

Cir. No. 39

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Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate greetings to each one of you as we commence the Month of September, commemorating the Birth of Mary and Girl Child Day.

The ***Birthday of Blessed Virgin Mary*** is a Feast of Eastern origin first celebrated in Jerusalem in the fifth century and introduced to Rome in the seventh century. A September birth was chosen for Mary because the Eastern Church begins its Liturgical year with September. The September 8 date, helped to determine the date for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8. We rejoice at the birth of the Virgin Mary the Dawn of Salvation; because it announces to the whole world that the coming of Christ, “the Sun of Justice,” is near at hand.

In India, important Marian Shrines - Vailankanni, Bandra, Bandel, Poondi, Harihar, celebrate this day with the greatest of solemnity. In some parts of India, this Feast is linked to the harvest festival. Children carry baskets of flowers to baby Mary every day of the Novena. On the last day, fresh sheaves of paddy are blessed and distributed to all the families. Family members come together to thank the Lord for the blessings of good health and prosperity bestowed upon the family through the hands of Mary, our mother.

In recent years, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India has asked us, very fittingly, to celebrate this day as the Day of the Girl Child’ since every girl child like Mary is destined to bring new life unto the world and therefore should be treated as a blessing.

“Girls are the Spirit of Our Nation, Save Them and Stop their Exploitation”

Celebrate every girl child

Girl Child Day greetings to each one of you who are called to be mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends as the Catholic Church in India celebrates the Girl Child Day on 8 September, the Birthday of Mother Mary. God put great care into selecting his Daughter, Spouse, Mother and the Holy Virgin, the most exalted of women, the creature best loved by God, conceived without original sin came into our world. She was born amidst a deep silence. It was autumn, when the fields are ready for sleep. No one living at that time was aware of what was happening. Only the angels in heaven rejoiced. We have the biggest example of how women are to be seen in our Blessed Virgin Mary. She was not just confined to home. She was seen authoritarian enough, to having asked Jesus for a favour even when it was not the time, at the wedding Feast at Cana. She is the greatest example of courage and hope. She walked with Jesus through his entire passion because she was perceived strong enough to bear the pain for the greater salvation. Even after His death, she was actively present with the disciples, preparing them for the way forward. All of this was possible because of the way she was brought up by her parents.

Our girls need to be brought up to achieve what is destined for them and this requires of us, as a family or society, to create an environment for our girls to grow without the fear of any of the evils that are present in today's world causing hindrance for their growth specially the attitude of merely an 'object for satisfaction'. When we are in a hurry to teach our young people what they shouldn't be doing, we should rather focus their attention to the biggest role model ever - Mother Mary, and teach them to imbibe her values in every way and we can be rest assured. What girls need is not reservations or special quota, they just need to be left to live a life without any constraints, and they have the ability to reach where they are destined to be.

"The history of the civilization could actually be written in terms of the level of its women", H.G. Fulton J. Sheen. These words from the great prelate of the Church, clearly indicates the gravity of the respect and dignity, which a woman deserves in the human society. As we near yet another International Girl Child day, we, especially in our society, have to work together to create an environment which is conducive for every girl child to attain her true potential in her life. We have to make sure that conflicts do not put down the girl child from growing to her full potential. If at all any conflicts happen we must accompany the girl child that no scars of the negative experience affect her progress and integral growth. This cannot be achieved with mere external support or assistance, but by elevating the girl child from within to reach her highest possible horizons.

Just eight days after the joyful Feast of the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on 15 September, we commemorate her sorrows – above all the supreme sorrow of witnessing the crucifixion of her son. The Servite Order first celebrated this Feast in 1668 and later Pius VII extended it to the universal Church. As we celebrate it we think back to the events of Good Friday. There, by the cross, stands Mary, the woman of sorrows, fully participating in the suffering of her son – truly Mother of the Saviour and Mother of Humankind. The Seven Sorrows of Mary are the prophecy of Simeon, the 33 mile flight into Egypt along with her Son and Joseph, the loss of Jesus in the temple, meeting with Jesus on his way to Calvary, the crucifixion, taking down the body of Jesus from the Cross and the burial.

The month of September also beckons us to celebrate our Teachers. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the teachers who work with commitment and zeal in all our Institutions. Mary was Don Bosco's teacher and as such, she passed on life experiences, traced out a line of action, taught him to avoid errors in his behavior. For Don Bosco, Mary was not a teacher on a platform. Instead she was always by his side, inspiring, guiding and helping him at every step. She was a teacher who taught attitudes: "Make yourself humble, steadfast and strong..." With authority she pointed out to him, "This is your field, this is where you must work." Thus, she led him to work for the poor young people most exposed to evil influences, and together with her son, taught him a method of education: "Not with blows, but with gentleness and kindness you will win over these friends of yours." Mary also cares for him with the heart of a shepherdess and teaches him the difficult art of changing wolves into lambs by teaching them the beauty of virtue and the ugliness of sin. As Mary accompanied our holy founders, may Mary assist us in our Educative Journey to make known the resplendence of virtue and the grotesqueness of sin.

SEASON OF CREATION 2020: From the 1 September to the 4 October (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi). We celebrate "**The Season of Creation**", an annual celebration of prayer and action for our Common home. The Pope's invitation is to return to prayer, to reflect and to act in order to repair and to recreate our relationship with others and with creation. Season of Creation is organized by an **Ecumenical Steering Committee**, which

helps the Christians around the world achieve the goals of this time and provides resources to enable Christians to respond to their faith, each according to their own confession. A **Consultative Steering Committee** Integrated by a coalition of partners from the whole world Offers to the Executive Committee a support of theological and liturgical skills, as well as the planning and programming experience of the partners. As a Community, let us adhere to the Season of Creation 2020, following the **practical commitments suggested by Pope Francis**: Repair and recover relationships with creation and one another, intensify prayer, reflect on our lifestyles, undertake prophetic actions for creation, it is a time to invoke courageous choices, orient the planet towards life instead of meeting death, take care of the most vulnerable and re-establish the connections that unite us. The experience of coexistence with the COVID-19 epidemic brings out this need to maintain justice, and the lessons we learn could indicate the need for a Jubilee and motivate us to restore the balance of the very systems that sustain life (cf. Leviticus 25:10). Study materials based on the above are being sent to all the communities recommended by Sr. Borja Runita. It will be of help to accompany our Educating communities to join the celebration. Those of us who register the planning of our events on the website at <https://seasonofcreation.org/> our celebrations will become visible on the global season of creation map to inspire others.

ARCHANGELS FEAST: On 29 September, we celebrate the Feast of the Archangels. It is important that we entrust ourselves to the archangels so that they may help us fight against the seductions of the devil, bring us the good news of Salvation and take us by the hand. The angels are before the Lord to serve Him, praise Him and also to contemplate the glory of the face of the Lord: Angels are the great contemplatives: they serve and contemplate, but the Lord also sends them forth to accompany us in the journey of life. Michael defends us, Gabriel gives us the good news and Raphael takes us by the hand and walks with us; he helps us with the many things that occur along the journey. Let us ask Raphael to help us not to be tempted to take the wrong step, to take the wrong path. The angels are with us as witnesses as friends and a family. We are never alone. We need not be afraid. This is the corollary of our salvation. It's a fact too easily forgotten. By God's design, the angels are active in our life, from the time we are conceived to the moment of our earthly end. Our moments go better if we work with the angels, as the scripture show.

WITHIN THE FAMILY:

GOLDEN JUBILEE: 5 August, 2020 marks the Golden Jubilee of our dear Sr. Susaimanickam Josephine. Though all of us looked forward to this day, we could not celebrate it together, because of the lock down. The Community of Therespuram will celebrate this day significantly with a thanksgiving Mass on 12 September 2020. Let us thank God for her loyalty who through her tenure as a religious for the past fifty years has written a page of very beautiful and meaningful history of our Province reality. Sr. Josephine has a passion for nursing and cares for the ailing with humility, patience, individualized care, compassion, kindness and respect. Those who come in touch with her can't but remember her words and deeds of gentleness. As an Animator in different communities, all the members of the community and people of the locality loved her. She was able to coordinate the mission, involving the collaboration of all the Sisters. May our Blessed Mother continue to bless and protect her in her mission of healing.

DISTANCE MONITORING: Miseen Cara animated a **Virtual meeting with key informants** on 'Human Resource Development Center' project on 17 August. Sr. Azarias Arokia Mary Selvi and Sr. Kanickairaj Shermila along with the staff and beneficiaries of the project from Chennai Province participated in the Meet. Sr. Lazar Maria Nirmala, the Provincial and Sr. Puliyani Lucy the Provincial Economist of INM were present for the entire meet and elucidated the process in progress of attaining the aimed results of the project.

NOVICES COMMUNITY CUM APOSTOLIC EXPERIENCE: Due to the Pandemic, all the Second Year Novices had their Community cum Apostolic Experience in Vadakku Paganoor from 20 to 30 August, 2020. They had formative sessions based on the theme eco spirituality, motivational talks, experience of manual labour, time for prayer, evaluation and sharing. They were happy to spend an hour with the evening Coaching Class Children teaching and catechizing them. Thanks to Sr. Antonyswamy Rosy and community for availing a formative and apostolic experience in a loving ambient of Salesian Family.

ECONOMERS MEET: Thanks to Sr. Madalaimuthu Angela – the Province Economist for coordinating the Economers Google Meet on the effects of COVID 19 on ‘Finances’ leading to a discussion, resulting in the need to draw guidelines to meet the challenges emerging during COVID 19 Pandemic on 8 August 2020.

STUDY OF THE CHAPTER WORKING DOCUMENT: The working Document of General Chapter XXIV bearing the theme - “Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5) communities that generate life in the heart of Contemporaneity will be sent to all the communities. We are recommended to read, reflect, and share our insights on **Part I – Vocational Community - A Yes that is Renewed Over Time**, responding to the questions and send the answers to the Sr. Amirthasamy Maria Pushpam - the Vice Provincial by 24 September, 2020.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST NEW EDUCATION POLICY: The staff of Auxilium Synergy Source for Integrated Social Transformation - ASSIST along with Sr. Azarias Arokia Mary Selvi - the Social Development Coordinator participated in an awareness sessions on New Education Policy organized in preparation for the Face Book Campaign organized by the Federation for the Protection of Education, Tamilnadu & Puduchery from 24 - 30 August 2020.

INTERACTIVE ONLINE MEETINGS:

INT SDB AND FMA COOPERATORS DELEGATES ZOOM MEETING: Thanks to Fr. Joseph Charles SDB and Sr. Antonyswamy Rosy – the Provincial Delegates for Salesian Cooperators, who were the Coordinators for the Zoom Meeting. It was held for thirty SDB, FMA Delegates along with the Provincials, Vice Provincials, the Salesian Family Provincial Delegates and the World Councilor Mr. Anthuvan on 27 August 2020 between 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Fr. Albert Johnson SDB, the South Asian Salesian Family Delegate animated them on “The Role of Local Delegates in reference to COVID19 Pandemic.”

PCI MEETING: The online meeting on the Formation of Formators and the sharing of **Guidelines and Itineraries for the Formation of Juniors** and for **ongoing formation** was animated for the Provincials, Formators and Animators of the seven Provinces of the Inter-Provincial Conference of India (PCI) from 24 to 28 August 2020. There were about hundred participants in the meeting. The meeting opened on 24 August with the prayer and greeting of Sr. Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi, National Coordinator for Formation and Secretary of the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle (INM). Our sincere thanks to Sr. Maria Nieves Reboso, General Councilor for Formation who encouraged the participants to live the ministry of Formation with joy and to carry it out lovingly, "with the power of persuasion and love alone" (Const. 7) and with the heart of Mañ who responded to the voice “I entrust them to you.” This was followed by an orientation talk on the spirituality of encounter.

We acknowledge with gratitude Sr. Tamizharasi who animated the participants on the Psychology of Relationships from 24 to 26 August 2020, Sr. Cruz Anthoni Michaela and Sr. D’souza Philomena Benedicta on the itinerary of the Community to accompany the Junior Sisters and Guidelines for inculturating the document **Guidelines for the Formation Period**

of the Temporary Vows respectively. It was followed by the sharing and interiorization of the same by seven Provinces of India and Sr. George Elizabeth, the Provincial of INS concluded the meeting inviting the Sisters to become capable of holding the new wine – the Young FMAs in the new wineskins. Our sincere thanks to Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, Visiting General Councilor who gave the introductory talk encouraging the participants to grow in the authenticity of life, service to the poor, deep prayer life – connected with the Divine. Sr. Ritha Dora Thomas, Provincial of INB and Vice President of PCI finally presented the itinerary for Ongoing Formation, referring to the Formation Plan and Program of the FMA India in the current context challenged by internal and external forces including the Covid 19 pandemic on 28 August 2020. Our deep sense of gratitude to Sr. Lazar Maria Nirmala and Sr. Tamizharasi, who coordinated the meeting with zest and joy.

On 29 August 2020, there was a zoom meet of seven Provincials of PCI with Sr. Ozhukayil Lucy Rose, General Visiting Councilor . The meeting commenced with an orientation talk by Sr. Lucy Rose based on the exhortations of Mother Marinella Castagno to Mother Antonia Colombo when she took up the leadership of the Institute as Superior General. During the meeting there were also interesting interactive moments on our preparation for the celebration of the Centenary of FMA presence in India, a brief reflection on the forthcoming GCXXIV, the challenges and plan encountered during COVID 19 in the Provinces. May God bless our efforts and accompany us moment by moment.

NEW EDUCATION POLICY AND HMS MEETING: Thanks to Sr. Fernando Majella who coordinated the Meeting on New Education policy with the help of Mr. Prince Gajendran on 15 August, 2020 for all the Sisters of the Province followed by HMs Meeting on the effect of Online classes on students, teachers and parents and the need to train and share the resources between the Schools.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM - NDF MEET:

- Thanks to the thirty Social Development Coordinators and Core Team members of the seven FMA Provinces in India who participated in the Orientation Programme & Re-dimensioning the Scope of FMA NDF in the virtual meeting animated by NDF from 10 to 14 August 2020. During the meeting the first E-Newsletter was released followed by a process of evaluation, discernment and a two year strategic planning headed by Fr. Joseph Xavier the Consultant and the presentation of the documents ‘Cooperation for Development’ and ‘Guidelines for the Management of Goods in the FMA Institute’ by Sr. Sequeira Magdeline (INB) and Sr. Jose Josmy (INK)respectively.
- Thanks to Mr. Jahir Hussain the Children Programme Coordinator from ASSIST who enlightened the Evening Study Centre teachers on the implications of New Education Policy - NEP on 12 August 2020.
- Thanks to the efforts of Social Development Coordinators of 7 Provinces who had coordinated the Meet in their provinces on **Awareness on the implications of the New Education Policy** by Mr. M. Arockiasamy Britto, an advocate and Human rights activist working with Vaan Muhil in Tirunelveli on 28 August 2020 animated by NDF. 80 participants from different parts of the country participated in the programme.

SCHEDULED ONLINE MEETING FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

- A webinar on E-Commerce is planned for the Social Development Coordinators by the National Development Forum
- The Women Empowerment Wing of ASSIST will initiate a webinar series on the Psychological care for the Self Help Group and Mothers’ Group members.
- An online Communication skill Classes for College students were initiated by the Career excellence wing of ASSIST.

- A Zoom Meeting for all the School Sisters and Teachers on how to enhance the capacity for concentration among the students was held on 11 September 2020.
- A Video Conference will be held on 15 and 16 September 2020, on 15 September at 11 a.m. and on 16 September at 5 p.m. (Italy Time) by the Mission sector in Rome based on the experience lived during the pandemic and the changes in our style of animation and in our service as coordinator/ Provincial for the Mission Sector.

LET'S CELEBRATE – SEPTEMBER 2020

- 5 Mother Teresa
- 8 Birth of Mary
- 12 The Most Holy Name of the BVM
- 14 Triumph of the Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 21 St. Matthew Apostle and Evangelist
- 22 Blesseds Joseph Calasanz and Companions, Martyrs
- 24 Our Lady of Ransom
- 29 Michael, Gabriel and Raphael Archangels Feast

OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS

- To Fr. Pauria Joseph SDB, Provincial and Confreres of INC over the demise of Rev. Fr. Reginald D'Silva who passed away at Don Bosco School, Liluah on 16 August 2020.
- To Most Rev. Thomas Paulsamy D.D - Bishop of Dindigul and Most Rev. Antony Pappusamy D.D. - Archbishop of Madurai over the sudden passing away of Fr. Joseph Selvaraj (66) who was the Executive Trustee of our Fr. Patrick Isaac Home of Hope for Women and Children, Sringerinagar, Madurai, on 19 August 2020. He was the Chancellor of the Diocese of Dindigul.
- To our dear Sr. Antony Rayappan Jothy, who suffer the loss of her sister Mrs. Clemencia Lenin (35). She passed away on 2 September 2020 after three days of hospitalization. Let us pray and support the bereaved family.
- Let us also gratefully remember to pray for our dear Fr. Antony Joseph SDB the IV Provincial of INT Province whose First Death Anniversary falls on 11 September, 2020.

May their souls rest in peace.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Velankanni let us continue to pray for all those who are afflicted by Corona and for the good health of all the people the world over. May God heal and restore peaceful life to everyone in the families. May our Blessed Mother accompany us to live with joy the maxim of Mother Theresa

“Do something beautiful for God” each day.

Sr. Margaret A

Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret
Provincial.

Happy Feast Day!

