



EAO Good Night Talk (54)

Bangkok, Thailand

September 1, 2018

How do we listen to the young today?

Dear Friends and Salesian Family members,

After a strong invitation of Pope Francis, the whole Universal Church during past two years is invited to listen to the young people. In one month time will start in Rome the Synod of Bishops about the ‘Youth – Faith – Vocation Discernment’ with a participation of many Salesians of Don Bosco – experts, bishops as well with our Rector Major, Fr. Angel F. Artime (October 3-28).

The Working document of the 2018 Bishop Synod (*Instrumentum Laboris*) is nothing else, but the reasonable summary of the global Catholic community listening to the young: Two of the five main sources used for the editing of the Working document refer to the ‘Online Questionnaire’ answered by 100.000 youth and to the ‘Pre-Synod Gathering’ with 300+ youth

and 15.000 online participants. Also many observations sent to the Synod Secretariat were produced by the youth. Never every any Bishop Synod had so abundant freedom of contributors! This we consider one of the signs of our times, that confirm the exceptional character of this 2018 Synod. All together there are more then 100 expressions taken from the two youth ‘sources’ and many times the quotations are rather long (Working document - chapter 5). Good to read it (attachment)!

However already during past two years all 4500) Catholic dioceses and each parish and ecclesial community were invited to listen to the young. And we know that many pastors and adults don’t know how to approach or listen to the young – Salesians included! It’s a clear call for conversion!

Incoming General Chapter 28 of the Salesians has a theme: “**What kind of Salesians for the young people of today?**” And we may add “**What kind of Salesian family** (Salesian Cooperators, Don Bosco Alumni, FMA Alumni, VDB, CDB, ADMA, Damas Salesianas, FMA Sisters, Caritas Sisters of Jesus, SIHM Sisters, DQM, SQM Sisters, Sisters Announcers of the Lord, Michaelites) **for the young people in our 23 countries of EAO Region?**”

The 90 SDB provinces around the world are preparing their Provincial Chapters and each province is invited by the Rector Major to approach many young people with these 4 questions:

What kind of Salesian would you dream or want for today’s youth?

What do you see as missing in the Salesians of today to be like that?

What are your main needs for which you ask the help of the Salesians?

How can you play active part in serve other youth with the Salesians in your environment?

When we read the first encounter of Don Bosco with Bartolomeo Garelli (Memoirs of the Oratory), we realize it’s an ongoing dialogue with many questions. Without making the first step, without taking time to talk, to listen, to exchange questions with our young people, there is no true Salesian or true Salesian family!

Fr. V áclav Klement, SDB