

**Cir. No. 37**

**JULY 2020**

Dearest Sisters,

### **PANDEMIC – A TIME OF GRACE AND MERCY**

In the month of July we solemnize the Feast of **St. Thomas** and **St. James** the Apostle. The Heart of Jesus whose Feast we celebrated in the month of June is sensitive to the pulsation of every human heart and so was it to St. Thomas who wanted a personal verification of Jesus' Resurrection. Jesus showed his wounds and invited him to touch His divine wound, as he desired. This immense love of Jesus shook Thomas and he was transformed completely. He was overwhelmed by Jesus' accessibility and meekness, that it reduced him to total surrender. He could only stammer, "My Lord and my God". Today we too are invited to put our finger into the Wounds of our brothers and sisters near and far by becoming sensitive to the pulsations of the Heart of Jesus and respond to the needs of the humanity with love that transforms.

We are living in a complex reality. The pandemic - Covid 19 has stretched its horrid tentacles the world over. It seems to tell us a tale, that only people with immunity power, comfortable habitats, workspace via internet can make profit and earn their livelihood in spite of the lockdown. While, the poor who have the sky as their roof over their head and those who cannot protect themselves by wearing masks and frequent hand wash can get themselves contaminated easily. The pandemic has not only distanced us from people but also distanced us from the dwelling places of God.

Israelites faced similar situation when ten plagues sent by God surrounded them. It's an invitation to each one of us to make an arduous journey within and a herculean pilgrimage outside into the shrine of human hearts that longs for God's mercy and love. God says in Exodus 3: 7 - 8: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites."

Our dear Mother General in her Circular 999 says, "This is a favourable time to stir into flame the gift of God that we have and to witness it precisely today with trust and with perspectives open to the future." To stir into flame the gift of God that we have", asks us to assume with new passion the formation journey as a space where the Holy Spirit acts, renews, recreates, breathes where He will and how He will. He is the 'active and transformative presence' in us, in the educating communities, in the young. He is the 'formator' par excellence who nourishes, sustains, and revives the joy of fidelity to the gift of our Christian Vocation and daring in the mission as Salesian consecrated women. At this unprecedented time of human history, we are posed with the questions on 'what to do', how

to act, which prospects are opening before us. Above all, we are invited to discern who we are and who we are called to be.

Jesus is true to His Words when He says, “Ask and you will receive, seek, and you will find, knock and the door will be open to you. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? If we know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will the Father in Heaven give us all that we need and more than we dare to ask.” “ The Heart of Jesus can never refuse anything we need or He can never keep silence to what we ask for according to His will. In the circumstances that we live, we are privileged to exercise mercy and intercede the Lord for our people.

#### **A few recommendations during the time of Covid 19:**

- Focusing on auto formation, self education and self discipline
- Following the guidelines of Formation sector.
- Formulating your goals and the ways to achieve them during this lockdown period.
- Apart from regular practices of piety, spending an hour in prayer, interceding and mediating God’s blessings on his people.
- Spending an hour at the lap of nature to actualize the theory of Laudato Si.
- Facilitating opportunities to all the members to improve their knowledge and communicative skills.
- Facilitating digital classes for the faculties and students wherever it is possible.
- Updating the documents and archives of the community.
- A judicious budgeting at all levels.
- Deepening our spiritual life by putting on the image of Christ more and more.
- Animating an hour of study daily for the Junior Sisters on “Guidelines for the Formation period of Temporary Vows”
- Taking care of young girls who show signs of vocation through personal contact and directing the suitable candidates to Dindigul – Marianathapuram.

#### **FIDELITY AND PERSEVERANCE: INTERTWINED RESPONSIBILITIES**

Pope Francis addressing the participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life spoke on the theme: “Fidelity and Perseverance: intertwined responsibilities” comprising of Three Pillars of Consecrated Life or Three Scales of Discernment on 4 May, 2018 in the Vatican. The three “Ps” consist of **Prayer, Poverty, and Patience.**

**Prayer** is returning to the **First call** and the person who enticed us to leave everything behind and follow Him. It is a loving recollection of the soul, of that **First glance** so powerful, to remain close to Him and share more intimately in His Mission. It is the reminiscence of the wrestling we had with the Lord and the resistances we had experienced in leaving behind our beloved mother, father, family, career... etc to possess the precious treasure we have found in Jesus. Prayer makes us work for the Lord and not for our personal interests or for an Institute. It is the smile of the **First steps**... During moments of problems, it is this returning to the First encounter which helped us to keep alive the flame within and kept us moving forward in our religious and consecrated life. As air is to the body so is prayer to a religious. The life of Mother Theresa is source of inspiration to each one of us. While engaging in the mission, Mother Theresa went in search of problems for the sake of the people. Her long lingering look at the Eucharistic Lord everyday enabled her to face any problem. We cannot discern if we do not speak and listen to the Lord. The Church needs men and women who pray in this moment of great pain for humanity.

The second “P” is **Poverty**. While speaking about Poverty, in the Constitutions of the Jesuits, Saint Ignatius quotes from the Fathers of the Desert thus: “Poverty is the mother, the perimeter wall of consecrated life”. Without poverty there is no fruitfulness in consecrated life. Poverty is the “wall” which defends us from the spirit of worldliness. Certainly, we all know that the devil enters via pockets. Even little temptations against poverty are wounds to our membership of the body of consecrated life. The Spirit of Poverty according to Constitutions and Regulations of every congregation remains the same. Without poverty, we cannot discern what is happening around us. In the Scriptures, the Lord called the young man to leave everything and go to the poor. Today we are that ‘young man’. The Lord asks you and me to let go of our petty attachments...It may be the ‘Isaac’ we may have to sacrifice. It is the Spirit of Poverty which defends us from problems that assail us each day. There are three steps involved in passing from religious consecration to religious worldliness. First: money, second: vanity and the third arrogance and pride. From here all the other vices spring. How is our poverty? Poverty is the wall that defends us from others. It is the Mother that makes us more a religious. It enables us to seek our treasure in the Lord. It is the wall that defends us from the worldly development that damages our religious life greatly.

The third pillar of Consecrated life is **Patience**. Discernment is not possible without patience. The entire life of Jesus mirrors patience. He was patient with the poor, the uneducated, the ailing. Jesus practice patience in front of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Even while hanging on the Cross, Jesus exercised patience. Our consecrated life cannot be sustained today without cultivating the capacity for endurance and ability to bear suffering. The community life in the consecrated life need patience to overcome quarrels that are scandalous. Alluding to scarcity of vocations, Holy Father Pope Francis exhorts us to have patience rather than taking hasty steps of closing down houses. We sell them and become attached to money. This is a sign that we are nearing death. Scarcity of vocations embitters the soul. “I have no offspring” was the lament of our father Abraham: “Lord, my riches will be inherited by an outsider”. The Lord told him: “Be patient. You will have a son” And the wife behind the window who spied at the window, smiled, because she thought: “Me, at 90? And my husband, almost 100, we will have a son?”. The Lord asked her to be patient.

Speaking about faithfulness and abandonment, Pope exhorts us to accord great importance to accompaniment. Numerous vocations are lost due to a lack of valid guidance. Continuous discernment will lead to discover God’s will and everything that most pleases the Lord. Moreover, it is necessary to remember that discernment is not simply a question of choosing between good or bad, but between good and better, between what is good and what leads to identification with Christ.

**WORLD NATURE CONSERVATION DAY:** The world Nature Conservation Day is observed on July 28 across the world to raise awareness about protecting our natural resources. The Earth has provided for the necessities of life like water, air, soil minerals, trees, animals, food etc. But we should keep nature clean and healthy. People must recognize that a healthy environment is the foundation for a stable and productive society for the present and future generations. It is therefore necessary to protect, conserve, and sustainably manage our natural resources.

There are several threats to nature - deforestation, illegal wildlife trade, pollution, use of plastics, chemicals, etc. Industrial development and several other factors are also responsible for the depletion of Nature. Whatever we do affects the globe, because the world is one. We are all linked together, nature must be conserved and protected. And we have to do it together.

This entails the wise management and utilization of natural resources. Due to natural imbalances, we are facing several problems like global warming, various diseases, natural disasters, etc. Mahatma Gandhi said: “the earth provides enough to satisfy everyone’s needs, but not everyone’s greed.” we have to understand the importance of saving preserving and recycling resources and the consequences of damaging or depleting them.

All this is by now common knowledge. But are we sufficiently motivated to reform our individual lifestyles? To give up our cravings for more and more, when in the process we know that some others are getting less and less. How can we arrive at a global conscience, feel responsible personally and collectively for the harm we do, and learn to care for nature (and thus for humanity) in a better way?

**NEW INVOCATIONS TO THE LITANY:** keeping with the present moment, which is marked by feelings of uncertainty and trepidation and the peoples’ desire to include invocations to the Litany of Loreto, the following three changes are made in the placement of the invocations:

**Mother of Mercy** is placed after Mother of the Church

**Mother of Divine Grace** is followed by Mother of hope

**Comfort of Migrants** is placed after Refuge of sinners.

**ANNUAL RETREAT:** We raise our hearts in thanksgiving to God for the 36 sisters who made their Annual Retreat in Auxilium Provincial House, animated by Fr. Biji Thomas SDB belonging to the Province of Kolkata from 18 June to 30 June , 2020.

### **LET’S CELEBRATE - JULY 2020**

- 3 St. Thomas the Apostle
- 6 St. Maria Goretti
- 7 Bl. Maria Romero Meneses
- 16 Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- 22 St. Mary Magdalene
- 25 St. James the Apostle
- 26 Sts. Joachim and Anna
- 28 St. Alphonsa

### **OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS**

† To Rev. Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam and the Confreres of Tiruchirapalli on the demise of Rev. Fr. Thommai Antonyrajan, who got drowned in the sea in Srilanka on 14 June 2020. Let us also pray for all the victims of Covid 19 during this time of Pandemic.

I take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Feast of all the saints of this month. May Blessed Maria Romero Meneses, the saint of the new millennium, bless us from paradise. Responding to the signs of the time she set up recreational Centers in 1945, food distribution Centers in 1953, a school for poor girls in 1961, and a clinic in 1966. In 1973, she organized the construction of seven homes, which became the foundation of the village of Centro San Jose, a community where poor families could have decent homes. May she accompany us to give a creative and a daring response to the challenges we face in this time of Pandemic.



Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret  
Provincial.