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In this month of September, I wish to reach you in the company of Mary whose birthday and the feast of Most Holy Name of Mary and the seven sorrows she bore in her heart as an expression of love to fulfil the divine will and her zeal in participating in the salvific mission of Jesus. May she bless each one of us, cover us under her mantle and lead us tenderly as our beloved institute is entering into an historical moment of celebrating General Chapter XXIV from 17 September to 24 October 2021.

“The child is the beauty of God present in the world – that greatest gift to a family.”

Said Mother Teresa of Kolkata, whose feast we celebrate on 5 September. Every year we celebrate the feast of the Nativity of Mary on the 8th September, a day which the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India has also dedicated to the Girl Child, in most parishes; this feast is preceded by the celebration of a Novena. Various events are organized all across the country to celebrate the day.

The birthday of Mary is fixed in line with the date of her Immaculate Conception. She was conceived in the womb of St. Anne her mother on December 8. Hence nine months after this date, that is, September 8, Mary was born. The earliest known account of Mary’s birth is found in the Protoevangelium of James or Gospel of James, an apocryphal text from the late second century, with her parents known as Saint Anne and Saint Joachim. This feast originated in Syria in the beginning of the sixth century, after the Council of Ephesus where Mary was declared Mother of God. It was celebrated in Rome (Latin/ western) toward the end of the 7th century, brought there by Eastern monks. In **Goa and Mangalore**, the feast of Mary’s Nativity called the “Monti Fest” is a major family celebration with the blessed grain of the harvest. On this day every Mangalorean Catholic eat vegetables. The priest blesses a branch of grain which is added to food. Catholics of Mangalore and Goa decorate baby Mary’s statue with flowers at home and in the Church. In **Kerala**, among St. Thomas’ Christians especially Malankara Catholics, there is a tradition of 8 days of lent from September 1 to 8 kept in preparation for the birthday of BVM. They pray and fast during these days. In **Tamil Nadu**, the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is known as the Feast of Our Lady of Good Health at Vailankanni. Hence, in several parts of India, the birthday of Mary is known as the feast of Our Lady of Vailankanni. In 1730, a wax statue of the Santissima Maria Bambina (Holy Child Mary) was brought to Milan (Italy) under the care of Sisters of Charity (Sisters of Charity of Saints Bartolomeo Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa (SCCG)) Hence the Sisters of Charity are popularly known as today Sisters of Maria Bambina or just Bambina Sisters even in India. Let her birth bring a new era of awareness, attitudes and action to value girl child.

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS : The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is celebrated each year on September 14. In the twentieth year of his reign (326), Emperor Constantine sent his mother Saint Helen to Jerusalem to venerate the holy

places and to find the site of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Cross. Relying upon the oral tradition of the faithful, Saint Helen found the precious Cross together with the crosses of the two thieves crucified with our Lord. However, Helen had no way of determining which was the Cross of Christ. With the healing of a dying woman who touched one of the crosses, Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem identified the True Cross of Christ. Saint Helen and her court venerated the Precious and Life-Giving Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption. The crowd responded with «Lord have mercy». This became the occasion of the institution in all of the Churches of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, not only in memory of the event of the finding of the Cross but also to celebrate how an instrument of shame was used to overcome death and bring salvation and eternal life. In a tiny way, we experience something of the power of the crucified Christ in our experiences of love. Love always means opening up to the suffering of the one who is loved, sharing it with him or her, and so becoming vulnerable to suffering and pain that is not our own.

THE STORY OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS : There were two feasts in honour of the Sorrowful Mother: one going back to the 15th century, the other to the 17th century. For a while, both were celebrated by the universal Church: one on the Friday before Palm Sunday, the other in September. The principal biblical references to Mary's sorrows are in Luke 2:35 and John 19:26-27. The Lucan passage is Simeon's prediction about a sword piercing Mary's soul; the Johannine passage relates Jesus' words from the cross to Mary and the beloved disciple. Many early Church writers interpret the sword as Mary's sorrows, especially as she saw Jesus die on the cross. Thus, the two passages are brought together as prediction and fulfilment. Saint Ambrose in particular sees Mary as a sorrowful yet powerful figure at the cross. Mary stood fearlessly at the cross while others fled. Mary looked on her Son's wounds with pity but saw in them the salvation of the world. As Jesus hung on the cross, Mary did not fear to be killed but offered herself to her persecutors. John's account of Jesus' death is highly symbolic. When Jesus gives the beloved disciple to Mary, we are invited to appreciate Mary's role in the Church: She symbolizes the Church; the beloved disciple represents all believers. As Mary mothered Jesus, she is now mother to all his followers. Furthermore, as Jesus died, he handed over his Spirit. Mary and the Spirit cooperate in begetting new children of God -almost an echo of Luke's account of Jesus' conception. Through this, we are assured that we can continue to experience the caring presence of Mary and Jesus' Spirit throughout our lives and throughout history.

TEACHERS DAY : We take this opportunity to thank each teacher who enter into the portals of our institutions to educate and guide the young people. We are grateful for your collaboration in our educative mission. The early years, adolescence and youth are times marked by an extraordinary development of sentiments and affections. As educators, religious, parents and teachers have a marvelous opportunity to guide youth towards very important virtues that will make them both strong and generous, as the centre of the heart is called love. Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata, asserts that "Intense love does not measure, it just gives." This is precisely a point that resonates with young minds. Loving God, loving and helping our neighbour out of love of God, channelizing anger, transforming mere human sentimentality into other finer and sublime forms of love can be frequent topics to be dealt within those innumerable 'teachable moments' of the day. Faithful in the small things obviously, developing strong hearts rooted on beautiful virtues does not happen overnight. Rather, it is a long building process. Our saintly mother St. Mary D. Mazzarello said, "Sanctity consists in being faithful to small things." Mother Teresa's luminous words also refer to this process: "Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies", she advises. We cannot expect to click on the icon or press enter, to attain it. There is surely no instant recipe, no quick path, no magic touch to get there. Yet, teachers, educators, religious and parents have the beautiful

and irreplaceable duty to open and to inspire young eyes to these sublime realities. Definitely, there cannot be true education without the steady and tireless education of the heart. Or, more precisely, as St John Bosco used to say: 'Education is a matter of the heart'.

TOWARDS A EVER WIDER WE: The 107 World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2021 is remembered on 26 September 2021. On this day Pope Francis exhorts us to reflect on the theme “ TOWARDS AN EVER WIDER WE”. The Holy Spirit enables us to embrace everyone, to build communion in diversity, to unify differences without imposing a depersonalized uniformity. In encountering the diversity of foreigners, migrants and refugees, and in the intercultural dialogue that can emerge from this encounter, we have an opportunity to grow as Church and to enrich one another. All the baptized, wherever they find themselves, are by right members of both their local ecclesial community and the one Church, dwellers in one home and part of one family. Among those dwelling in those existential peripheries, we find many migrants and refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking, to whom the Lord wants his love to be manifested and his salvation preached. The current influx of migrants can be seen as a new frontier for mission, a privileged opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ and the Gospel message at home, and to bear concrete witness to the Christian faith in a spirit of charity and profound esteem for other religious communities. The encounter with migrants and refugees of other denominations and religions represents a fertile ground for the growth of open and enriching ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Today's migration movements offer an opportunity for us to overcome our fears and let ourselves be enriched by the diversity of each person's gifts. Then, if we so desire, we can transform borders into privileged places of encounter, where the miracle of an ever wider «we» can come about. Pope invites all men and women to make good use of the gifts that the Lord has entrusted to us to preserve and make his creation even more beautiful. Ours must be a personal and collective commitment that cares for all our brothers and sisters who continue to suffer, even as we work towards a more sustainable, balanced and inclusive development. A commitment that makes no distinction between natives and foreigners, between residents and guests, since it is a matter of a treasure we hold in common, from whose care and benefits no one should be excluded. We are called to dream together, fearlessly, as a single human family, as companions on the same journey, as sons and daughters of the same earth that is our common home and as sisters and brothers to all.

WITHIN THE FAMILY:

CATECHETICAL TRAINING FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF NEW CATECHISM TEXTBOOKS : Sr. Arockiam Gracy Rani, the Catechetical Coordinator of the Province, along with Sr. Savari Raj Arockia Sophiya, the Mission ad/inter Gentes Coordinator of the Province participated in the Catechetical training meant to disseminate the New Catechism Text Books for primary school children organized by Fr. George Chinnappan SDB the General Secretary – TNBCLC Tindivanam, in Poondi from 7th to 12th August 2021. As the follow up of the training on the dissemination of “The New Catechism School textbooks” for the Primary Education, an online meeting was animated for all the Sisters of the Province on 20th August 2021 from 6.00 pm to 8.00 p.m., christened “To know, experience, love and proclaim Jesus”. The ultimate purpose of the new Catechism textbook is not to fill the young minds with doctrines but to bring children to Jesus and to help them to establish a personal relationship with Him and make Him their best friend. Both the sisters systematically presented the theme using power-point which was well attended by all the sisters of the Province. Our sincere thanks to Sr. Arockiam Gracy Rani and Sr. Savari Raj Arockia Sophiya who animated the meeting.

ORIENTATION FOR CREATING A NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILDRENS' PARLIAMENT MEMBERS :

On 20th August 2021 the Sisters and Staff from the Seven provinces were given an introduction about the functioning of Childrens' Forum at different levels by Mr. Andrew Jesuraj M, State Convener, TNCRW – Tamil Nadu Child Rights Watch. He animated an orientation for creating a national platform for NCP members on 27 & 28 August 2021. Seventy-five participants from all the provinces participated in the meeting from 4.00 p.m to 06.00 p.m. Developing a concrete module to form the federation at various levels was discussed. The meeting was an occasion for the Sisters involved in the Social ministry to share their points and give their feedback. Thanks to Sr. Azarias Arokia Mary Selvi who coordinated the meeting.

YOUTH PASTORAL COORDINATORS' MEET : All the local Youth Pastoral coordinators participated in the google meet conducted on 6 August 2021 on the theme “Keep running the race before the young people, outstripping all those who are slow or afraid.” The meeting commenced with the presentation of the multifaceted, evolving roles of youth Animator as an evangelizing Missionary followed by a discussion on how to make our presence felt by young people during the period of lockdown. Thanks to Sr. Diaz Francis Immaculate, the Province Youth Pastoral Coordinator who coordinated the meeting.

ORIENTATION ON THE STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES : On 8th August 2021 all the sisters of the Province participated in the google meet, ‘an orientation on the study of the Acts of the Apostles’, by Rev. Fr. Michael Raj from St.Paul’s Seminary, Tiruchirapalli. The deeper study and reflections on the Acts of the Apostles enabled us to reflect more on discipleship in order to rededicate our lives to our God and Master.

ANIMATORS CUM ECONOMERS MEET : The online Animators and Economers meet were held on 7th and 14th August 2021 respectively. On 17th August, Animators participated in the meeting held in Auxilium Provincial House. The points dealt were on Innovative Writing of the Activity Report, the Guidelines to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act and Annual General Body Minutes. Thanks to Sr.Madalaimuthu Angela who organized the above meetings. May God bless and reward your hard work.

FORTHCOMING VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

DATE	PROGRAMME
31 Aug – 1 Sept.	Mornese Experience for the Novices
04	Catechetical seminar for the teachers of Chennai Zone -online Orientation for the staff
05	Orientation Critical Thinking and Child Rights
10	Media Animation for Teachers
11	Junior IAS academy Training for Marialaya Children VII – X -Pothur Session on Psychological care and Positive Parenting for SHG/ Women Coordinators
12	ASC INT Zonal Level Animation – local centre Tuticorin Zone Junior IAS Academy Training – Marialaya Children – VII – X standard – GT Mariyalaya
17	Media animation for Media Coordinators
18	Junior IAS Academy Training - Patrick Home Children VII – X standard – Madurai Sringerinagar

- 19 Animation on “I Can” – Dream Session – for Selected Evening Study Centre children
- 25 Headmistress Meeting
- 29 Digital Literacy for Sisters

LET'S CELEBRATE

- 05 St. Teresa of Calcutta
- 07 Blessed Joseph Calasanz and companions, martyrs
- 08 Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 12 Most Holy Name of Mary
- 14 Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 21 Feast of Mathew, Apostle
- 29 Feast of Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels.

OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS:

† To Fr.K.M.Jose, the Provincial and the Confreres of SDB INM Province at the passing away of Bro.Joseph Das SDB (87) on 25th August 2021.

The Catholic Church recognizes the existence of only **three Archangels**, or the three mentioned in the Scriptures: **Michael** “Who is like God”, **Gabriel** “God’s Power” and **Raphael** “God’s Doctor”. The Sacred Scripture then, attributes a particular mission to each Archangel.

Michael is the warrior who fights against Satan and his emissaries (Jn 9) (Rev 12:7), the defender of those who love God (Dn 10:13-21), the protector of the people of God (Dn.12, 1).

Gabriel is one of the spirits closest to God, before his heavenly throne (Lk 1:19) the one who revealed to Daniel the secrets of God’s plan (Dn 8: 16; 9:21-22), announced to Zechariah the birth of John the Baptist (Lk 1:11-20) and to Mary that of Jesus (Lk 1: 26-38).

Raphael stands before the throne of God (Tb 12:15; Rev 8:2), accompanied and protects Tobias in his perilous journey and healed his father from blindness and his future bride from the influence of evil.

In general, therefore, the task of the three Archangels, in addition to contemplation of God, is to communicate His Will to people in various ways, to be an inspiration for human beings, and the catalysts of divine grace for them. Let us invoke their assistance in our day today life to be an effective instrument of God’s love to His people.

Yours affectionately,



Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret
Provincial.