

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

We are now in the month of February, and the Holy Season of Lent begins on February 22nd with Ash Wednesday. Let us enter the time of mercy of the Almighty and Everlasting God as we begin the season of Lent. He made everything good and despised nothing at all. He is always ready to reassure and comfort the whole of creation under the wings of his forgiveness. The sign with ash on the forehead indicates to us the nothingness of our life - For you are dust, and to dust you will return. As the season of Lent draws our attention to our own frailties, let us prepare ourselves to welcome everyone with open arms, forgiving the harm they have done to us. Let us celebrate this Holy Season joyfully and confidently expecting God's grace.



Preparation of Young Salesians for Renewals and Admissions

I request the Rectors and Leaders to encourage and guide our young Salesians as they prepare and apply for their next level of formation, the renewal of vows or perpetual profession. I exhort the Young Salesians to spend qualitative time in prayer, making use of Rendiconto and spiritual direction as beautiful opportunities to examine oneself and evaluate the commitment in religious life, and thereby becoming stronger and devoted to religious vocation.

The province Secretary will send the details of the list of those due for renewals and perpetual professions and the documents related to the same. I exhort the leaders to ensure cooperation in promptly sending back the forms.

Commemoration of Deceased Confreres

According to our traditions, we remember the deceased Salesians on the first of February. In this academic year, we have lost one of our most senior confreres, Fr. Joseph Puthenkalam and we have just buried Fr. Marcel Lincoln on 2 February. I earnestly request the communities to pray for them in a special way, as well as the 17 other Salesians who have gone to paradise after a beautiful life on earth. May they all enjoy eternal bliss and beatific vision of God.

Silver Jubilee Inauguration of Don Bosco Scouts and Guides

On **11 February 2023**, the Tamil Nadu Don Bosco Scouts and Guides District Association will inaugurate the silver jubilee of its founding at **DB Thanjavur**. It is a half-day programme from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. In honour of the silver jubilee, there will be a number of programmes conducted throughout the year to encourage and strengthen the scouts and guides of our institutions. On behalf of the province, I wish them all the best for a successful silver jubilee celebration all through the year.

Meeting For Those Due for Perpetuals

For those Clerics due for perpetuals, a meeting will be held **on 18 February 2023, Saturday** at **Don Bosco Provincial House, Kallukuzhy**. Fr. Xavier Michael, the vice provincial, will communicate to you the details of the meeting. Clerics are asked to reach the provincial house, the previous day for supper. Let us remember these young Salesians as they step into an important phase of religious commitment.

Leaders Meeting

All the leaders of our communities will have two days of meeting on **23, 24 February 2023** (Thursday, Friday) at **Don Bosco, Manikandam**. Fr. Xavier Michael, the vice provincial, will remind you the details of the meeting.

Youth Mela

The Salesian Youth Movement (Ilamai) of the Province will have the Youth Mela on **February 25 and 26** at **Don Bosco, Pallithammam**. It is an annual feature of Ilamai, and I recommend the Leaders to ensure the involvement of all registered SYM members, as well as youth service coordinators, in this celebration.

Congrats to Sr. Margaret Devadoss and Sr. Majella Fernando - Provincials Elect of FMA INM and INT

The Mother General of FMA, Rev. Sr. Chiara Cazzuola, has nominated Sr. Margaret Devadoss as the new provincial of FMA-INM and Sr. Majella Fernando as the new provincial of FMA-INT for the six-year term 2023-2029. Sr. Margaret Devadoss has spent the last six years as a provincial councillor and the last three years as the animator of the formation house Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi. She has extensive experience in the fields of formation and animation and has contributed to the governance of the province.

For the past thirty-five years, Sr. Majella has served the province as a teacher, headmistress, formator, animator, academic coordinator, and provincial councillor, contributing a vast amount of experience and knowledge. I express my warmest congratulations and prayers to Sr. Margaret and Sr. Majella on behalf of the province. God bless you, dear sisters, and our fervent prayers will be with you and our support in every step as you assume your leadership of the province.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

01	Wed	Every priest offers one mass for the deceased confreres
10, 11	Fri, Sat	Seminar on GST & Tally @ DBPH
16	Sun	Provincial council
18	Sat	Meeting for those due for perpetual @ DBPH
22	Wed	Ash Wednesday
23, 24	Thu, Fri	Leaders Meet @ Manikandam
25, 26	Sat, Sun	Ilamai Youth Mela @ Pallithammam

Tri Monthly Recollection

Quarterly Assessment of the Temporary Professed

RECALLING EVENTS

Dissemination of Strenna 2023

Strenna 2023 was presented to all leaders of our community on January 5, 2023, at Don Bosco, Amsam. Fr. Simonraj gave the presentation, and Fr. Thomas Louis coordinated the entire event. I appreciate their availability and the cooperation of all the leaders. I would also like to thank the Amsam community for hosting the event. Once again, I urge the leaders of our community to disseminate the Strenna to the confreres and the Salesian family members in the local community by 15 February.

Provincial Community Day

Don Bosco Sayalkudi hosted the Provincial Community Day on January 21, 2023. All the silver jubilarians of our province were honoured and thanked for their loyal service to the province and the new priests were congratulated. It was a memorable and colourful day of celebration, with many representations from all our communities with the Salesian family members. I would like to thank the rector, confreres, staff, and students of Sayalgudi for their efforts in arranging the place and organising the whole event. I also thank the Vilathikulam community for animating the liturgy and the young priests who led the choir. My gratitude to the vice provincial and the economer for the overall arrangement. On a personal note, I am grateful to you my dear confreres for your love and concern in journeying with me. I am grateful to God always for the wonderful confreres I have in the province who are good and dedicated to the charism of Don Bosco.

14th National BOSCOREE

The 14th South Asian Boscoree was held in Assam Don Bosco University, Tapesia Gardens, Guwahati, from December 29 to January 3, 2023. I sincerely congratulate the Scouts and Guides from our Province, as well as the Scout Masters, who participated in Boscoree joyfully amidst challenging situations of travel and climate. My heartfelt gratitude to Fr. James Benjamin, young and energetic Salesian, who led the group prepared them for the memorable event.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

13.2.2017 – **Fr. Edward Xavier** died at Sri Lanka at the age of 68.

CONDOLENCES...

On behalf of the province, I offer my sincere condolences

- To the **Provincial and confreres of IND Province** at the demise of **Rev. Fr. Tharakan Mathew** (88) on 03 January 2023.
- To the **Provincial and confreres of INC Province** at the demise of **Fr. Thomas Pulickal** (76) on 08 January 2023.
- To **Fr. Danistanraj** at the sudden demise of his elder brother **Mr. Sagaya Roges** (45) on 22 January 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

OBITUARY OF REV.FR. MARCEL LINCOLN SDB

INTRODUCTION

"But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself." Ps 49:15

We the Salesians and the Salesian family members of the province of Tiruchy are shocked, and grief stricken at the sudden demise of a jolly good and loving confrere Rev. Fr. Marcel Lincoln sdb on 1 February 2023, 7.30 am. As the psalmist says, God has taken him to himself at the young age of 60. I am sure he was very much prepared to meet the Lord because he was always boldly saying, "God wants me." Only we were not prepared to leave him because he was such a good confrere, able to relate with everyone with great enthusiasm and sentiments, pull the legs of everyone and challenge friends with arguments of different kinds. It was interesting to note the fact that he won always. I must say he won over all of us even to the point of his death. May the Lord grant him eternal rest and fill us with his consolation and courage to go ahead with the journey of life, relying solely on God's providence and help.



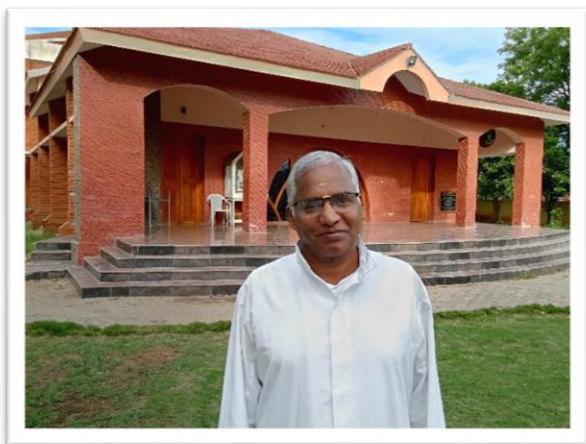
LAST DAYS OF FR. MARCEL LINCOLN

Fr. Marcel was complaining of eye problems in Namakkal, and he was brought to Joseph's eye hospital in Trichy, by Fr. Rex on 17 January 2023. After going through some tests, the doctors advised him that nothing could be done because of his high sugar. He remained for a day with us in the Provincial house. After dinner he was accompanied to his room but on

the way, he collapsed in front of the chapel. All of us rushed and gave him first aid. He was taken to the Child Jesus Hospital and found that he had suffered a heart attack. He was admitted there and several tests were done in the following days.

The doctors are well acquainted with Fr. Marcel for the past 10 years and more and have a detailed medical history. He had been admitted in the hospital a few times before for the problems of kidney, a blood clot in the brain and high sugar. God's providence was always with him, and he saw life once again after the treatment every time. He was asked to control his sugar level which he invariably did not follow all his life. This time when I met him, he told me that he was not taking medicines from January 2022 onwards. When he was admitted for cataract surgery last time, he was compelled to bring down the sugar level which he did because he had to undergo surgery. I guess after the surgery he followed his own advice because he always called himself as the chief doctor.

After all the tests, the doctors informed us that his condition was not good because many of his vital organs were damaged because of prolonged diabetes. Thanks to the doctors and sisters who took care of him well that he survived and was discharged on 26 January. He was advised to go through 5 days of observation and go for a review later. But he developed stomach pain on 30 January morning and was admitted again at the Child Jesus Hospital. He underwent scan and echo and the doctors found that he had a mild attack in the morning hours. Besides, the liver also had a tumour and that needs to be diagnosed.



We were planning to shift him to Kavery Medical Centre and Hospital, so that constant

psychiatric help also could be given him besides medical attention. But, at the insistence of Fr. Marcel, he was discharged on 31 evening and was brought to the provincial house for rest and observation. He was talking to us in his usual spirits and so we were relieved that he was doing well. Fr. Amaladoss checked on him a few times at night and in the morning. He was having sound sleep till 7 am. At 7.45 am when they went to see him, there were no movements. Nurse was called to examine him and there was no pulse at all. We rushed him to the hospital so that we could revive him but alas, no effort could help, and the doctors declared him dead. He had breathed his last around 7.30 am on 1 February 2023. Sr. Ruby FMA, the younger sister was with him all these days and May God bless her for the love and care she showed towards her brother.

We then requested the sisters to prepare the body of Fr. Marcel and informed the news of his death to his brother's family in Delhi and to all the other relatives. The funeral was planned for the next day 2 February morning at 11.30 am at the shrine of Mary Help of Christians, AMSAM. The body was then kept in the mortuary at the hospital.

SALIENT CHARACTERS OF FR. MARCEL LINCOLN

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”
2 Timothy 4:7-8

I feel these words are true in the life of Fr. Marcel. He had done everything well to the best of his capabilities when he enjoyed good health. He was the second Vice Provincial of the province and held many other important responsibilities which he carried out with dedication and commitment. I like to present a few of his salient characters that were explicitly seen in his life.

01. An Exuberant and Joyful Salesian

No one can deny the fact that Fr. Marcel enjoyed his life all the time. He was certainly joyful and exuberant in all that he talked and lived. Wherever he was present, there used to be laughter and fun. He was always humorous in his conversations. He used to pull the legs of the confreres of the community and allowed himself to be fooled as well. But he always had the final word. He was very strong and clear about it too. I remember several of the confreres going near him and tickling him and he used to shout in joy. The more he shouts, the more used to be the fun and happiness but all of them used to enjoy and he kept the community in good spirits. Keeping up to the recommendation of article 17 of our constitutions, “Because he is a herald of the good news, every Salesian is always cheerful. He radiates this joy and is able to educate to a Christian and festive way of life. ‘Let us serve the Lord in holy joy,” Fr. Marcel used to explicitly show his happiness of life.

02. A Man of Hard Work and Commitment

We used to wonder from where he would get the energy to do works and that too sitting at the desk for days and months, writing and compiling documents and articles. He was equally strong in the manual labour as well. God had blessed him with strong will and boldness to pursue any difficult task and he always persevered in them all. Such was his hard work and commitment. He would not give up anything because they were tough and impossible. Rather, he worked out plans and strategies so that everything would be possible and become a reality. That was the reason he was appointed the provincial secretary after his ordination, and he accompanied the extra ordinary visitor helping him with the necessary documentation to perfection. I also remember his help and support to Fr. Antony Joseph, our former provincial in writing articles and setting up the archives, which he did with much dedication.

03. A Creative Pastor and Administrator

AMSAM Parish can never forget the systems brought in by Fr. Marcel when he was both the Assistant Parish Priest as well as later when he became the Parish Priest. He was very creative in dealing with the leaders of the villages and disciplined them. He practiced punctuality and made the people to follow the same as well. He was courageous to solve

the problems of various kind and there was peace and serenity at the end of them all. He introduced the family card and the subscription. He was interested in the youth ministry and helped many of the youth to study and get employed. He was always available and approachable but with discipline and firmness. He always gave freedom to others but never forgot the principles and values of life.

04. A Poor and Disciplined Religious

Fr. Marcel was a person who had very little things with himself. He was very strict in following poverty in his life. He was never extravagant in spending or wasting resources of the congregation and the province. He was very careful and used to insist on the same to the clerics and other Salesians of the community. All of us know the value he gave for punctuality. I remember when he was Vice Provincial, he used to say, "Consider me dead if I am late for 5 minutes." It so happened that one day he was going to Manakkal for some animation. He was late for more than half an hour because of the traffic. When he reached the hall, a cleric remarked, "Come father Marcel, we shall have the requiem mass because you are late for half an hour." All had a good laugh, but he asked pardon for being late and carried on the programme. When I met him recently, he was complaining about the punctuality of the Salesians for prayer and told me to remind the confreres about it. I guess he is punctual even at his death that he has reached heaven early at the age of 60.

CONCLUSION

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4

Dear Fr. Marcel, we are grateful to the Lord for the gift of you to our province. You had lived up to the divinely call every moment of your life. I must say you have been adamant in meeting the Lord so early in life and you have achieved it, or rather God has been benevolent in granting your desire. I am sure you are cynically smiling at us all from heaven with your usual wits and humour. Remember us all and pray for us that we may be joyful and happy Salesians, doing everything with dedication and commitment and above all a good and disciplined religious like you. Enjoy your eternal life, Marcel. We shall meet you in heaven when the Lord calls us, and we will continue to have our good times as we had here on earth. Adieu.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB
Provincial – Salesian Province of Tiruchy, INT.



**Our Lady of Lourdes,
Pray for us!**