



**Cir. No. 43**

**JANUARY 2021**

Dearest Sisters,

God has gifted us with yet another New Year 2021 with His unfailing promise “Behold I make all things New” (Ap 21,5). The time of grace that God in His goodness gives us today is full of surprises, new avenues with new challenges, and beautiful paths to be traced with the assistance of the Spirit. It is the beauty that comes from the One who, with infinite love, opens the eyes of the soul so that we can discover the fragments of beauty that shine in daily life, in our communities, in the Church, and society.

At the dawn of 2021 we celebrate the **54<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace with the message of our Holy Father heralding the theme “A Culture of Care as a Path of Peace”**. The hour we are living is dialectic of light and shadows, of peace and violence, of the solicitude to walk without tiring, to go deeper until we reach the dwelling where the Holy Spirit awaits us and sanctifies us, traces out the road for an authentic encounter with Jesus, the Master of the interior life. We are fortunate to celebrate the year 2021 as ***The Year of St. Joseph*** who is the Patron of interior life.

### **PATRIS CORDE**

"With a father's heart..." A newly proclaimed Apostolic Letter, titled "**Patris corde**," begins with the appeal to live with fatherly love. In memory of the 150th anniversary of Pope Pius IX's proclamation of Saint Joseph as the "Patron of the Universal Church," Pope Francis proclaimed a special "Year of Saint Joseph," together with a proclamation from the Apostolic Penitentiary about special plenary indulgences extended to the elderly, the sick and the dying, from December 8, 2020, to December 8, 2021. In the new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis describes St. Joseph as ***a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father, a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows***. *Patris Corde* is written against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble St. Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence," who nonetheless played "an incomparable role in the History of Salvation."

**A BELOVED AND TENDER FATHER:** Saint Joseph, concretely expressed his fatherhood “by making an offering of himself in love” a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home. Because of his role at "the crossroads between the Old and New Testament," St. Joseph "has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people". In him, "Jesus saw the tender love of God," the one that helps us accept our weakness, because "it is through" and despite "our fears, our frailties, and our weakness" that most divine designs are realized. "Only tender love will save us from the snares of the

accuser," and it is by encountering God's mercy especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that we "experience His truth and tenderness," - because "we know that God's truth does not condemn us, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us".

**AN OBEDIENT FATHER:** With his 'fiat' he protects Mary and Jesus and teaches his Son to "do the will of the Father." Called by God to serve the mission of Jesus, he "cooperated... in the great mystery of Redemption, and is truly a minister of salvation."

**AN ACCEPTING FATHER:** St. Joseph is "an accepting Father," because he "accepted Mary unconditionally" - an important gesture even today, says Pope Francis, "in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence towards women is so evident." But the Bridegroom of Mary is also the one who, trusting in the Lord, accepts in his life even the events that he does not understand, "setting aside his own ideas" and reconciling himself with his own history. Joseph's spiritual path "is not one that explains, but accepts" - which does not mean that he is "resigned." Instead, he is "courageously and firmly proactive," because with "Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude," and full of hope, he is able "to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments." In practice, through St. Joseph, it is as if God were to repeat to us: "Do not be afraid!" because "faith gives meaning to every event, however happy or sad," and makes us aware that "God can make flowers spring up from the stony ground." Joseph "did not look for shortcuts but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it." For this reason, "he encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak".

**A CREATIVELY COURAGEOUS FATHER:** Patris corde highlights "the creative courage" of St Joseph, which "emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties." St. Joseph was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence. He had to deal with "the concrete problems" his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants. In this sense, St Joseph is "the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty." As the guardian of Jesus and Mary, Joseph cannot "be other than the guardian of the Church," of her motherhood, and the Body of Christ. "Consequently, every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect." From St Joseph, we must learn... to love the Church and the poor.

**A WORKING FATHER:** "A carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family," St Joseph also teaches us "the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour." St. Joseph dignified work and is the patron of workers. Work is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them at the service of society and fraternal communion. Those who work, cooperate with God Himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us. This Apostolic Letter exhorts us to rediscover the value, the importance and the necessity of work for bringing about a new 'normal' from which no one is excluded. Especially in the light of rising unemployment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Pope calls everyone to "review our priorities" and to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!"

**A FATHER IN THE SHADOWS:** St. Joseph's fatherhood of Jesus is "the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father." "Fathers are not born, but made," says Pope Francis. "A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child." Unfortunately, in today's society, children "often seem orphans, lacking fathers" who can introduce them "to life and reality." Children, need fathers who will

not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be "capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying the freedom and exploring new possibilities." This is the sense in which St Joseph is described as a "most chaste" father, which is the opposite of domineering possessiveness. Joseph, says Pope Francis, "knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself, but focused instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus." Happiness for Joseph involved a true gift of self: "In him, we never see frustration, but only trust" writes Pope Francis. "His patient silence was the prelude to concrete expressions of trust." Joseph stands out, therefore, as an exemplary figure for our time, in a world that "needs fathers," and not "tyrants"; a society that "rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, a charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction". True fathers, instead, "refuse to live the lives of their children for them," and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that "he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes 'useless,' when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied." Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, "has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a 'sign' pointing to a greater fatherhood": that of the "heavenly Father".

**ST. JOSEPH IN THE LIFE OF POPE FRANCIS:** In his letter, Pope Francis notes how, "Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds [Morning Prayer]" he has "recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary." This prayer, he says, expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph," on account of its closing words: "My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power."

At the conclusion of his Letter, he adds another prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together: Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you, Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

**PLENARY INDULGENCE:** The Apostolic Penitentiary has also issued a Decree granting plenary indulgences for the year of St Joseph.

- The plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful under the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intentions) to Christians who, with a spirit detached from any sin, participate in the Year of St Joseph on these occasions and manners indicated by the Apostolic Penitentiary:
- The plenary indulgence is granted to those who will meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, or take part in a Spiritual Retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St Joseph.
- The indulgence can also be obtained by those who, following St Joseph's example, will perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy.
- The recitation of the Holy Rosary in families and among engaged couples is another way of obtaining indulgences, in order that "all Christian families may be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family."

- Everyone who entrusts their daily activity to the protection of St Joseph, and every faithful who invokes the intercession of St Joseph so that those seeking work can find dignifying work can also obtain the plenary indulgence.
- The plenary indulgence is also granted to the faithful who will recite the Litany to St Joseph (for the Latin tradition), or the Akathistos to St Joseph (for the Byzantine tradition), or any other prayer to St Joseph proper to the other liturgical traditions, for the persecuted Church ad intra and ad extra, and the relief of all Christians suffering all forms of persecution.
- The faithful who will recite any legitimately approved prayer or act of piety in honour of St Joseph, for example, "To you, O blessed Joseph" especially on "19 March, on 1 May, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, on St Joseph's Sunday (according to the Byzantine tradition) on the 19th of each month and every Wednesday, a day dedicated to the memory of the saint according to the Latin tradition."
- Amid the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis, the gift of the plenary indulgence is also extended to the sick, the elderly, the dying and all those who for legitimate reasons are unable to leave their homes. They too can obtain the plenary indulgences if they are detached from any sin and have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions and recite an act of piety in honour of St Joseph, offering to God the pains and hardships of their lives.

**STRENNA 2021:** In response to the current situation generated by the pandemic, the Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, has gifted to the Salesian Family the Strenna for 2021, emblem of the Salesian response to the: «Hope moves us: “Behold, I make all things new” (Ap 21,5). We welcome with joy the message of our Rector Major which underlines and reaffirms that faced with this harsh and painful reality with its heavy consequences, we continue to express the certainty of being moved by hope: because God in His Spirit continues to make ‘all things new’.” Our Rector Major points out that Don Bosco himself experienced many difficult situations – including a cholera epidemic – without losing hope, on the contrary, always reacting and motivating others to increase their efforts, work even harder. The current era, therefore, is the opportune time for awareness and commitment in the face of everything that even before the pandemic was not going well, but which we had become accustomed to: the suffering of many people, the epidemics of other less-publicized diseases, the damage to Creation ... Here, then, the Strenna will serve to propose a Salesian reading of the present time in order to learn alternative processes to the dominant culture, capable of achieving a change of values and vision. And to maintain Salesian concreteness, to propose, at the same time, places and situations, where “to learn and exercise hope.” All this while always allowing oneself to be accompanied by Mary, “Mother of God, Star of Hope”.

**DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION:** The United Nations has issued a massive global ‘call to action’ to mobilize the political and financial support necessary to restore the world’s deforested and degraded ecosystems over the coming decade to support the wellbeing of 3.2 billion people around the globe. More than 2 billion hectares – an area larger than the South American continent – stand to be restored. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, approved by the General Assembly on 1 March, will run from 2021 to 2030 and emphasize scaling-up of restoration work to address the severe degradation of landscapes, including wetlands and aquatic ecosystems, worldwide. It will likely boost landscape restoration work to the top of national agendas, building on public demand for action on issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and the resulting impacts on economies and livelihoods. The Decade also targets coastal and wetland areas, which have been declining even more quickly than terrestrial ecosystems.

Coral reefs are projected to decline by a further 70 to 90 per cent with a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in global warming, having massively detrimental effects on biodiversity, the global economy and the atmosphere.

**INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CREATIVE ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** UN declares 2021 as International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. At the 74th session of the UN General Assembly this month, 2021 was declared as the International Year of CREATIVE ECONOMY for Sustainable Development.

**WITHIN THE FAMILY:**

**CENTENARY CELEBRATION 1922 – 2022:** In preparation for the Centenary Celebration 1922 – 2022, PCI held “Celebrating Memories of our Pioneers” on Tuesday, 8 December 2020 from 5.00 p.m. The celebration commenced with the Divine Moment animated by INB Province, followed by a welcome address by Sr. Nirmala Lazar, the Chair person of the Centenary Commission followed by a brief moment of honouring Mother Mary by INS, INK, and INB Provinces. Our heartfelt thanks to our dear Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, Visiting Councilor who availed herself and delivered the inaugural talk. In celebrating memories of our Pioneers ING, INK, INS, INC and INM presented the life of Sr. Innocenza Vallino, Sr. Giulia Berra, Sr. Cecillia Da Roit, Sr. Clotilde Appiano and Sr. Maria Bricarello respectively. The Zoom meeting concluded with honouring Mary by the Provinces of INC, INT, INM and ING followed by vote of thanks by INT. Our sincere thanks to Sr. Braganza Hilda, Media Coordinators of all the Provinces and the young Sisters who presented the life of our beloved Pioneers.

**FMA INDIA LOGO DESIGN COMPETITION:** The FMA India Souvenir Committee is glad to invite sisters to participate in the FMA India Logo Design competition on the theme “With Mary through the Course of the Century (1922 – 2022) and Beyond...” All the details regarding the competition are sent in the poster of the logo competition. We are expected to mail to [logofmacen@gmail.com](mailto:logofmacen@gmail.com). The selected logo will be used for the entire Celebration. The last date of Submission is **30 January 2021**. We invite also the High School Students to participate in the Logo Design Competition.

**ANNUAL RETREAT:** Fifty five Sisters participated in the Annual Spiritual Retreat held from 26 December 2020 to 2 January 2021. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to Rev. Fr. Alphonse Philip SDB from INM Province who animated the retreat on the theme **Chosen for the World! Consecrated and Challenged to be Salt and Light of the world.**

**PONGAL 2021:** As Pongal the feast of the harvest is fast approaching, we remember with gratitude all the farmers who toil day in and day out paving the way for us to express our gratitude to the Lord who blesses us with good harvest. Let us pray for all our farmers so that they may be blessed with feasible conditions in India to accomplish their work with joy.

## MEETINGS – JANUARY 2021

Date	Meeting
08	Team Meeting – Google Meet
09-10	Provincial Council - Auxilium Provincial House
18 - 19	Economers Meeting and Submission of Accounts

## LET'S CELEBRATE – JANUARY 2021

01	Mother of God
03	Epiphany of the Lord
10	Baptism of our Lord
14	Blessed Devasahayam (M)
18 - 25	Unity Octave
22	St. Vincent Pallotti ( India)
24	St. Francis de Sales
25	Conversion of St. Paul AP.
26	Republic Day of India
27	SS. Timothy and Titus, Bps.
31	Feast of St. John Bosco

## OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS

† To our dear Aspirant Deena who lost her mother Mrs. Aanthonyammal on 7 December 2020 in Pallam, Kanyakumari District.

† To Sr. Poobalarayan Nirmala who lost her elder sister Mrs. Rajam Fernando on 8 December 2020 in Thambaram.

† To Sr. Rita Dora Thomas and the Sisters of the Province of St. Mary Mazzarello – INB at the demise of Sr. Beatrice Monteiro (82) who passed away on 24 December 2020 in Mangalore.

† To Rev. Fr. Kochamkunnel Jose and the confreres at the demise of Rev. Fr. Felix Koikara (83) SDB (INM Province who passed away on 25 December 2020

Let us continue to pray for the bereaved members of the family.

As the pandemic continue to challenge us, I conclude with some inspiring extracts from **Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future** a book written by Pope Francis in collaboration with his biographer Austen Ivereigh: “To come out of this crisis better, we have to see clearly, choose well, and act right. Let us talk about how. Let us dare to dream” .May Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph lead us to become co dreamers with our Holy Father to make the world safer, fairer, and healthier for all people now. My affectionate greetings to the entire Salesian Family and Educating Community for a grace filled New Year and the Feast of our Holy Founder Don Bosco.

Yours affectionately,



Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret  
Provincial.