift and task) that Salesian Brothers are called to offer. Let us become together experts in fraternity, each one sharing the originality of his call and personal history, helping each other to become professional in our capacity of LISTENING, which is the ABC of living together.

Primacy of the person in serving the youth

Our presence among young people in the style of Salesian assistance is the best way to make our charism visible and attractive (evangelization by attraction, EG 16). This is our way of being like Don Bosco "with the young and for the young" (Strenna 2015). This will also prevent us from being caught in what is strongly denounced by Pope Francis as 'spiritual worldliness, seeking not the Lord's glory but human glory and personal well-being, seeking one's own interest, not those of Jesus Christ' (EG 93). Let us help each other to purify our motivation through a sincere service to the youth, especially the poorest among them.

Resolutions

We, the Salesian Brothers of the AFW Province give thanks to God for calling us to live in joyful simplicity and profundity, together with our brother priests, our common mission to young people following in the footsteps of St. John Bosco. We are committed to a rediscovery of what this call means especially in the light of our changing times and the challenges faced by the youth, posed by society and demanded by our very consecration as lay consecrated Salesians. In this vein, we commit ourselves:

- to understand more deeply our calling as one Salesian vocation and being visible witnesses of what we profess and believe, to our confreres in community, to the young people we are called to serve, to the laity, and to the local church.
- to render visible the complementarity of the two arms of Don Bosco by our everyday life and even in the appropriate use of terminology (avoiding confusion in identifying SB and candidates in formation).
- to lead by example, being first what we profess to be and doing what we promised to do.
- to live as Don Bosco lived, confronting every situation with reason, religion and loving kindness.
- to bear witness to the values of a hard and honest work; humility in service to whatever we are called to do as an affirmation of the community which is the primary sign of our visible and credible unity.

We wish all the Salesian Family in AFW province a fruitful and joyful bicentenary year and a sincere return to the spirituality of St John Bosco.