

### **GREETING OF MOTHER GENERAL AT THE OPENING OF THE ACSSA SEMINAR OF SALESIAN HISTORY EAST ASIA-OCEANIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

*Cebu (Philippines), 4-8 November 2013*

Happy to participate, I greet the Superiors here present: Fr. Andrew Wong, Regional Councillor, the Provincial and the Rector of the House that has welcomed us, the speakers, representatives of the Salesian Family and all the religious and lay participants in this seminar on Salesian History of the East Asia-Oceania Region. A special thanks goes to Fr. Nestor Impelido who has taken care of its organisation and coordination with such dedication and competence.

For the region, this is a further and fruitful stage in the reflection and contributions that enrich the already significant patrimony of Salesian historical studies that we possess.

I thank the president of ACSSA, Sr. Grazia Loparco, the secretary of the Salesian Historical Institute and of ACSSA, Fr. Stanisław Zimniak, and all the members of the Association for their constant and wise commitment in accompanying the Provinces in deepening the historical dimension of the charism, re-discovering the sources, caring for their conservation and recognising their value. Thanks to ACSSA and the Salesian Historical Institute, a new era has begun for Salesian history, one founded on a correct methodological approach and on secure historical criteria.

There is a very deep link between Salesian identity and the knowledge of history. In order to form and develop Salesian identity a knowledge of one's own history and a personal and collective re-elaboration are necessary.

In these times of economic, social and ethical crisis at various levels, especially in certain areas, there is also a crisis in the preservation and use of one's cultural patrimony, perhaps because motivation has become weak. It is necessary to re-awaken this motivation, to make use of it to build awareness of the importance of historical documentation, and of the preservation of the sources and elaboration of one's history.

I believe that caring for this dimension is of vital importance in formation, so that the patrimony that forms the cultural and spiritual wealth of the Salesian Family may not be lost, since it gives consistency to the present and helps to project towards the future.

The work of the historian requires people who are well prepared and dedicated to research. Therefore it is necessary to identify some persons and prepare them for this important cultural mission.

Together with the search for the sources, their correct conservation and cataloguing is also decisive. The possibility of making use of them in the future and of continuing to research depends on their faithful and precise conservation.

The Salesian charism in Asia has known a great development and still enjoys a great vitality. The study of history allows discovering those elements that have favoured its inculturation. We could make a synthesis and interpret these elements and offer them as a base to the new generations for a better awareness so that they may keep on spreading the Salesian colours in this continent, rich with many young people. The Asian continent has much to say to the Salesian Family!

One can never reflect enough on the fact that much of the history of the nations was passed on by monasteries, parishes, and religious institutes and that the most ancient memoirs were preserved in codices and papers written by monks or religious. From here comes the responsibility to care for the historic patrimony of congregations as a contribution to culture and evangelisation.

In the Synod of Bishops on *new evangelisation for the transmission of the Christian faith*, at which I had the grace of participating, the need emerged to make the faith more alive and rich in fascination. It will be that way if we allow the Lord Jesus to inhabit our heart and if, in a renewed covenant between generations, we are capable of passing on to younger people the treasure of experience and witness of many of our brothers and sisters who have already written the history of the Church and of society with their lives.

Therefore my wish for you is that your work of research and sharing in these days may be fruitful and may encourage you, later, to share the main lines of this encounter at Province and community level.

May Mary Help of Christians, woman of memory and of gratitude bless you!

*Sr. Yvonne Reungoat FMA  
Mother General*

Roma, 4 novembre 2013