

## **STATEMENT - SOUTH ASIA TEAM VISIT 2023 - March 1 to 3, Hyderabad**

I am happy to present to you the statement of the Team Visit at Hyderabad, which I and the Provincial Council members attended from 1 to 3 March. I request everyone to consider these deliberations as the Way Forward of the GC 28 deliberations.

“We, the 126 members of the “Team Visit 2023 of South Asia Region”, along with the Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime and his Council, Regional Superior of South Asia, Provincials & members of the Provincial Councils, secretaries of various networks, Rectors of post-novitiates & theologates, and Moderators of Provincial Chapters, gathered at the Provincial House of the Province of St. Joseph, Hyderabad from 1-3 March 2023, to discuss the theme “Forward together on the Path of GC28”.

We deliberated and reflected upon the following five sub-themes:

1. Growth in charismatic identity in Salesian life
2. Renewing Youth Ministry focused on the poorest of poor while taking care of sustainability of mission
3. Co-responsibility for the mission: With Laity and the Salesian Family
4. Identity of Salesians in South Asia, and
5. Collaboration and synergy with the Congregation in human resource.

### **GROWTH IN CHARISMATIC IDENTITY IN SALESIAN LIFE**

“Salesian Charismatic Identity” involves a process of embracing the program of Don Bosco *Da mihi animas* by becoming “mystics in the spirit, prophets of communion and servants of the young.”

It invites us to be pastors who have deep God experience, who are rooted in the Word of God and who have the heart of a father, brother, friend and an educator of the young like Don Bosco.

In our region the Salesian charismatic identity is strengthened in our everyday living through the importance given to the primacy of God, regular community practices of piety and following of „Salesian traditions“ of piety. It is further manifested in various forms of apostolates, process of ongoing formation, Salesian accompaniment in youth works and oratories.

It is weakened by spiritual worldliness, tendency to focus on mere human

promotion rather than spiritual accompaniment, social and emotional fragility and lack of proper understanding of contemporary media trends and different religious traditions.

Growing and living the gifts and charism of the Holy spirit, practices of *da mihi animas*, formative accompaniment, promotion of Salesian brother vocation, pastoral possibilities through media innovations provide us with ample opportunities to grow in our Salesian charismatic identity.

It is threatened by neglect of traditional Salesian practices, spiritual eclecticism, individualism, clericalism, careerism, ethnic and caste polarization and social media addiction.

This calls us to be spiritually enriched, professionally qualified, psychologically integrated and passionately committed to respond to the challenges of the time.

We therefore resolve to:

- ❖ Ensure that our Salesian traditions, life of fraternity and prayer, working together in a spirit of collaboration with our lay partners, family spirit and presence among the young are followed in the community's life and mission.
- ❖ Inculcate appreciation for spiritual direction and ongoing formation through preparation of spiritual directors, training of formation personnel in spiritual accompaniment and psychosexual maturity.
- ❖ Reconcile individual giftedness with community dimension of our Salesian charismatic identity through the process of listening, dialogue and proper discernment.
- ❖ Ensure that in the Aspirantate there is a process of accompaniment and discernment.
- ❖ Study and grow in our conviction about the promotion of Salesian brother vocations and carry forward the resolutions of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brothers congress in each of our provinces.
- ❖ Tackle clericalism, individualism, careerism in all our institutions through periodical evaluation of our ministry at House Council, House Assemblies, functioning of the EPCC and working together with the common goal and focus.

## **1. Renewing Youth Ministry Focused on the Poorest of Poor while Taking Care of Sustainability of Mission**

We are living a historical phase characterized by changes that are not only profound, even radical, but also rapid.

We are conscious of the fact that “to renew” is a verb of action for our Salesian Youth Ministry, which not only has the task of dealing with the present, but also of grasping the dynamism and movements of history and thus entering into the heart of the expectations and hopes of today’s youth.

In this context, it is necessary to have a discernment of the “signals” that come to us from the present times in order to make efficacious the mission we have received.

The 117-year old Salesian mission in South Asia reaches out to various groups of disadvantaged and vulnerable, who experience various forms of poverty and deprivation. We reach out to Dalits, tribals, migrants, beggars, construction labourers, slum dwellers, prisoners, substance abusers, orphans, young at risk, refugees and HIV/AIDS affected and infected persons.

The South Asia Region is blessed to have a vast network of institutions with good infrastructure even in remote areas. The PDOs in most of our provinces function as resource-mobilizing agencies for pro-poor projects.

It is weakened by the fact that we Salesians are formed to work with the youth but not with the poor and their eco system. There is a high tendency towards institutionalization and limited neighbourhood outreach, lack of utilization of the resources within the Salesian family, and pro-poor initiatives limited to certain individual charism.

Opportunities are provided to us through various government schemes, access to social media and technology, and vast number of Salesian Family members.

We are threatened by right-wing political environment, tendency to emulate successful models in the market forgetting our own identity and mission, and stringent government norms on education and health services that are anti-poor.

Therefore, we resolve to:

- ❖ Move from youth ministry that focuses on activities to process-oriented approaches.
- ❖ Emphasize the animating role of the youth ministry delegate as per *SYM Frame of Reference* (i.e., moving from compartmentalization of the various sectors of our mission to one integrated approach).
- ❖ Give systematic training and co-opt lay people to be partners in our Salesian mission.

- ❖ Make our evaluation systems more scientific, being professional in our HR policies, making optimal use of our structures and resources and making them available to the poor, working towards greater self-reliance.
- ❖ Create synergy with other provinces through common interprovincial formation houses, sharing of personnel & expertise, and collaborating with different networks.

## **2. Co-responsibility for the Mission: with Laity and the Salesian Family**

The Salesian missionary spirit is rooted in our charism and our motto *Da mihi animas*, and we share this spirit with our lay collaborators and members of the Salesian family.

We foster a culture of initial proclamation in all our settings in South Asia by forming our lay mission partners as heralds of the Good News.

We keep the missionary spirit alive in the provinces through the right choice of PDMA who carries out the responsibility to animate the confreres and the members of EPC.

The South Asia Region has established institutions and a large number of associations of lay people who work with the Salesians. Good collaboration is experienced with the lay people and members of the Salesian Family particularly in mission centres. There are good, committed and qualified lay people willing to collaborate with Salesians. However:

- ❖ The South Asia Region still lacks well-prepared programmes for information, preparation and formation of the laity for their participation in our mission. The formation and functioning of EPC and SEPP has not yet become a normal practice in many communities.
- ❖ Trust-deficit is seen between Salesians and the collaborators as they are not fully integrated in matters of planning, policy-making and financial administration.
- ❖ Enormous possibilities for the expansion of our mission exist in our region. Therefore, we resolve to:
- ❖ Make Don Bosco's missionary spirit vibrant and alive in our region.
- ❖ Prepare Salesian personnel as well as training modules and material for the formal and systematic joint formation with the laity and the members of the Salesian family.
- ❖ Train and co-opt qualified and well-motivated lay people and members of

the Salesian Family in Governing bodies, Provincial Commissions, Formation Teams, Principals in Schools and Colleges, and other managerial roles.

- ❖ Promote missionary voluntarism, and be part of civil movements for social justice and gender equality.
- ❖ Have graded syllabus on Salesian Family for the various stages of formation involving them in the formation process.
- ❖ Share responsibility with the Salesian family through synodal way of planning, implementing, and evaluation of the SEPP as EPC.

### **3. Identity of Salesians in South Asia**

Consolidation or expansion is a perspective of both the present and the future, a true path of “reshaping” that must lead to a vision that is shared among provinces. The Charismatic originality is shared communally and continually.

We resolve to strike a balance between consolidation and expansion by giving numerical consistency to our communities, giving quality to our community life, making it a prophecy of fraternity and a place of ongoing formation and of holiness.

### **4. Collaboration and Synergy with the Congregation in Human Resource**

The areas of shared responsibility and collaboration of the Congregation involving all of us are:

1. Headquarters
2. The major Salesian places and other services carried out by RMG on behalf of the Holy See
3. UPS in Rome

As members of the South Asia Region, we resolve to be conscious of the need to have a renewed openness to the sense of Congregation.

At the end of the Team Visit 2023, resonating with the challenges posed by the South Asian context with its amazing plurality of cultures, religions, spiritualities, and other ethnic diversities, we firmly resolve to reveal God’s love by becoming His signs and bearers to the young, especially the poor of our South Asia Region, following the spirit and charism of Don Bosco.

May Mary Help of Christians, be our constant guide”.