



EAO Good Night Talk (55)

Sampran - Thailand

October 1, 2018

Missionary Youth (Gioventù missionaria) possible also today?

Dear Friends and Salesian Family members,

A special greeting from Sam Phran, the ‘Vatican’ of Thailand, near Bangkok. Just yesterday were send another 25 SDB and 11 FMA new missionaries from the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians at Valdocco by the Rector Major (149th expedition). In the same time were present also three EAO provincials in their week long mid-term

encounter with the Rector Major in Don Bosco holy places: Fr. Joseph Quang (VIE), Fr. Godofredo Atienza (FIS) and Fr. Charles Saw (MYM).

Most of the 11.000+ Salesian missionaries ad gentes who were sent since 1875, left their homeland at quite young age (even as 15 years old) and thousands of them even before their novitiate in the mission land. This missionary fire was possible due to the bold and far-sighted Salesian missionary culture, including the Missionary groups in most of our houses. There was a wide network of missionary Aspirantates in many European provinces and vibrant youth magazine '*Gioventú missionaria*' (Missionary Youth) published in six different languages.

Are the young people of today less courageous then 50 or 100 years ago? I don't think so! What do we probably miss today is the missionary spirit and enthusiasm to share the Gospel until the 'end of the world'. Wherever I have been asking the teenagers about their life dreams, always the only 'missionary kids' are those educated by different Christian denominations, but never Catholics! Few years ago as the *Councilor for the Missions (2008-2014)*, I discovered an exciting Salesian tradition - experience almost forgotten in most of our EAO provinces: a Missionary group.

What is the ‘Missionary group about? It’s not about the name, it’s about the group vision and action. In the recent Cagliari11 (August) we find these simple indications: (1) daily prayer for the missionaries all over the world – e.g. Missionary Rosary; (2) group study about present mission frontiers; (3) personal offering to the missions (fundraising); (4) sharing of missionary news and needs [Cagliari11 on social media]; (5) personal commitment to catechesis or sharing the Gospel with non-Christians or (6) personal missionary vocation and action growth (Lord, send me!)

We can start of re-shape missionary groups in our SYM, in our Youth center, in our formation houses (starting from the Aspirants), in our parishes or schools. What about ‘Namuncura Boys’ or ‘Cagliari Friends’?

During this month of October we celebrate in Rome the Synod of Bishops about **Young – Faith – Vocation discernment (Oct 3-28)** and the **5th World Congress of Salesian Cooperators (Oct 25-28)**. May the month of the Holy Rosary and of the Missions, be for us a time of true Salesian prayerful life – centered on God present through the needs of the young people!

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