



PROVINCE OF OUR LADY OF SNOW PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

AUXILIUM PROVINCIAL HOUSE, SALESIAN SISTERS,
MADURAI MAIN ROAD, MANIKANDAM, TIRUCHIRAPALLI – 620 012

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Viva Gesù!

Greetings of love, joy and peace to each one of you dear Sisters and the entire Educating Community for the Feast of Immaculate Conception, Advent and Christmas. In the Immaculate Conception of Mary, we celebrate the sparkling beauty of our Blessed Mother. The secret of her beauty was that she kept the Word of God close to her heart, it then took flesh within her womb. Remaining with God, dialoguing with Him in every circumstance, Mary made her life beautiful. Let us ask her help to remain free of sin, so that we too can live a beautiful life, saying “yes,” to God.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your prayerful accompaniment as we the seven PCI Provincials made our Retreat in Auxilium, Negombo, Sri Lanka from 1 to 8 December, 2019 animated by Rev. Fr. Almeida Joseph on the theme **Call to Holiness**. I extend my thanks to Sr. Lazar Maria Nirmala the Provincial of INM who invited us to Srilanka, and Sr. Fernando Mary Ann and Community for their hospitality and an experience of the family spirit which enabled us to make our retreat well. I take this opportunity to thank Sr. Amirthasamy Maria Pushpam, the Vice Provincial for lovingly sharing my responsibility in my absence.

Admirabile Signum

As we are preparing ourselves for Christmas, it is very apt to dwell on Pope Francis’ latest apostolic letter - **Admirabile Signum** on the meaning and importance of the Nativity scene issued on **1 December, 2019**. In this Apostolic Letter, Pope Francis exhorts us to rediscover and revive the tradition of preparing the **Nativity Scene** not only in families but also in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares.

The crèche then and now: Firstly, the Christmas Crèche has its **origin** in the Gospels. Luke simply says: Mary “gave birth to her first born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger.” Secondly, in 1223, St. Francis of Assisi created the first Nativity scene in **Greccio**. He asked a friend 15 days before the Christmas to help him prepare “to bring to life” the memory of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem by creating a crèche display. When St. Francis arrived, he found a manger full of hay, an ox and a donkey. All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. The priest, then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist. The first biographer of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano, wrote that someone present at the Mass had a vision of the Baby Jesus Himself lying in the manger. At Greccio there were no statues; the Nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present. With the simplicity of this sign, St. Francis carried out a

great work of evangelization. His teaching continues today “to offer a simple yet authentic means of portraying the beauty of our faith”. From the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God’s Son took upon Himself in the Incarnation.

Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes **today**, helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem, imagine the scene and enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real in a broad gamut of historical and cultural contexts. **Today it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need (cf. Mt 25:31-46).**

The meaning of the symbols related to the christmas crèche: A starry sky wrapped in the darkness and silence of night signifies the closeness of God in our lives when we have experienced the darkness of night. God is there to answer the crucial questions about the meaning of life. His closeness brings light where there is darkness and shows the way to those dwelling in the shadow of suffering. The scenic setting of *ancient ruins or buildings* symbolize that Jesus is the newness in the midst of an aging world, and He has come to heal and rebuild, to restore the world and our lives to their original splendor. The *angels and the guiding star* symbolize, that we too are called to set out for the cave and to worship the Lord. It is customary to add many symbolic figures to our nativity.

First, there are the *beggars and the others* who know only the wealth of the heart. They too have every right to draw near to the Infant Jesus. No one can send them away from the crib because the poor are a privileged part of this mystery. Often they are the first to recognize God’s presence in our midst. The presence of the *poor and the lowly* in the nativity scene remind us that God became man for the sake of those who feel most in need of his love and who ask him to draw near to them. Jesus was born in poverty and led a simple life in order to teach us to recognize what is essential and to act accordingly. *Herod’s palace* in the background is closed and deaf to the tidings of joy. By being born in *a manger*, Jesus proclaims, in a meek yet powerful way, the need for sharing with the poor as the path to a more human and fraternal world in which no one is excluded or marginalized. The *fanciful additions in the crib* signify there in the new world inaugurated by Jesus, there is room for whatever is truly human and for all God’s creatures. From the shepherd to the blacksmith, from the baker to the musicians, from the women carrying jugs of water to the children at play all speaks of the everyday holiness, the joy of doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way, born whenever Jesus shares his divine life with us.

Persons in the cave: Mary contemplates the child and shows Him to every visitor. She invites everyone to obey His word and to put it into practice. When God knocked on the door of her immaculate heart, she responded in complete obedience to the message of the Angel to become the mother of God. *Saint Joseph* stands by her side, “protecting the Child and His Mother.” Joseph is the guardian, the just man, asks us to seek God’s will as he entrusted himself always to God’s will. *Jesus* reveals the greatness of His love and makes us reflect on how our life is part of God’s own life. The three kings from the East, observing the star, found Jesus and offered Him gold, frankincense and myrrh. *Gold* honours Jesus’ kingship, *incense* His divinity, *myrrh* His sacred humanity that was to experience death and burial. They are men of wealth, sages from afar, thirst for the infinite, and set out on a perilous journey to Bethlehem. They are not scandalized by the poor surroundings; they fall to their

knees to worship him. The presence of the three kings reminds us of every Christian's responsibility to spread the Gospel.

Let us make use of the Christmas crèche as a process of passing *on the faith, contemplate Jesus, experience His love for us, feel and believe that He is with us and that we are with Him.*

Within the family:

Welcome back: We are happy to welcome Sr. Madalaimuthu Angela and Sr. Azarias Arockia Mary Selvi after the New Economers Course and training in collaborative platform in our Generalate, Italy from 3 to 23 November, 2019.

Salesian Co-operators promise day: Nine of our Salesian Co operators from Regunathapuram made their first promise at Don Bosco Provincial House, Tiruchirapalli on 10 November, 2019. Thanks to Sr. Ayundukayam Arockia Malarjothi who prepared them well ahead for this beautiful day. Thanks to Sr. Anthonyswamy Rosy, the Province Delegate for Salesian Co-operators, Fr. Thomas Louis, the Salesian Family Delegate, Fr. Mariadoss the Province Delegate and the Coordinators who helped them to experience this day, as a significant one in their lives.

National conference by higher education commission: *Sr. Robinson Jenny Grace and Sr. Masilamani Sebasti Jeya Pushpam* took part in the National Conference by Higher Education Commission on the theme "Educating Youth for Social Transformation which was animated by DBHEI (Don Bosco Higher Education - India) and Don Bosco SPCI, New Delhi at Don Bosco Media Centre, Manikandam from 14 -15 November, 2019.

Congrats: We congratulate *Archbishop Thomas Menampampil* Emeritus of Guwahati, who will be conferred the award of Ambassador for peace by the Delhi - based International Human Rights Council on 9 December 2019 in the presence of invitees from all over the country and abroad.

We extend our appreciation and prayers to the *Most Rev. Antonysamy Savarimuthu*, who was appointed Bishop of Palayamkottai Diocese by Pope Francis on 20 November, 2019. Let us pray for him as his Episcopal ordination will be held in St. Xavier's Higher Secondary School - Palayamkottai, on 15 December, 2019.

Second novitiate programme: Our Second Novitiate Sisters will take part in the preparation for Final Vows in Don Bosco Renewal Centre, Bangalore from **Monday January 6 to Friday January 31, 2020**. Final Vows Contents comprises of Orientation & Assessment of the Past, Consecrated Life, Community, Prayer, Mission, Discernment, Psycho-sexual Integration & Celibacy, Group Counselling and Guided Retreat. Let us accompany our Sisters with our prayers as they are preparing themselves for their Final Commitment.

Course in media: Sr. Jeyaseelan Thabitha Florence, Sr. Pichai Muthu Masilin Mariya and Sr. Raja Clarenia Mary participated in Video editing and Photography Course held in Alaihal Media Maiyam, Manikandam from 26 to 29 November, 2019.

Spiritual direction and counselling: Sr. Cruz Anthoni Michaela took part in the course on Practice of Spiritual Direction and Counselling from 25 November - 7 December, 2019 in Don Bosco Renewal Centre, Bangalore.

General assembly 2019 – seminar and workshop: Sr. Vedamuthu Santiago Theresa participated in the General Assembly 2019 - Seminar and Workshop on “Communicating Gospel Message through Social Media” from 5 - 8 December 2019 in Don Bosco, Dimapur, Nagaland, India animated by BOSCOM South Asia.

NDF Annual Meet: Sr. Azarias Arockia Mary Selvi, and Mr. Britto a staff from ASSIST will participate in the Social Development Forum Annual Meet at Mornese, Yercaud from December 12 to 14 organized by Sr. Alphonse J. Isabella, NDF Coordinator - INM.

XIV southern zonal conference of salesian co-operators: Four Salesian Co-operators from each Province will take part in the XIV Southern Zonal Conference on the theme ‘**Good Christians and Upright Citizens**’ to be held in Don Bosco, Manikandam, Tiruchirapalli from 12 - 13 January, 2020. The participants are expected to be in the spot on 11 January 2020 by 6. 00 p.m.

Thanks and appreciation to:

- To Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora and community for hosting Tri - Monthly Recollection and Animation for Juniors from 2 - 3 November, 2019.
- To Sr. Pathi Margaret and community for facilitating Ashram experience for the First year Novices from 5 – 15 November and the Second Novitiate Programme from 15 November - 15 December, 2019 in Mannivakkam.
- To all the animators who made arrangements for the Seniors’ Tri monthly recollection on 9 November, 2019.
- To Sr. Rayan M. Auxilia Sophia and Community of Keela Eral for facilitating Neighbourhood Children Parliament Formation Meeting on 9 November, 2019.
- To Sr. Antony Lourdu Sagayam and Community for facilitating Awareness on Gender based Violence for Women in Tiruppur on 23 November, 2019.

Prayers requested: Kindly pray for Sr. Asirvatham Amalorpavam, who is hospitalized in Madurai from 30 November, 2019. My heartfelt thanks to all the Sisters especially the Sisters of Madurai - Sirudur Community who assisted our dear Sister. Joining with our children let us storm heaven for a miraculous intervention of Mary and Saints to restore her to health and wholeness.

Forthcoming feasts – December 2019

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

Forthcoming meetings in the Province — December 2019

07	NCP Formation Meet	Pothur
10	International Human Rights Day Children and Women Safety awareness, photo exhibition on ‘Standing up for Human Rights’	Local Communities
14 - 15	Provincial Council	Manikandam
21	Awareness on Gender Based Violence	Madurai
31	Videograph faith experience of 2 students from each school.	Each School

Our heartfelt condolences and prayers

- † To Sr. Soosaimuthu Arul Mary at the demise of her beloved mother Mrs. Arputhamary (86) on 6 November, 2019.
- † To Sr. Maria Kanikkai Savariammal at the demise of her dear mother Mrs. Arul Mary (68) on 12 November, 2019.
- † To Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot and Confreres of INS over the demise of Fr. Vadakumpadan Paul SDB, on 18 November, 2019.
- † To Sr. Viagappan Rosario Jebamani at the passing away of her dear brother-in-law Mr. Gnana Pragasam on 22 November, 2019.
- † To Sr. Pannirselvam Alphonsa and Family at the demise of her dear Mother Mrs. Susai Thersal (83), on 29 November, 2019.
- † To Rev. Fr. K M. Jose SDB, the Provincial and Confreres of INM Province and to Most Rev. Lawrence Pius and the Priests of Dharmapuri Diocese, at the passing away of Rt. Rev. Joseph Antony Irudayaraj DD. SDB (84) Bishop Emeritus of Dharmapuri on 29 November, 2019.
- † To Sr. Rose Ezarath INC over the demise of Sr. Alice Olickal, INC who went to meet her spouse on 30 November, 2019.
- † To Sr. Ritha Dora Thomas and Sisters of INB over the sudden demise of Sr. Celine (Eliammal) the first Missionary to Ethiopia from the Province of INB on 1 December, 2019.

May the Lord grant them eternal bliss and comfort the bereaved families.

The Lord had been gracious to shower manifold spiritual and material benefit to each one of during the year 2019. Let us be grateful to Jesus for His benevolent blessings. Let's **Welcome the New Year**, give a happy Adieu to the **old**, start the **new** beginning with courage and Cherish the Memories We Hold! Happy Christmas and grace filled New Year to all the Sisters, Members of the Entire Educating Community.



Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret
Provincial

*The Word became flesh
and dwelt among us!*



HAPPY CHRISTMAS