



CIR. NO. 34

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Dearest Sisters,

**“For neither herb nor poultice cured them,
but it was your work, O Lord that heals all people”**

Greeting of peace as we journey through the very complex historical hour - the celebration of the Paschal mystery of Christ blended with our unimaginable experience of sorrow, pain, suffering and loss of life due to the spread of Corona virus.

The outbreak, which was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in December 2019 was recognized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. On 24 March, 2020 the Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure against the 2020 coronavirus pandemic in India. It was ordered after a 14-hour voluntary public curfew on 22 March, followed by enforcement of a series of regulations in the country's COVID-19 affected regions. The lockdown was placed when the number of confirmed positive coronavirus cases in India was approximately 500. On 14 April, Prime Minister extended the nationwide lockdown till 3 May with a conditional relaxation after 20 April for the regions where the spread has been contained. This lockdown has brought all factories, markets, shops and places of worship closed, most public transport suspended and construction work halted, so as to stop the imminent spread of the novel corona virus. In spite of the lockdown, there is a rapid spread of the virus. At this juncture, where health workers with other civil workers are engaged in alleviating the pain of the people, most of us are lockdown with an invitation to journey within and join with the entire human race to plead the Lord to come to our aid.

Wisdom 18:20-22 narrates the threat of Annihilation in the Desert. “The experience of death touched also the righteous, and a plague came upon the multitude in the desert, but the wrath did not long continue. For a blameless man was quick to act as their champion. He brought forward the shield of his ministry, prayer and propitiation by incense. He withstood the anger and put an end to the disaster, showing that he was thy servant. He conquered the wrath not by strength of body, and not by force of arms, but by His Word he subdued the punisher, appealing to the oaths and covenants given to our fathers.”

Responding to the reality, Pope Francis, the herald of God's mercy invited everyone to join him in the Urbi et Orbi blessing on 27 March, 2020 at 10.30 p.m. with blessings and plenary indulgence to the people who could not have an access to the Sacraments.

In one of his interviews, Pope Francis traces the ways and means to face the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic: "We need to rediscover the concreteness of small things, the small acts of kindness shown to those who are close to us, family and friends. We need to realize that our treasure lies in small things. There are tiny gestures that sometimes get lost in the routine of everyday life, gestures of tenderness, affection, compassion, that are nevertheless decisive and important." He gives the examples of sharing "a hot plate of food, a caress, a hug, a phone call... these are familiar, attentive gestures regarding everyday details that make life meaningful, create communion and communication amongst us". Holy Father invites "everyone to be close to those who have lost loved ones, to try to accompany them in every way possible". We must all be dedicated to consoling others.

Our dear Mother General in one of her communications on Corona Pandemic says: "We Christians and consecrated women are asked for something more, intensify prayer to the Father the Lord of history so that with his grace, he will help all of us, and the entire human family, to live this time with mature faith, hope and openness to solidarity. It is time for greater trust in the presence of God and in the powerful intervention of Mary, Mother, and Help of every son and daughter present throughout the world." As per her exhortation, let us continue to pray the novena to Mary Help of Christians, until this emergency is eradicated, as Don Bosco suggested, "If you want to obtain graces from the Holy Virgin make a novena" (MB IX, 289).

I take this opportunity to thank all the Sisters and Communities who have taken steps to express your concreteness of small acts of kindness to the people around and those who are paving the way to reach out to the Corona affected victims. We are grateful to Social Development Office Sisters and Novices of Divyadhanam Community at Manikandam who mobilized the resources to respond immediately to the plea of Sudaroli Self Employment Women Group to supply food for 117 families who had lost their daily wage earning jobs from the neighboring village of Ambedkar Nagar on 9 April 2020. We are grateful to the donors and the Sisters who reached out to the migrant families.

As the end of the lockdown period approached, the state government and other advisory committees recommended extending the lockdown as a way to reduce the possibility of COVID 19 massive outbreak in the communities. Mrs. Poongothai, the Ward member of Manikandam village approached the Sisters and requested food supplies for 110 Dalit families who were daily wage earners. On 18 April 2020, the ASSIST the Social Development Office Directress and Staff along with the community Sisters of Divyadhanam community headed to the Manikandam village accompanied by the local Policemen to distribute the food supplies for 110 families. At the request of the Local Police for supplies of Personal Protective Equipment, Auxilium Synergy Source for Integrated Social Transformation - ASSIST purchased

and supplied Personal Protective Equipment - PPE for the local police officers of the area and the neighboring station. People of the village and Policemen along with the village leaders praised God for His providence at this time of need.

WORLD FEAST OF GRATITUDE: We take this opportunity to greet our Mother General a very Happy Feast and big thanks for her charismatic leadership nurtured with motherly tenderness and joy. We are grateful to her for her audacious accompaniment in coordinating the General Council, and assisting us to living our vocational fruitfulness. On studying Mother General's Circular 977 - 'with the young we touch the chords of life', we have chosen the following thank you commitment: "We commit ourselves gratefully to awaken the plan of God in every young person to make a radical response to God's call through our vocational fruitfulness rejuvenated with joy of fraternity." The initiatives taken in view of the World Feast of Gratitude will be availed in the Institute's website, on the Province's Website and Social Channel: Province's sharing comprising the sharing of the communities on Mother General's Circular are available in <http://www.fmairo.net>. The video presentation on ecological conversion, the thanksgiving message by Sr. Angela Maria Maccioni, Animation of Rosary and the videotaped message of our beloved Mother General can be viewed through you tube channel - **ISPETTORIA ROMANA SAN GIOVANNI BOSCO FMA IRO**. The Answers to the questions based on Mother General's Circular will be available in Instagram and Facebook from 15 to 22 April. The presentation of video, messages, and letter sent by the young people from Roman Provinces to Mother General will be shared in the websites and social channels of the Provinces.

REST IN PEACE: Dr P. Soundararaju Periyamayagam SDB, DD (70), Bishop of Vellore passed away suddenly due to a massive cardiac arrest on March 21, 2020. He was born to Mr. D. Periyamayagam and Mrs. C. Bernath on 6 June, 1949 at Periya Kolapalur, Vellore District. He was the eldest of the eight children, five brothers, and two sisters. He was appointed as the sixth Bishop of Vellore Diocese, Tamil Nadu on 11 July 2006 and ordained a Bishop on 24 August 2006. He was a great orator who could share the teachings of the Church with passion and precision. He was known for his passion for the poorest and was keenly interested in the education of young people. As a Bishop, one of his concern was to reach out to the downtrodden. He had a great capacity to pool the resources of the priests and religious of the Diocese to realize the dream of God for the marginalized. He was audacious to speak the truth, blended harmoniously the qualities of the heart and intellect to work for the kingdom of God. He was a person of compassion, forgiveness, and love. His death has indeed left a vacuum in the Church and in the Salesian Family. The Funeral Service took place on 24 March 2020 at 10 a.m. in Assumption Cathedral, Vellore. May the Lord grant him eternal bliss and bless his family and the Diocese with consolation and peace.

WITHIN THE FAMILY:

SECOND NOVITIATE: Sr. Antony M. Ponraj Amudha Selvi and Sr. Samson S. Gnana Jennifer will be making their Perpetual Profession this year. Let us accompany them with our prayers so that they may prepare well and configure themselves to the image of Jesus to be heralds of His Love.

ANNUAL RETREAT: Corona Pandemic has restricted our going out but opened up a vast horizon to journey within. It is a time of grace that God has bestowed on us once again to cherish our Community life, refocusing our gaze on the Lord and His mission. Those who have not completed the Annual Spiritual Retreat are requested to have the animation in your own communities before the end of this month. The resource material for the Annual Retreat will be sent to the Animators' email address. I thank all the Animators in advance for making all the arrangement for Sisters to make their Retreat well in a conducive ambient.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GENERAL COUNCIL (2020 - 2026) : Congratulations to our Rector Major Rev. Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime on his second mandate as the X successor of Don Bosco and to Fr. Stefano Martoglio - the former regional for the Mediterranean region who has been elected as the new Vicar of the Rector Major. Congratulations to all the newly elected General Councillors of the Sectors Fr. IVO Coelho - General Councillor for Formation, Fr. GARCIA Miguel Ángel - General Councillor for Youth Pastoral, Fr. SANTOS Gildasio - Geeneral Councillor for Social Communication, Fr. MARAVILLA Alfred - General Councillor for the Missions, Bro. MULLER Jean Paul - Economer General and all the newly elected General Councilors for various regions, particularly Fr. Biju Michael Pulianmackal SDB of Guwahati Province who is elected as the New Regional of South Asia in the place of Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga. We implore God's blessings and the accompaniment of our Blessed Mother in their newly assumed responsibilities. At this juncture, we remember Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga with sentiments of gratitude and affection. Being a man of interiority, he was available to share the wisdom with us. May the Lord grant all the graces he needs to establish His kingdom.

MEETING OF THE HISTORY WRITING COMMITTEE: Sr. Anthonyswamy Suganthi took part in the meeting of the Committee for History writing towards the centenary of FMA presence in India from 16- 18 March 2020 at Kodambakkam, Chennai.

TRAINING BY MIRACLE FOUNDATION: Sr. Irudayasamy Maria Tamil Selvi took part in a three day programme on "Training for Child Care Institutions" animated by the Salesian Sisters India in partnership with Miracle Foundations for the Sisters responsible for YaR centres/ Boarding from 11-13 March 2020 at Provincial House, Avalahalli, Bangalore.

CONGRATULATIONS: We are sincerely thankful to Sr. Alice Chacko, for her dedicated work in compiling and printing the reports of the PCI meetings from its inception until now (1989 – 2019). We thank God for her zeal and passion in fulfilling the Mission of the Lord.

OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS

- † To the Provincial and Confreres of the Salesian Province of Hyderabad at the death of Bro. Soosai Dennis on 14 March 2020.
- † To Sr. Rose Ezarath and the Sisters of INC Province over the passing away of our dear Sr. Mary George Uzhunnalil (88) on 27 March 2020 at Provincial House, Auxilium Dum Dum, Kolkata.

- † To Fr. Thathireddy Vijaya Bhaskar and the Confreres of INH over the demise of Fr. Yedanapalli Antony Selvraj SDB who passed away on 9 April, 2020 at DB, Mathinagar, Hyderabad.
- † To the Provincial and Confreres of INB over the demise of Bro. Michael Condillac (78) at Karum Hospital, Borivali, Mumbai on 12 April, 2020.

This Sunday, April 19, 2020 we celebrate the twentieth year after the Institution of the Feast of Divine Mercy by John Paul II on the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938) in the Jubilee Year of 2000. In her diary, Faustina wrote these words of the Lord: **“I wish the Feast of Mercy to be a refuge for all souls, especially those of poor sinners...I will bring forth a whole sea of graces for the souls who come to the source of my Mercy.”** Let us become mediators of God’s ocean of mercy to millions of people who are suffering at this time because of the consequences of the new coronavirus and the souls departed through our prayers, penance, and sacrifices.

Sr. Margaret A

Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret
Provincial