SYNOD OF BISHOPS - XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

“YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT”

FINAL DOCUMENT FROM THE PRE-SYNODAL MEETING

Rome, 19-24 March 2018

Introduction

The young person of today is met with a host of external and internal challenges and opportunities, many of which are specific to their individual contexts and some of which are shared across continents. In light of this, it is necessary for the Church to examine the way in which it thinks about and engages with young people in order to be an effective, relevant and life-giving guide throughout their lives.

This document is a synthesized platform to express some of our thoughts and experiences. It is important to note that these are the reflections of young people of the 21st century from various religious and cultural backgrounds. With this in mind, the Church should view these reflections not as an empirical analysis of any other time in the past, but rather as an expression of where we are now, where we are headed and as an indicator of what she needs to do moving forward. It is important at the outset to clarify the parameters of this document. It is neither to compose a theological treatise, nor is it to establish new Church teaching. Rather, it is a statement reflecting the specific realities, personalities, beliefs and experiences of the young people of the world. This document is destined for the Synodal Fathers. This is to give the Bishops a compass, pointing towards a clearer understanding of young people: a navigational aid for the upcoming Bishops’ Synod on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment” in October 2018. It is important that these experiences be viewed and understood according to the various contexts in which young people are situated.

These reflections were borne out of the meeting of more than 300 young
representatives from around the world, convened in Rome March 19-24, 2018 at the inaugural Pre-Synodal Meeting of Young People and the participation of 15,000 young people engaged online through the Facebook groups.

The document is understood as a summary of all of our participants’ input based on the work of 20 language groups and 6 from social media. This will be one source, among others, that will contribute to the Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod of Bishops 2018. It is our hope that the Church and other institutions can learn from the process of this Pre-Synodal Meeting and listen to the voices of young people. Understanding this, we can therefore move forward to explore with openness and faith where the young person is situated today, where the young person sees his or herself in relation to others, and how we as the Church can best accompany young people towards a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

Follow the link below to read the entire official document:

Website: SYNOD2018
Today the Salesian Congregation has a meaningful presence in the world of tertiary learning (IUS). Therefore, may our responsibility in educating the new generations to a committed Christian humanism grow to shape a more inclusive

For Salesian Universities and centers of thought

That they may understand and propose human and gospel paths in front of today’s social, financial and anthropological challenges.
My dear brother Salesians,

My dear sisters and brothers of the entire Salesian Family throughout the world, dear young people in different places of the Salesian world, I send you my sincere greetings as we draw near to Holy Week and Easter.

The purpose of this appeal is to invite you all wherever you are in the Salesian world, to make this a time of intense faith and prayer. And the reason is this: the pain which we are forced to undergo in so many parts of the world is too much, so many people of different religions and confessions are suffering a real martyrdom.

In our Church, a large number of Christian men and women, are being persecuted for their faith in Jesus. The latest drama, as we well know, took place in Yemen, where several people were killed four Missionaries of Charity of Mother Teresa who died as martyrs, and other lay men and women who gave their lives for their faith, simply because they were there at the end, they also were martyrs, mowed down by a senseless violence.

We continue to follow with pain and with great concern, what is happening to our brother Tom, a Salesian of Don Bosco, who disappeared and about whom we have no news.

I also wish to express our closeness, and our solidarity to his family while we implore from the Lord a deep peace that he may endure this moment trusting in the Lord Jesus.

Therefore I invite everyone to spend a very intense moment of prayer on the evening of Holy Thursday, when we join with Jesus in the pain and loneliness of Gethsemane.

I sincerely hope that all our Salesian Family in the world and our young people in different places and at different times will be united in this one prayer: for peace. We join with Pope Francis, who continually prays for this peace. Let us implore peace from the Lord, and ask for infinite eternal peace for the martyrs and the extraordinary power of the Risen Lord for all who suffer so much pain and persecution.

Let us also remember our brother Tom.

Thank you for accepting this initiative and may the Lord bless you. I greet you from my heart.

Fr. Ángel Fernández Artíme
The Rector Major of the Salesians
SYLC SPIRIT TEAM MEMBERS MET FOR THE SECOND TIME IN PREPARATION FOR THIS YEAR’S SYLC, SALESIAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE AT ST. JOSEPH’S IN ROSEMEAD FROM MARCH 23-25. THERE WERE A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS, FACILITATED BY THE SPIRIT TEAM ADULT MEMBERS, LEAD BY ENRIQUE DIAZ AND BRO. JAMES NGUYEN. NEW AND EXCITING SESSIONS WERE INTRODUCED TO THE TEAM AS WELL AS A NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE EXHIBIT ON “FAST FASHION” AND THE EFFECTS IT HAS ON SOCIETY. SPIRIT TEAM WILL MEET ONE MORE TIME IN JUNE BEFORE SYLC 2018 KICKS OFF!

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEKEND WAS THE NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE “FAST FASHION” EXHIBITION. ADULT SPIRIT TEAM MEMBERS AND SPECIAL GUEST BR. JOHN RASOR, WORKED THE WALKWAY AND MODELED OFF SOME OF THE CURRENT FASHION TRENDS.
Easter invites us to drink in abundance from the true sources of the Salesian missionary spirit. May the Risen Christ, as in John’s dream at the age of nine, continue to show us our mission field!

The Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud*, of which we will celebrate the centenary next year, recalls the commitment and missionary protagonism of the great religious orders, in particular the Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits. Their work and testimony, especially during the centuries of the modern period, profoundly marked the evangelization of so many peoples.

It is not by chance that Don Bosco recommends the first missionaries, leaving for Argentina to: “Love, esteem and respect other religious orders, and always speak well of them” (Ricordi, n.10).

This reminds us of our own historical responsibility today, as the Society of St. Francis de Sales. It was always intended to be missionary right from its foundation. It is to be a call to youthful missionary leadership in this third millennium.

Happy Easter everyone!

Fr Guillermo Basañes, SDB Councillor for the Missions

Fatima, Seminar for SDB PDMA and FMA coordinators of mission animation throughout Europe.

From 4 to 11 March we held at Fatima the continental seminar for Europe and the Middle East. Among the various points of learning, I emphasize the following: At Fatima we rediscovered synergy. We had proof that synergy is possible, in Europe in particular. There is great synergy here among FMA, SDB and volunteers ... It is impressive how synergy works!

It is very interesting that we were at Fatima, precisely at this time, to reflect on missionary animation ... It was Fatima that released a word of hope at the close of the First World War. Pope Benedict XV wrote in *Maximum Illud* that that period, 100 years ago, was a wonderful time for “missionary sowing”. The message of Fatima is clearly one of hope. Can our Salesian missionary animation become an equally clear and hopeful message to this “world, broken by the third world war”, as Pope Francis calls it?

We also learned again that Europe is also a mission territory and we want to do everything to convince even our confreres and sisters that it is so! If we look at various European realities with these eyes, everything changes, including our way of thinking and acting.

As for the journey that awaits us, we are convinced that reflection and prayer are very important. These days of the seminar (as in other continents) the Lectio of Sr Maria Ko accompanied us. In a very masterly, sharp and Salesian manner she tip-toed her message into our hearts. She pointed out to us the beginning of everything and the source from which to draw our missionary zeal. This is a lesson we took home with us.

We realized on the final day the fundamental importance of the contribution from the PDMA and Coordinators to the governance and animation of our provinces. We are called to do missionary animation of our confreres and sisters. With them we need to find intelligent paths forward. That takes study and prayer, in order not to be wasting our strength! It was interesting how, in the name of missionary animation - not because there is confusion, but because we need synergy - our reflection these days ranged from youth ministry, to formation, to social communication ... This is the synergy to build. Everyone will see, in their province, where there is more scope for synergy. We want to be very realistic: we start working where the land is more welcoming, where the fire of missionary zeal can take root.

As for areas that call for strategic attention, we chose the Family, Migration and Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service.
"The poor who evangelize"

My name is Mario Bordignon. I was born 70 years ago in Veneto, in the North-East of Italy. I was at the Salesian professional school of Becchi where Don Bosco was born. As carpenters we saw to the maintenance of the Missionary Museum. The figures of various people in the museum and the objects preserved there provoked my adolescent fantasy. The desire to be a missionary was strengthened by several Lay Salesians. They were my idols and models, and some of them went off to the missions. After my training, at the age of 25, I was sent to Mato Grosso, Brazil. I was first at Cuibá, Coxipó and in 1980 at Meruri among the Bororo.

This mission for the Bororo began in 1902. The school also welcomed, for a long time, the sons and daughters of settlers, as ours was the only school in the vast area of over 100 sq. km. The presence of these settlers compromised the practice of Bororo culture.

My first task was to look at people's reality, which was very different from all my adolescent fantasies and plans. The Indian in my books and magazines did not exist and his culture had almost disappeared. After my initial disappointment, I started observing things and listening to people. I made my contribution to the economy, to the functioning of the school, to the defense of the earth and to saving that beautiful culture. I tried to implement integral education. I was inspired by the example of Don Rodolfo, who had recently been killed defending the land of the Bororo, and Fr Gonzalo Ochoa, a great connoisseur of Bororo history and culture.

The best thing I did was to have an elderly Bororo as my godfather. He helped me a lot to live and understand this culture, no longer as an observer but as an actor. Fortunately for me, just a few kilometers from the old mission there was a village where they still practiced traditional rituals. My godfather was my teacher until his death. My knowledge of Bororo culture has greatly enriched my spirituality and my being. I understood in practice the words of Archbishop Helder Camara: "The poor evangelize us." I tried as a Salesian to pass on to our young people what I learned from my godfather. It was a slow but very sweet process.

The rituals and beautiful ornaments gradually reappeared; we made some inculturation of the Christian liturgy; the students at school began to use the texts we had prepared together with my godfather and Father Ochoa. The Bororo began to take pride in their cultural identity. We started training Bororo teachers; today the school is completely in their hands. One batch graduated from the university and others are on the way. Two court cases for the recovery of Bororo territory are well advanced, thanks to the struggle that we began, but is carried forward by the people. Things change quickly even in traditional villages. Globalization brings the good and the bad. Today the mission has great significance, more than ever, because of the numerous interferences that come from external cultures, often harmful to indigenous peoples. When the ideals of a missionary are very strong, spirituality still finds the strength to seek new ground to manifest God's love for others.

Coad. Mario Bordignon, Italian, missionary among the Bororo of Brazil

Witness of Salesian Missionary Sanctity
Fr. Pier Luigi Camerini SDB, Postulator General for the Causes of Saints

Blessed Augustus Czartoryski (1858-1893), 125th anniversary of whose death occurs on April 8th.
He elaborated an effective method of discernment of divine designs. 'How lovely is your dwelling place. Oh, Lord of hosts! My soul mourns and pines for the house of the Lord . . . For me one day in your house is more than a thousand elsewhere'. He chose these words of the Psalm as his motto and put them on the souvenir of his first Mass. He presented to God in prayer all his fundamental questions and perplexities and then, in the spirit of obedience, he followed the advice of his spiritual guides.

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INTOUCH • April 08, 2018
SDBs Celebrated Easter at Richmond CA
Easter Sunrise Service at St. Joseph, Rosemead CA
I am approaching the subject of weight gingerly. Why? I don’t want people to think that I am critical of you just because you might be on the “heavy” side. I want to have a deeper understanding of weight and how that affects your health. For the coming weeks, we will unravel how our weight could change our health and more importantly what can we do about it. I dare not end you by making broad statements about weight or obesity. Hence I was extremely happy to come across this website “Weight Matters” in their introductory statement about why weight matters. It begins with an opening statement which reflects my belief and my motivation to begin our conversation on weight.

The issue of weight matters to people in many different ways. It evokes many different emotions and can often be difficult to talk about with your healthcare provider, spouse, friend, loved one or others. The most important reason why weight matters is because of your health. There are many health implications that accompany excess weight, such as diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea and others. Sometimes weight can even affect emotional health as well. It is not uncommon for some one dealing with weight issues to be affected by depression or a lack of self-confidence.

Gaining excess weight and realizing the health implications is not always the easiest thing to recognize. In fact, most Americans do not realize that they are affected by excess weight or obesity, or even at risk for weight-related conditions. This is why it is so important for you to realize that YOUR WEIGHT DOES MATTER!

Let me begin by going into the physiological component of a fat cell this week. From Wikipedia in its definition of Adipocyte: Adipocytes, also known as lipocytes and fat cells, are the cells that primarily compose adipose tissue, specialized in storing energy as fat.

My friend Mrs. C. was in tears. She said she needed to see a psychiatrist. When I explored with her what seemed to be the problem, she confided in me that she has this anxiety about getting old. Mrs. C. is 75 years old and very healthy; she goes to the gym almost every day. I am always envious of how well she can bend her back and stretch her legs into an elegant yoga pose. Her children have very successful careers. Her husband had retired with good pension. And every year, they go out of the country for extended vacations. In most people’s eyes, her senior year is golden. “There is nothing to worry about.” remarked by her friends. Mrs. C. does not need to see a psychiatrist; common sense tells me the diagnosis – boredom.

Boredom is dangerous; we see that with our teens. They have too much time on hand, and have no hobbies or sport activities after school. Hence they resort to fixing themselves over video games or engaging in activities that are not the best way to use their spare time. I see the similarity with the seniors. Mrs. C. is a good example of “I have nothing to do – it is scary to think of the eventual death”.

Not everyone has to go through this terrible stage of aging. Look at our most senior cooperators at St. Joseph; Stella is 93 years old and Paulo is 92. Today during our Easter Sunrise Mass, these two were ready to entertain the kids. Stella took pride in making Easter eggs, goodie bags and cupcakes. Both served with joy. With a warm
and hospitable smile, Paulo welcomed the kids to their Easter Booth. The kids were delighted with their Easter treat. Not only were they creative in bringing joy to the young, both participated fully in whatever activities that the retreat center can offer. Stella attends to the flowers and plants at St. Joseph. We call her the Easter Bunny at St. Joseph – her battery is always on, and you cannot stop her. Paulo always dresses neatly and wears his friendly smile as an active member of our cooperator group. Paulo says he cannot walk as fast as the rest of us. But he is so willing to accompany us in whatever we do.

Hanging around old folks is a good thing, we learn so much from their life experience and their faith. Both have shown us that God has given a new day every day and they are going to make the best out of it. There is purpose in life – to serve God’s people and while you are serving, have fun with it. So say goodbye to boredom and hello LORD!

Your homework assignment from the Care Ministry this week: Adopt a boredom buster/cultivate the art of accompaniment.

The Care Ministry welcomes your comments/suggestions: kunlouis@gmail.com