



CIR. NO. 38

AUGUST 2020

Dearest Sisters,

At the wake of the month of August, we are blessed with the triple events of importance - **148th Anniversary of the Foundation Day of our Institute**, commencement of the **Second year of preparation for the Centenary of our presence in India**, and the Feast, **Our Lady of Snow the beloved Patroness of our Province**, on 5 August, 2020. This month is replete with many Marian Feasts, which beckons us to renew our identity and Charism as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. Grateful to God and to Mary Help of Christians for the great history we have lived as FMA up to now, we want to revitalize the beauty of the charism so that it may be more meaningful and contagious in the context of India today.

Daughter of Mary Help of Christians

F. Maccono in his book on **St. Maria Mazzarello** records: “The Holy Founder... desired that the new Religious should be called by the beautiful name of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, because, as he said later in moving accents, he wished that the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians should be a monument of perennial gratitude for the singular favours granted by this good Mother.” Later Don Bosco added: “Tell these good Daughters that I will come and together we shall make the great promise to live and die working for the Lord under the beautiful name of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians”

The Servant of God, Don Philip Rinaldi, whose heart most resembled that of our Father, John Bosco, of whose fatherliness he was the living incarnation, wished that we enter well into the thought of Don Bosco, also as regards our title. “You are Daughters of Mary Help of Christians” he wrote, – remember this well – not Ladies, not Mothers, not Mistresses, neither Sisters not Servants, Daughters! This name is always the sweetest to the ear, the dearest to the heart... Daughters of Mary! Yours is a great glory! Jesus is Mary’s Son and you are made equal to Him! You have renounced everything, but there still remains to you the most beautiful and precious treasure on earth and in heaven: Mary, the apple of God’s eye! Comfort yourselves in your troubles and difficulties, you are confided to the care of this divine Mother who watches over you with infinite tenderness. Endeavour at all costs to be a true Daughter of Mary Help of Christians: you will be happy in proportion to the remembrance which you preserve of this title which honours you; and to the efforts that you make to bear it worthily”

Being a Daughter of Mary Help of Christians obliges us to live with Mary, in Mary, through Mary in an interior assimilation and fusion of soul whereby we reproduce in ourselves her spiritual likeness as a daughter reproduces the likeness of her mother. Don Rinaldi repeats again in the Strenna for the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, 21 Nov. 1927: “... the

thought of Don Bosco in founding this Institute was that every Sister in it should be a faithful copy of Mary, so that in seeing her one would exclaim: "This is how she must have been, this is how the Blessed among women must have acted!" The good Sisters of Mary Help of Christians must strive therefore, to reproduce in themselves, with the greatest possible perfection, the virtues of Our Lady; her immaculate purity, her profound humility, her heroic spirit of sacrifice and especially her active goodness. Seeing her, the world should say: 'Here is a true Daughter of Mary Help of Christians!'

This Marian character of our way of acting and working is an obligation imposed by our vocation, stemming from the fact that we form part of a Congregation pre-eminently Marian. In fact the Virgin Mother embraced a life of virginity and poverty which Christ Our Lord chose for Himself. She consecrated herself completely to the person and work of the Incarnate Word, in the service of the Mystery of Redemption, and in the role as Help of Christians, she cares for her Son's brethren who are still pilgrims on earth. In fact, it is an obligation, which we renew daily by the special act of consecration to Mary Help of Christians. By this consecration, every Daughter of Mary Help of Christians, day by day, dedicates herself entirely to her and promises her to "live and work" in her and with her for the "greater glory of God and for the salvation of souls"; being a witness to her in the world, making her "known and loved.

A marian life is one which unfolds under the standard of Mary, under her gaze, her inspiration and her guidance. The soul clothes herself with Mary's spirit, to clothe herself with Christ Jesus, and with Him ascend to the Father, inflamed with and animated by the Holy Spirit. Living in this way implies that Our Lady thinks, prays and works in us; it means that we conform ourselves to her, to her loving "Fiat", to her "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" which is the expression of her complete surrender to God. All this means living in Jesus, with Jesus and through Jesus, because the life of Mary, being replete with the Spirit of Jesus, has no other end in view, no other purpose: "we belong to Mary, but Mary belongs to Christ".

Let us live therefore in Mary, and as Mary did, in absolute virginity, a life of love both consecrated and consecrating. The exclusive love of God is the virginal seal on the whole of Mary's being. The great secret of the Blessed Virgin is this; as she did not conceive the Word Incarnate except by the power of the Holy Spirit, so, all her thoughts, words and deeds were conceived in Him, and through Him brought into being and action. There was nothing of self, nothing on a purely human or natural plane in her, but everything was raised to the supernatural plane of grace; everything done in the Holy Spirit and by the Holy Spirit. Her "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" was no isolated act, it was a state of total, absolute, unconditional surrender to all that God desired.

We belong to a Marian Congregation and we must live in a Marian atmosphere. Let us be impregnated with her spirit, to be able to spread it around us, always and everywhere. We must do everything in Mary and with Mary, because she inspired, guided and led Don Bosco step by step in the founding and organising our Institute. Its foundation on the day of the dedication of the greatest Basilica in honour of Our Lady of St. Mary Major - 5th August, Our Lady of the Snow, 1872 - seems almost to symbolize the dedication of our Institute as the "living temple" of Our Lady Help of Christians, which sings through the ages the glories of Mary: "From here, my glory shall go forth!" Our Lady herself has imprinted the spirit, established the aims, prescribed the methods. Our Lady Help of Christians is, above all, our Lady seen in her highest dignity of Mother of God and Mother of the Church, Christ's

Mystical Body, in her particular and universal mission as Co-Redemptrix with Christ and helper of His Church. She is the special helper of Him who personifies and represents the Church as her visible Head, the Vicar of Christ, the Pope.

To live in Mary is to live in the Church and for the Church. “Mary and the Church are not two realities diverse in character; in a certain way they are the same mystery viewed under two different aspects. Do we not say: Our Holy Mother the Church, as also our Mother Mary? Devotion to Our Lady is already devotion to the Church.

The dogmatic Constitution, “De Ecclesia”, confirms this authoritatively: “The intimate connection of the Blessed Virgin with the Church is based on the gift, the office, of divine motherhood which unites her to her Son, the Redeemer, and on her singular graces and gifts. As St. Ambrose taught long ago, the Mother of God is the type of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ. In the Mystery of the Church, which is rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin has taken precedence because of the eminence and uniqueness of the example that she offers as virgin and mother”.

To live in Mary Help of Christians is to give our life this essentially ecclesial character. Mary Help of Christians is, in fact, the Queen of Apostles and Mother of the Church. Our vocation as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians is, therefore, to carry out the mission of Our Lady Help of Christians. With Mary, the Daughter of Mary Help of Christians must be a helper of Jesus and of His Church. She must bear Jesus within her as Our Lady did, to give Him to souls; she must extend Mary’s work and mission, causing Jesus to be born and to grow in her brothers and sisters; in short, she must participate in Mary’s virginal motherhood in the Church.

At this juncture, a Hymn of Gratitude wells up from our hearts to sing the praises of Mary who did it all in our Province since 2017. Our journey as educators today, with the intervention of Mary still needs a grace filled, creative and audacious response. May Mary our Blessed Mother, accompany us in our mission as we are called to face the challenges of New Education Policy today. Let us remember to entrust ourselves and our Province under her protection and guidance.

INDEPENDENCE DAY AND ASSUMPTION – MARY THE WOMAN FULLY FREE:

Even today, the Indian woman is not treated as equal to man. She is subjugated, dehumanized, and exploited. As the young Indian girl begins to make her presence felt in the family and in society, she finds herself curtailed to many fronts. Often, she cannot exercise freedom even where necessities are concerned. Naturally, she grows up into a very nervous, suspicious, discontented, dependent, withdrawn person, unable to develop her inborn talents or realize her potentialities towards self-reliance and leadership.

Though the ‘**culture of silence**’ prevailed in Mary’s times, she chose to speak. She questioned the Angel, “How can this be since I am a virgin’. She knew very well that her acceptance to be a mother before her marriage was full of risks. She would be the object of suspicion and calumny with the prospect of being abandoned and ultimate risk of being stoned to death. The family would lose its reputation and prestige in the eyes of the neighbours. Even Joseph himself would have to face scorn and ridicule. Therefore, in saying her ‘yes’ but as a well - informed, intelligent human being. Though she lived in **a culture of silence, she dialogued, discerned, and made courageous choices.** She distinguished

between ‘**freedom from**’ and ‘**freedom to**’. She freed herself from internal and external pressure or conditioning and journeyed to a freedom to choose something positive in harmony with one’s life project.

Hence “**freedom from**” is in function of “**freedom for.**” so if a society cannot ensure “freedom from” to its members, the “freedom for” guaranteed in the constitution becomes, to put it mildly, just a dead letter. All education is, therefore, helping young people to acquire “freedom from” so that they can exercise “freedom for” as adult members of society.

WITHIN THE FAMILY:

WELCOME: We are happy to welcome Sr. Robert Santhiya Punitha who has completed her three years of study on Religious Science in Auxilium Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences, Rome, and will be returning in the month of August, 2020. May our Blessed Mother be with her in her new venture of forming the vibrant Novices of INM and INT in Manikandam.

VOCATIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT: The eleven Aspirants who after their annual home holidays could not proceed to Katpadi were in Regunathapuram from 2 - 29 July 2020. The community of Regunathapuram received them with joy. During the course of their stay there, they were given formative sessions in preparation for their Postulancy. We are grateful to Sr. Amirthasamy Maria Pushpam - the Vice Provincial and her Community who lovingly accompanied them in their formative journey. Let us also support them with our Prayers for their holy perseverance, as they will make their Annual Retreat during these days, followed by the reception of Postulants medals on 24 August, 2020.

VOCATION PROMOTION: As we live in a period of lock down, I lovingly invite you to respond generously to promote quality vocations to our Institute and the Church with intensified prayer and assuming personal responsibility for the care, discernment, and accompaniment of vocations.

JUNIORS PROGRAMME: The 14 Junior Sisters namely Sr. Jeyaseelan Thabitha Florence, Sr. Raja Clarenia Mary, Sr. Pichai Muthu Masilin Mariya, Sr. Arulananthu Jefri, Sr. Mahimai Raj Jaya Sharmila, Sr. Pensiker Bastina Mary, Sr. Vishvanathan Sujatha, Sr. Charles Sandal Princy, Sr. Joseph Kulanthai Theresa, Sr. Devadoss S. Soniya, Sr. Paralogaraj Jeya, Sr. Paralogaraj Sutha, Sr. Antony Samy Reshma and Sr. Sahayaraj Infanta commenced their Intensive Juniorate in Auxilium Provincial House, Tiruchirapalli on 24 July, 2020 – the day dedicated to our beloved Mother. Let us accompany them with our prayers. May this course help them to pay heed to the whisperings of Mary to do whatever Jesus tells them.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE WITH GRATITUDE:

- Sr. Lazar Nirmala for coordinating the annual INM and INT Formators online Meeting on 25 July, 2020.
- Sr. Azarias Arockia Mary Selvi for animating Webinar Leadership Training for all the Sisters of our Province on four Thursdays beginning from 15 July, 2020.

PUBLIC EXAM RESULTS: Heartfelt congratulations to all the students who in collaboration with their management and Teaching Staff have secured good results in the

Public Exams for the year 2019 - 2020. Paying heed to the signs of the time, let us accompany the young people in the Don Bosco way, in this new scholastic year.

INTERACTIVE ONLINE MEETINGS:

SALESIAN COOPERATORS: Twenty-five SDB and FMA Provincial Delegates and Provincial Councilors responsible for Salesian Family participated in the interactive on line meeting headed by Fr. Ashok Lawrence Britto SDB, the Province secretary of INT on 17 July, 2020. Sr. Anthonyswamy Rosy - Province Delegate for Salesian Cooperators and Sr. Poobalarayen Nirmala – Provincial Councillor responsible for Salesian Family, participated in the meeting on the topic *the current situation of Salesian Cooperators and the need to strengthen their faith life*.

Under the able guidance of Sr. Carmen Lucrecia Uribe of Colombian nationality, the World Delegate of the Association of Salesian Cooperators (ASSCC) for the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians animated an interactive online meeting for ten FMA Salesian Cooperators' Province Delegates, on 18 July, 2020. Sr. Anthonyswamy Rosy participated in the meeting and briefed about the status of the Salesian Cooperators in the Province, statistics, formative programme, activities carried out, plan for the future and the effect and response of Covid 19 in the Province.

Sr. Anthonyswamy Rosy along with FMA's, SDB's local delegates for the Salesian Cooperators participated in the interactive on line meeting held on 22 July, 2020 on how to reach out to the needy in collaboration with FMA and SDB units in Tamil Nadu.

ASSIST - Auxilium Synergy Source for Integrated Social Transformation:

- A Google Meet headed by **Sr. Xavier Jenophia Josephine** and **Mr. Arjun** the Coordinator of Keela Eral was held for twenty evening Coaching Study Centre students on the cause and preventive measures to fight against Covid 19 on 13 July, 2020. Mr. Arjun also presented the awareness posters on Covid 19 to fifteen evening coaching study Centre Students through Google meet on **17 July, 2020**. A Conference Call Meet for fifteen Members of the Child Protection Committee of Eppodhum Vendran Village (Ever Victorious Village) was organized by Mr. Arjun the Coordinator of Keela Eral in order to revise the inputs on **Child protection policy, and Gender based violence issues** by Ms. Subathra the women Programme coordinator.
- On **18 July 2020**, an online meeting was held for fifteen coordinators of Children and women on drafting **Action Plan for 2020 - 2021** by Sr. Azarias Arockia Mary Selvi, Sr. Remegius Angel Veda, Sr. Antony Lourdu Sagayam, Mr. Jahir and Ms. Subathra staff from ASSIST.
- Headed by Fr. Joseph Xavier the consultant, a Google meet for SDCs and Core Team Members was organized by NDFC on 4 July, 2020 to discuss on **Strategies on Campaign against Covid 19 and Plan the Training Program**.
- Sr. Azarias Arockia Mary Selvi and Mr. Britto, Coordinator for Skilling Programme participated in the Partner Head Meet on **Self-Employment** organized by Quest Alliance

on **3 July, 2020**. Sr. Selvi also participated in the Emerging Leaders Cohort, S2 Sub Grant Catch up, and Quest to Learn Summit on the theme – **Skill for the future of work** organized by Quest Alliance from **8 to 10, 21 to 22 July 2020** respectively.

Youth Ministry Sector:

- An Online Meeting for the Responsible person of ISS – FMA and the Provincial Coordinators for Youth Ministry was animated on **23 July 2020** on the theme “**The Covid 19 Pandemic in reshaping education, challenges and possibilities for the network of ISS- FMA**. Sr. Amirthasamy Maria Pushpam, Sr. Peter Selvarani and Sr. Ayundukayam Arockia Malarjothi participated in the meeting, which was animated by Sr. Runita Borja and the team belonging to the Youth Ministry Sector.
- Thirty delegates and office bearers from ten VIDES units of the Province participated in the online meeting held on **31 July, 2020** on the theme **Monetarism and accompaniment of God in the Current Scenario** headed by Sr. Rayappan Sampooranam.
- Sr. Fernando Majella the Academic Coordinator of the Province along with some HMs, Staff and Sisters participated in the Webinar seminar on **Implications of the National Education Policy** on the present Educational System animated by Mr. Britto the Advocate and Director of VAAN MUHIL Educational System on **1 August 2020**.

LET’ S CELEBRATE – AUGUST 2020

- 05 Our Lady of Snow
- 06 Transfiguration of the Lord
- 10 St. Lawrence
- 14 St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe
- 15 The Assumption
- 22 Queenship of the BVM
- 24 St. Bartholomew Ap.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS IN THE PROVINCE – AUGUST 2020

Meetings to be Coordinated by Sr. Kanickaraj Tamizharasi - PCI National Delegate for Formation

- Zoom Meet for the **Animators and Formators** of INM and INT will be held on **24 to 26 August, 2020**
- Zoom Meet for the **Formators** of all the Provinces of India for the **Province Formation Coordinator** for Initial and Ongoing Formation, **Intensive Juniorate Animator and Assistant, Novice Formator and Assistants, The Animators and Assistants of CPCs, Aspirants and Postulants** .

Meeting to be coordinated by Sr. Madalaimuthu Angela - Province Economer

- Google Meet for all the Economers of INT Communities will be animated on **8 August, 2020** from **5.00 to 6.00 p.m.**

Further details about the above meetings will be communicated later.

OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS

† To Sr. Poobalarayen Nirmala at the demise of her dear elder brother Mr. Gnanapragasam (65) on 15 July 2020.

† To Fr. Joseph Pauria SDB and the confreres of INC, at the loss of

- Fr. Mathew Mananchira (75) on 17 July 2020,
- Fr. Joseph Aymanathil (73) on 19 July 2020,
- Fr. Thomas Kanjirathumkal (87) on 3 August 2020.

† To Sr. Lazar Nirmala and Sisters of INM over the death of Sr. Gnanapragasam Victorina (45) who passed away on 21 July 2020.

† To Sr. Savarimuthu Annamanickam on the passing away of her elder brother, Mr. Gaspar (64) on 21 July 2020.

† To Fr. Jose Kuruvachira SDB and the Confreres of IND at the demise of Fr. Joseph Kaippallimyalil (56) on 27 July 2020.

† To Sr. Maria Kanikkai Savariammal over the passing away of her dear father Mr. Maria Kanikkai (80) on 2 August, 2020.

May the Lord grant the dear departed His eternal bliss, bless, and comfort their families.

In this journey of preparation, we remain united in prayer and in the joy of belonging to the Lord and to our beautiful religious Family, entirely of Mary. Invoking the blessings of our Blessed Mother on each one especially our Mother land India which celebrates its 73rd Independence Day, we greet one another a very Happy Feast. Let us continue to be united in prayer for the entire humanity especially the victims of the Pandemic Covid 19.

With affection, we greet you by invoking upon all of you the blessing of the Trinity and of Mary Help of Christians.



Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret
Provincial.