



Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
Our Lady of the Snow Province - INT
Tiruchirappalli - India

Provincial Circular

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December 2023

My dear Sisters,

Cordial greetings and prayerful wishes from Tiruchirappalli.

At the beginning of this holy season of Advent, I anticipate my loving greetings to you for the great feast of Christmas towards which we prepare ourselves. Wish you a Joyous Christmas, filled with the blessings of the Child of Bethlehem.

Christmas is the feast of Love, Jesus' love for us is unconditional and it surpasses everything. He is born for us, let us open our hearts to receive the grace, which is Jesus himself. He is the mercy in whom God our Father has revealed His great tenderness to the entire world. He is the Light, Who dispels the darkness of fear and anxiety and brings peace to the broken hearts. Out of love for us, God became human so that we might become more like Him. John the Evangelist says, "This is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent His only Son into the world that we might have life through Him." (1 John 4:9) Let us thank God for revealing His love for us in Jesus, that He who is so big and powerful became so small and weak for us, that He became one of us, to help us be more like Him, to have life through Him.

Being the feast of love, let us reflect on **Pastoral Charity**, which is the characteristic element of our Salesian Charism. Article 7 of our Constitutions defines pastoral charity which is the center and the heart of our Salesian Spirituality. Pastoral charity is a gift of God which makes the mercy of the Father, the salvific love of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit present among the young. It takes its inspiration from the maternal solicitude of Mary, Mother of God who sustains our vocation and nourishes our response to it. Pastoral Charity is also the summit of our entire charism. It is not a virtue that is merely a matter of personal conquest but a humble and total opening up of oneself to God, following Mary's example. It is the impassioned search for the young to turn them over to God. Pastoral Charity or a Shepherd's Love, is the hallmark of Don Bosco's spirituality and it is an incarnated form of love that becomes the propelling crux of Salesian Spirituality. It is a special and typical characteristic of love that knows how to make itself loved, that is to call forth love in response. This love is visible, manifest, and it frees and saves.

Don Bosco, in his letter of 1884 from Rome, emphasized the mystical significance of pastoral charity. He reflects: "How is it possible to reanimate these dear young people?... With charity." Christ made Himself little with the little ones and bore our infirmities. He did not break the bruised reed or put out the smoldering wick - to say, He was meek and humble in his love for God's children. The mysticism of *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle* consists in profound communion with God, which forges the heart of the educator, predisposing him/her to total dedication and to generous service. The perspective of Don Bosco's mysticism is found in this: learning from God how to love and participating in Christ's love by cultivating an apostolic heart that knows how to give of itself without limits for the salvation of the young. It was precisely pastoral charity which

was the spiritual energy impelling Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello to seek out souls and to serve God alone. It was a charity that filled their minds and their hearts and animated their projects with the intent of expanding them and giving stability to their work.

Don Bosco handed over the Gospel way in the Salesian style, of totally donating oneself in working together with and through the young for salvation. He challenges us to cultivate the gesture of goodness, kindness, reassurance and encouragement to the youth. He expressed candidly that among the youth, he felt perfectly at home. It is a manifestation of our conviction that we are placed in this world, not for ourselves but for others and are entrusted with a specific mission to which we are committed, in service to our brothers and sisters without reserve. The call is to work always and everywhere and in all things with evangelical charity - something which is greatly needed.

The aim of the education given by Don Bosco was two-fold: making of the young good Christians and upright citizens. This aim can be translated also in terms of the formula of a holistic education that we find in our tradition: the three-fold formulae of - 'health, study, and sanctity' or 'joy, study, and piety', or 'work, bread, and paradise.' It is happiness here and hereafter, both on earth and in Heaven. To really understand this, it is necessary to enter into the spirit of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello to rediscover their way of doing things.

The word "pastoral" indicates a specific form of charity; it immediately calls to mind the figure of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. However, it is not only his way of acting: kindness, seeking the lost one, dialogue, forgiveness; but also above all, the substance of his ministry - to reveal God to every person here on earth. It is more than evident how different this form of charity is to other forms whose preferential focus is on particular needs of people: health, food, and work.

The element typical of pastoral charity is the proclamation of the Gospel, education to the faith, the formation of the Christian community, and bringing the yeast of the Gospel to the concrete context of mission. It requires being totally available, and devoted to the salvation of humanity, as shown by Jesus. Don Bosco following the footsteps of Jesus expressed this charity with his motto: *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle...* That becomes therefore an ascetical lifestyle of someone moved by pastoral charity: "cetera tolle" - to leave all the rest behind. One has to give up many things in order to live up to the main objective, to be open and available totally to the young in bringing them to God. This is not only in one's personal life but also in the programs and the apostolic works and all pertaining choices. In the Salesian apostolic spirituality, it is expressed and deepened in and through pastoral work. The apostolate becomes a genuine spiritual experience, and not merely the expending of energy, leading to stress, and wear and tear. It is animated by charity, a source of effectiveness, confidence and joy in pastoral work.

Charity brings unity and generativity to our personal lives and to those of the young; it resolves any tension that could arise between activity and prayer, between community life and apostolic commitment, between education and evangelization, between a professional approach and the apostolate. The whole thrust of our spiritual life consists in revitalizing pastoral charity, purifying and intensifying it. "Love and do what you wish," said holy theologian, Augustine. Let us entrust to Mary our Mother, the preparation towards the solemnity of Holy Christmas. May the experience of Christmas, amidst the uncertainties and hopes of our times, help us experience the same joy that filled Mary's life in welcoming Jesus and offering Him to the world.

❖... Month's Special! ...❖

ADVENT: Advent is a time of waiting and expectation, a time of getting ready and looking forward. This season is also about preparing ourselves for the return of Jesus. We set our hearts on the birth of Jesus and the promise that the Son of God will return to bring even more hope, peace, joy, and love to the world. Advent is a penitential season too, similar to the season of Lent, and we make sacrifices as a means to get ready for Christmas. Our Lord communicates to us Words intended to uplift us, especially on the Sundays of Advent, making this season a period of transformation. It's a privileged time to rekindle our relationship with Jesus and adopt an intentional discipleship lifestyle. May this Advent be a time of spiritual awakening and renewal preparing us to celebrate the birth of the Saviour of the World.

BL. PHILIP RINALDI (December 05): Don Bosco's third successor, Bl. Phillip Rinaldi was born on May 28, 1856, in Piedmont, Italy. Though he met Don Bosco when he was just five years old and immediately recognized the sanctity in him, he entered the Salesian Congregation only at the age of 22. He was ordained a priest in 1882. Philip, a humble and quiet leader, was entrusted with enormous responsibility. He worked with prudence, charity, and intelligence, overseeing the growth of the Salesian mission in Spain, and later as Prefect General of the Congregation. In the responsible positions that he held, he demonstrated an impressive fatherly enthusiasm and emphasized that the real essence of the Salesian Work is found in a profound, peaceful, and tranquil intimate life rather than in external achievements. He was a fervent supporter of missionary work, care for vocations, and the spiritual renewal of the congregation. He laboured with confidence in God, and he entrusted all his works to Mary Help of Christians. He founded the secular institute, "Volunteers of Don Bosco" (VDB). On the day of his commemoration, let us pray for the Volunteers of Don Bosco. May God grant us the ability to take on the same spirit as Bl. Philip Rinadi.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (December 08): The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a time to rejoice in God's gift to humanity in Mary, as well as to recognize Mary's motherly intervention in the life of Don Bosco and our Congregation. She leads us to Christ and shows us the way to live holy lives. Every person is called to recognize and respond to God's call, to find and fulfill his/her own vocation, in order to carry out God's plan. And this feast has a special significance for us the Salesian Family, as it had its origin with the mission that was born this day, with a 'Hail Mary' of Don Bosco with the little Bartholomeo Garelli in 1841, a mission that has spread all over the world today winning the hearts of millions of young people. Let us seek the maternal intercession and assistance of the Immaculate Mother, that we might become sanctuaries, pure, holy, and filled with thanksgiving to God.

ST. STEPHEN (December 26): Stephen was the first Christian martyr, the first follower of Christ to die for his faith. He manifested his strong faith even while he was stoned to death and, like Jesus, offered forgiveness to his killers as he gave his spirit into the hands of the Lord. He stands as a splendid model and teaches us to aspire, to be filled with the Spirit, and to be on the lookout for opportunities to help and care for the underprivileged and vulnerable. It is important to be witnesses to our faith so that the world can see it alive in our words and our actions, specially, in the time of difficulties. Let us remember on this day, to offer special prayers for those who endure hardships for the sake of their loyalty to Christ and His Church.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH (December 30): Every family of the people of God is invited to partake in God's divine life, as did the Holy Family of Nazareth. However, in the reality today, while some families remain strong in virtue, there are very many others that have difficulties and drawbacks. Caring for our families, and for every member in it, is a special call we have received as members of the family of God. Our families have to be the first testimonies of the community of faith, as the Church is built of the human families united in faith and love. The Holy

Family stands as a model in many ways to our families today, above all in the fact that the presence of God was felt there in all its fullness. Let us pray that the Lord would visit every one of our families and sanctify it, just as the Holy family in Nazareth was sanctified.

✠… News from the Province! …✠

- **REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE PLAN OF FORMATION AND THE GUIDELINES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE:** A communication was sent to us by Vicar General, Sr. María del Rosario García Ribas, updating on the progress of GCXXIV's deliberations, which include reviewing and updating the Formation Plan and the Guidelines for the Educational Mission. As a result, we, the FMA representatives, laypeople, and the youth have been invited to participate in the online focus group by Sr. Nilza Fátima de Moraes, General Councilor for Formation, and Sr. Runita Galve Borja, General Councilor for Youth Ministry.
- **ANNUAL RETREAT - I:** The first Annual Retreat will be held from December 27, 2023 to January 03, 2024 in the Auxilium Provincial House, Tiruchirappalli.

✠… PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS AND THANKS …✠

TRIMONTHLY RECOLLECTIONS:

- The Trimonthly Recollection for Seniors in On-going formation, was held in the cluster communities on November 04, 2023 with the Theme “Life in the Community: Romans 12: 1-21”.
- On November 18 and 19, 2023, Auxilium Provincial House in Tiruchirappalli hosted the INM and INT Junior Trimonthly Recollection and a Day of Animation. Fr. Ravidiran OCD preached on the topic, “Spirituality of St. Paul”, and emphasized the importance of enhancing our community life. With the topic “Life in the Community,” Sr. Fernando Majella, the Provincial of INT, led the day's animation and guided the sisters to do the personal auditing of their life in the community.

PROMISE DAY AT THERESPURAM: On November 12, 2023, 15 Aspirant Salesian Cooperators from Tuticorin Zone, 10 from Therespuram and 05 from Puthenthurai joyfully made their Promise as Salesian Cooperators, at Little Flower Church, Therespuram. We acknowledge with gratitude, the service of Sr. Anthonyswamy Rosy, Province Councillor for the Salesian Family and Sr. Antony Nirmala Rani, Province Delegate for the Salesian Cooperators, in coordinating and making this event memorable. Special thanks to Fr. Xavier Michael, the Vice Provincial of Salesian province of Tiruchy, Fr. Amalraj Soosai SDB, and Fr. John Barnabas SDB for their collaboration and spiritual guidance.

SILVER JUBILEE OF BHARAT SCOUTS AND GUIDES, DON BOSCO DISTRICT ASSOCIATION: The celebration of the Silver Jubilee of Bharat Scouts and Guides, Don Bosco District association, Tamil Nadu was held on November 18, 2023, at St. Bede's Anglo-Indian HSS, Santhome, Chennai. It was a momentous occasion bringing together nearly 1375 Scouts, Guides, Cubs, Bulbuls, Rovers and Rangers from the Salesian Schools in Tamil Nadu.

The event aimed to commemorate the organisations rich history and highlighting its contributions to youth development. The great occasion was presided and graced by the honourable Minister Shri. PK Sekar Babu, the Minister of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, Honourable

Minister Shri. Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozi, the Minister of School Education in Tamil Nadu, the Chief Guest Shri. Rajkumar Kaushik, Director of Bharat Scouts and Guides, National Headquarters, New Delhi. It was my privilege to witness and honour the veteran scouts awardees for their accomplishments along with the special invitees: Fr. Dr. Don Bosco Lourdu Samy SDB, Provincial of Chennai, Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB, Provincial of Trichy, Sr. Devadoss Margaret FMA, Provincial of Chennai. Expression of gratitude and appreciation to Sr. Sebastian Margaret Mary, and all the participants, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters of our Province whose collective efforts made the celebration a memorable and impactful event.

ANIMATORS' MEET: The Animators' meeting was held at St. Francis Xavier's Convent, Broadway, Chennai. On November 25, during the introductory talk, we reflected on "Walking the Talk" of our faith life in community and Mission" with a focus on the Seven lessons outlined by Pope Francis - Listen, Simplify, Refocus, Engage, Embrace, Challenge, Rejoice. It enabled us to lead a meaningful and committed life in the community.

On November 26 Dr. Jonas Richard, HOD of Social Work and the Director of the Centre for Life Skills Education and Centre for Continuous Professional Development in Kristu Jayanthi College, Bangalore, animated the meet efficiently and offered valuable suggestions to the Animators through Inspirational Leadership Workshop on "The Heartbeat of Leadership: A Life-Generating Authority and the Leader with a Growth Mindset".

✂️... Appreciation and Thanks! ...✂️

- To all the animators of the cluster communities who made arrangements for the Senior's Trimonthly Recollections on November 04, 2023.
- To Sr. Anthonyswamy Rosy and the community of Therespuram for having hosted and organized the Salesian Cooperators' Promise Day on November 12, 2023.
- To Sr. Soosaimuthu Arul Mary and the community of Auxilium Provincial House for hosting the Trimonthly Recollection and Animation for Juniors of INT and INM, on November 18 and 19, 2023.
- To Sr. Amirthasamy Maria Pushpam and the community of St. Francis Xavier Convent, Broadway, Chennai for facilitating the Animators' Meet on November 25 and 26, 2023.

✂️... Important days of the month ahead! ...✂️

03	-	First Sunday of Advent
03	-	St. Francis Xavier
05	-	Bl. Philip Rinaldi
08	-	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12	-	Our Lady of Guadalupe
25	-	Christmas
26	-	St. Stephen
27	-	St. John the Evangelist
28	-	Holy Innocents
31	-	The Holy Family

✦ Meetings in the Province ✦

03	:	Be a Conqueror 21st Century Skill Training for Evening Study Centre	Local Communiities
05	:	Training on Responsible Parenting focusing on the Critical usage of Social Media for Women	Keela Eral
07	:	Human Right Day	
09	:	NCP - Training Trichy	ASSIST - Trichy
10	:	Visit to the Parishes for promoting Vocation	Local Communities
20	:	Media Mela for Non-formal Sectors	Local Communities
27 Dec. 2023 - 03 Jan. 2024	:	Annual Retreat - I	Auxilium Provincial House Tiruchirappalli

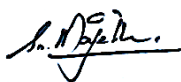
✦ CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS ✦

- † **To Sr. Antony Muthu Lourdhu Mary** who lost her beloved mother Mrs. Alphonsa (68) on November 03, 2023.
- † **To the Provincial and the Confreres of INM Province** at the demise of Fr. John Rosario Lourdasamy on November 05, 2023.
- † **To the Provincial and the Confreres of IND Province** at the death of Fr. Joseph Thettayil (69) on November 13, 2023.
- † **To Sr. Arokiasami Ofelia** who lost her Sister-in-law Mrs. Philominal James (91) on November 18, 2023.
- † **To Fr Maria Arokiam Kanaga INM**, at the demise of his beloved mother Mrs. Maria (89), at Varadarajanpettai, on November 18, 2023.
- † **To the Provincial and the Sisters of ING Province** at the demise of Sr. Celine Porinchu (86) at Maligaon, Guwahati on November 28, 2023.
- † **To Sr. Sebastiar Caroline who lost her dear father** Mr. Sebastiar (82) on November 28, 2023.

May their Souls rest in peace!

I take this opportunity, to extend to each one of you, my dear sisters, my wishes for a joyful Christmas and a grace-filled New Year. Let us pray as one family for peace and harmony all over the world and that the message of this great feast may reach to all humanity. God has shown the fullness of Divine love by becoming part of our world, with all its conflicts, sufferings and poverty. Jesus is truly Emmanuel, God with us! Let our Christmas gift to God be our hearts filled with love, compassion and empathy, and our resolution to be with and to stand with all those who are suffering and those who are in need. May the Love made flesh, fill this earth with peace and forgiveness.

Yours affectionately in Christ,



Sr. Fernando Majella
Provincial

*A Blessed Christmas
and
A Wonderful New Year 2024!*



PROVINCIAL ITINERARY

DECEMBER - 2023

02 - 03	Provincial Council	Auxilium Provincial House
04 - 06	Provincial Visit	Therespuram
07	Provincial Visit	M. Saveriarpuram
08 - 09	Provincial Visit	Keela Eral
12 - 13	Provincial Visit	Puthenthurai
14	Provincial Office	Auxilium Provincial House
18 - 19	Provincial Visit	Vadaku Paganoor
27 Dec.2023 - 03 Jan. 2024	Annual Retreat	Auxilium Provincial House

ECONOMER ITINERARY

02 - 03	Provincial Council
04	Therespuram
05	Keela Eral
12-13	Puthenthurai
17	Vadaku Paganoor