

## **“Don’t say good-bye; I’m still here!” Cardinal’s heart-to-heart with the Salesian Family**

**HONG KONG: 6 May 2009** -- Despite the farewells and official functions, and despite the fact that he will not always be that easy to find, Cardinal Zen will be remaining in Hong Kong at the express invitation of Bishop John Tong. “Don’t say good-bye; I’m still here!” the Cardinal joked at a recent heart-to-heart talk with the Salesian Family in the city.

Speaking of his appointment as bishop of Hong Kong 12 years ago, Cardinal Zen pointed out that it was a total surprise to him. He was in Shanghai at the time. But after its return to China, Hong Kong especially needed someone with a perspective on mainland China, so he obediently accepted. As cardinal, he said, he needed to care in a particular way for the Church in mainland China, and it was difficult to maintain two fronts, especially given the immense workload of the diocese: meetings with diocesan committees, all sorts of administrative tasks, actively participating in the celebrations of over 300 schools and institutions. But as a Salesian in particular, he said, he had done his best to live up to the spirit of Don Bosco, to remain close to young people and to pay special attention to youth ministry.

As a result of the diocesan synod held in 2000, a total of 177 recommendations were made covering a wide area of pastoral activity: formation of the laity, youth ministry, marriage, and family education. The cardinal emphasized that young people are at a crucial stage of their lives, and youth ministry is intended to help them make the right choices.

He thought it was important for the faithful in Hong Kong to spend more time reading the Pope’s pastoral letters and understanding his teachings, where contemporary language is being used to explain everlasting truths. He revealed too that in order to help the faithful in Greater China to get to know papal teaching promptly and accurately, the dioceses of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan will join hands to set up a translation team so that papal messages will have their timely and adequate translations in hand.

The meeting with the Salesian Family took place at Tang King Po School, Hong Kong, on April 18.