

*Dear Fr Provincial, the Moderator and the Members of the Provincial Chapter,*

Loving greetings to all of you with the heart of Don Bosco!

These are days of grace for the Universal Church and also to our Congregation. We have just celebrated the Holy Week and we are in the Easter Octave. The joy of the Resurrection fills our hearts with hope and gratitude. The Church has been blessed with the momentous events recently with two great Vicars of Christ setting us examples of radical way of living the Gospel. Our Congregation is on the path of renewal with the preparation for the General Chapter and for the Bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth. In this context, I am sure that the celebration of your own provincial chapter, your first as a new province, is also going to be a momento of grace. My prayer and wish are that you live it so.

The Theme of the General Chapter was born out of a felt need in contemporary religious life to return to the Gospels in a radical way. Religious life was born in the early centuries precisely for this purpose. Namely, to live the Gospel radically among those who took it lightly. Radicality is therefore essential, without which religious life becomes irrelevant. Don Bosco, like Jesus, lived in his own time and space, the radicality of being a mystic, a prophet and a servant. He expressed it also by entering work for the poorest of the poor by a life of asceticism mentioned in a simple way as temperance. As you study these theme, for your own renewal and in preparation for the General Chapter, I hope that all of you will take a personal and renewed commitment to the person of Jesus and to his radical values. Your province has had many saintly confreres who spent their entire lives for the name of Jesus and his Kingdom. Hence examples are not lacking before you.

Yours is a relatively young Vice-Province, even if Salesian presence in Timor-Leste and Indonesia are older. The initial years of its existence will naturally throw up several issues of animation, administration, fraternal living and mission to be tackled. I am sure you are taking up also some of these problems for are not just some philanthropic service providers, but radical followers of Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and God. In particular take care of the issues of formation, fraternal living and our closeness to the poor. Your Vice-province's specific nature is Evangelization. Hope the Chapter will give also a new impetus to this basic mission of the Church and of the Congregation.

I conclude, wishing all of you a wonderful experience of the provincial communion, salesian fraternity and frank discussions. This first chapter will surely leave a lasting experience and impact on your province. Be certain of my prayers for all of you.

Yours in Don Bosco,

Rome 3 April 2013

Fr. Pascual Chavez V., SDB

Rector Major