



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

MARCH 2023

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

We have already begun the holy season of Lent and we are entering the month of March. This season demands a lot from us. I am very sure many of us have taken certain resolutions to follow during this season to enrich our lives, grow in spirituality, and reach out to the needy. It is also fitting to [celebrate the solemnity of St. Joseph, the wonder worker](#), which falls in this season, and we have a powerful model to imitate. He was a person who understood and executed well the divine plan, not his personal one. May the powerful intercession of St. Joseph help us to be humble in understanding the divine plan that God has for every one of us so that our Lenten observance will be more meaningful and fruitful. I wish you all a very happy feast of St. Joseph.



The Team Visit at Hyderabad

The Team Visit will take place in the Provincial House, [Hyderabad](#), from [March 01–03, 2023](#). Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, Rector Major, and his General Council will animate and review the implementation of GC 28 in the South Asia region. All the provincials and their councils from South Asia, together with the network heads and members of the formation commission, will take part in the team visit. The SPCSA Assembly will be held on March 05 and 06, and the SPCSA Council will be held on March 07 and 08. The theme of the visit is "Forward Together on the Path of GC 28." The following are the topics for input sessions and discussion:

1. Growth in Charismatic identity in Salesian life, vocation promotion, and the formation of Salesians.
2. Renewing Youth Ministry, focused on the poorest of the poor while taking care of the sustainability of mission.
3. Co-responsibility for the mission: with the laity (EPC, SEPP), and the Salesian Family.
4. Identity of Salesians in South Asia: Consolidation or expansion (re-structuring).
5. Collaboration and Synergy with the Congregation in Human resources.

The topics will be studied, discussed, and the lines of action will be drawn, which will once again rejuvenate our desire to live the deliberations of the GC 28. Let us pray that these

days become times of reflection and evaluation so that the leaders may be enlightened with that fire and passion and pass on the same to every member of the province when they return to their provinces. I am sure the members of the General Council will also get an opportunity to live together with the South Asian Salesians and enthuse them with the charism of Don Bosco in a deeper manner.

All Commissions and Departments Meet

All commissions and departments meeting will be held on [March 11, 2023, at Don Bosco Provincial House](#). I express my sincere gratitude to all of you, especially the heads of the commissions and departments, for carrying out all the programmes of the current academic year as they were scheduled in the annual plan with lots of involvement and enthusiasm. During this meeting, we will prepare the youth ministry plan for the coming academic year. I request all the members of the various Commissions and Departments to attend this meeting without fail. Kindly come prepared with your tentative annual plan for the respective commissions and departments together with your suggestions.

Diaconate Ordination

Clerics Antony Shajan Alexander and Rex Jayakumar Arputha of Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, will be ordained deacons on [March 18, 2023](#). Clerics Xavier Vinodh Raj Longinus, Aldon Jibose Antonypitchai, Immanuel Karthik Leo, and Justin Kumar of Don Bosco Theological College, Kavarapettai will be ordained on [March 19, 2023 at Kilpauk Votive Shrine](#). We congratulate them and wish them all a relevant and fruitful diaconate ministry. We thank Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy, the Provincial of Chennai, the Rector and staff of DBTC, Chennai, and Fr. Jose Thomas Koyickal, the Provincial of Bangalore, the Rector and staff of KJC, Bangalore, who have accompanied our clerics in the past three years and helped them make a firm decision to serve the Lord as ordained ministers. They are assigned to the following places for their diaconate ministry:

Antony Shajan Alexander	-	Amsam
Rex Jayakumar Arputha	-	Therespuram
Xavier Vinodh Raj Longinus	-	Vilathikulam
Aldon Jibose Antonypitchai	-	Pallithammam
Immanuel Karthik Leo	-	Savariyarpalayam
Justin Kumar	-	Madhakottai

The rectors and parish priests are requested to accompany them in their pastoral experience. They will be engaged in preaching, administering sacraments, animating basic Christian communities, and organising Easter blessings.

We also congratulate the students of theology who will be receiving their ministries as acolytes and lectors.

Summer Apostolate

The students of theology will be available in our communities for summer ministry from [March 20, 2023](#). After the summer apostolate, they will come back to the provincial house for two days of animation and evaluation of the summer ministry on [June 3 and 4, 2023](#). The students of Philosophy will be available for the summer ministry from [April 17 to May 22, 2023](#).

The communities have a vital role to play in accompanying the young Salesians who come into our communities for a formative experience. I wish the entire community would guide and support the brothers during their stay and get involved as a community in all the activities. The leaders must ensure the regular rhythm of the community during these days, especially the prayer moments. May I request the Rectors to send their assessments of the clerics involved in the summer ministry in the beginning of June to the Provincial's office.

Meeting For Those Due for Perpetuals

For those clerics due for perpetuals, a meeting will be held on [Saturday, March 18, 2023](#), 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 evening for supper. Let us pray for these young Salesians as they step into an important phase of religious commitment.

Applications for Perpetual and Renewal

The clerics who are due for Perpetual Profession and Renewal of Vows will submit the application on [March 19, 2023](#), to the Rectors of the Communities during the Holy Eucharist. I request the rectors to send the documents on or before [March 25, 2023](#), with the opinion of the house council in the prescribed form, to the Provincial's office. Kindly send two admission forms and the applications of those applying for the perpetual profession. I recommend all community members to accompany our young Salesians during their journey of discernment. *The province secretary has already sent the details of the list of those due for renewals and perpetual professions and the related documents to the Rectors. I exhort the leaders to ensure prompt responses and cooperation in this regard.*

Consultation for Economer, Councillors and Rectors

I thank you, dear Confreres, for your sincere response and prompt reply in sending the filled-in consultation forms by email or postal mail. I was happy to receive replies from most of you. I recommend everyone to pray that this process of choosing the apt leaders for various roles in the province, confreres for different responsibilities, and various ministries and studies may be done by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

ADMA Annual Meeting

A day of meeting and animation at the province level is planned for all the members of ADMA from all the units of our presences on [March 12, 2023](#), at [Lourdes Shrine, K. Pudur](#). I

exhort the leaders of our communities to encourage all the members of the local units to attend the meeting.

40th Day Memorial Mass for Fr. Marcel Lincoln SDB

The memory of the deceased confreres forms part of our Salesian tradition. As we are grateful for the wonderful life of Fr. Marcel Lincoln SDB, we will be having the 40th day memorial mass on [Sunday, March 12 at 11 a.m. at the shrine of Mary Help of Christians, AMSAM](#). As I reminded during the leaders meeting, I encourage the presence of as many members as possible for this event. This is the only time that we can also show our solidarity to the family of Fr. Marcel. Let us continue to pray for the repose of the soul of Fr. Marcel. May I request the confreres send your good memories to be added to the obituary, which is being prepared by the Rector of Namakkal, Fr. Amos.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

- 10 Fri Provincial council
- 11 Sat All Commissions & Departments meet @ DBPH
- 12 Sun 40th Day Memorial Mass for Fr. Marcel Lincoln SDB @ AMSAM
- 12 Sun ADMA Province Level Meeting @ LS Madurai
- 25 Sat Applications for Profession to Reach Provincial Office
- 25 Sat Annual Retreat for Domestic Staff @ Pallithammam

RECALLING EVENTS

Silver Jubilee Inauguration of Don Bosco Scouts and Guides: The Tamil Nadu Don Bosco Scouts and Guides District Association inaugurated the silver jubilee celebration of its foundation on February 11, 2023, at Don Bosco Thanjavur. Eight hundred Don Bosco scouts and guides from all over Tamil Nadu joined the inaugural function. A good number of Salesians, FMAs, and scout masters accompanied the children. It was a colourful day of inauguration, and I wish them a meaningful celebration throughout the year. I extend my thanks to Fr. James Benjamine, INT provincial delegate for scouts and guides, the rector, and the community of Don Bosco Thanjavur for organising and hosting the entire event. We are also grateful to the confreres and lay collaborators of Chennai province for their presence and collaboration.

Leaders Meeting: All the leaders of our communities had two days of meeting on February 23 and 24, 2023, at Don Bosco Manikandam. The entire meeting was centred around the ongoing preparation for the silver jubilee of our province. At this juncture, I sincerely thank all the facilitators, Fr. Arokiadoss Lourdusamy (INM), Fr. John Dharman, Fr. Barnabas, Fr. Jeyan Joseph, Fr. Arul Maran, Fr. Ricopar Royan, and Fr. Daniel Sebastian, who animated the different sessions with various themes effectively and creatively. A special thanks to Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy, Provincial of INM, for joining us to preside over the Holy Eucharist on the second day. I thank and congratulate the rector and community of

Manikandam for hosting the event and looking into all the minute details of the programme.

Youth Mela: The Salesian Youth Movement (Ilamai) organised one of its annual features, the Youth Mela, on February 25 and 26 at Don Bosco, Pallithammam. It was a meaningful gathering of young people from all our presences to enjoy their togetherness, to inherit knowledge, and to exhibit their talents. There were 198 young people in total, with 34 Salesians and 15 FMA and SMA sisters. I congratulate Fr. Felix Arulnathan, the youth service coordinator of our province, for organising the mega programme. I also thank the rector and community of Pallithammam for hosting the event.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

02.03.2015 – Fr. Xavier Rodriguez died at Tiruchy at the age of 84.

CONDOLENCES...

On behalf of the province, I offer my sincere condolences

- To the [Provincial and confreres of INM Province](#) at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Arampulikal Joseph](#) (91) on 07 February 2023.
- To [Fr. Charles Arulappan](#) at the sudden demise of his eldest brother [Mr. James](#) (58) on 13 February 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

MISSION TO THE YOUNG - 4

Positive Approaches to The Mission Get Greatly Rewarded

We are in the second year of preparation for our Silver Jubilee, and the theme is "Mission to the Young." If we conduct a survey of all our works and activities in all our presences, I am sure the list will be endless. Nobody can deny the fact that our confreres work hard and move from one project to another. In fact, I had to recommend to some of the communities that they should rest and relax a while before they begin their next project. I am inspired by the hard work and dedication of some of the young confreres. Hence, I would like to present to you how positive approaches to our mission get greatly rewarded. This does not rule out challenges and failures. Sufferings and crosses are part and parcel of our lives. We may have given up our work a number of times during the process of completion. But then, the end is satisfying, consoling, fulfilling, and greatly rewarding.

I want to sincerely appreciate two of our young rectors who have not only accomplished great monuments in building churches but also built up the people, bringing in a great synergy of spirituality. Fr. George Fernandez, the Rector of Pallithammam, and Fr. Suresh Felix, the Rector of Vilathikulam. When I refer to these two rectors, I am also including the Salesian community and all the confreres who have stood together with them. Let us be

grateful to God for these confreres, and let us hope we may draw inspiration from them so that all of us will be able to become positive contributors in our own presences.

Bosco Maiyam Mission

All of us are well aware of the enormous works carried out in the campus in the past six years. I cannot but be grateful to God for his benevolence towards this mission through the help of the benefactors year after year. But what has happened under the leadership of Fr. George is the coordination and good positive vibration that have resulted in great success. Just like the



multiplication of loaves by Jesus, so too have works been multiplied beyond imagination, and God has been the guiding hand in all these efforts. Let me enumerate some of the salient developments that have taken place in this mission in the past few years.

01. Devotion to St. Anthony: I feel very strongly that this devotion to St. Anthony and its propagation has been the underlying phenomenon behind the entire project of completion of the Church. No wonder, the Church is named after the saint, and it is the bounden duty of the confreres to perpetuate this devotion in the future. They have celebrated 300 weeks of novena, and I can imagine the odds and struggle they had to undergo every week in carrying the speakers, arranging the chairs and benches, getting the place ready from morning until evening, and doing some work in preparation whenever they had time during the day. What zeal the confreres displayed in animating the people week after week. Perseverance par excellence, I would say. I had witnessed myself a few times in the past years the faith of the people during these novena days. Some of them shed tears and others were in agony, including Fr. George, who was trying to gather money for this auspicious monument



in honour of the saint. St. Anthony has listened to their prayers and supplications, and today, the Church stands tall and proud, strong and mighty, beautiful and elegant, a great centre of spirituality and faith. I am sure there will be hundreds and thousands of people who will frequent this shrine in the future, offering thanksgiving and petitions as children of God.

02. Hard work and consistent efforts of the community: I am sure all of us will agree that the community of the confreres was so good and excellent in the past years that they were able to carry out so many developmental projects under the wonderful and adorable leadership of Fr. George Fernandez. Everything looks great today, but what about the past so many years! I can imagine the hardships and pain they had to go through in accomplishing various tasks, some of them planned well and others sudden and sporadic, but all for the glory of God and the happiness of the young. Even if some of the confreres were not oriented well, they fell in line with the community because the mindset of the community was such that they felt comfortable later and began to contribute their best to building up the mission. I know for sure some of the clerics felt overloaded, but I appreciate their perseverance, and they feel so good now that they have been part of the memorable history of this mission. Everyone who has visited the campus has had some good words to say about something or other. Hence, good community and fraternal communion made the difference.



03. Availability and good relationships with people: It was Fr. Anthony Joseph, of good memory, who during his term of leadership established good relationships with people from all the villages and solved most of their problems, so much so that the people proposed the parish church. Fr. George continued this journey, and by his casual and loving ways, he won the hearts of all the people, and now there is a



feeling of one parish, which is a great leap in history. During my past visitation, people have remarked on the availability of our confreres to meet the needs of the people, and they have admired the way our confreres maintained good relationships with people. This actually won the good will of the people, and it has gone to the extent of giving me a memorandum and petition saying, "Do not transfer our parish priest at least for one year. Let him rest after such an exhaustion." I can understand the simplicity of their love and concern. This kind of feedback goes on to explain to us the need to always have good relationships with people.

04. Creativity and ingenuity in resource mobilization: It's a wonder how Fr. George was able to find money for all the projects carried out at Bosco Maiyam. I really admire his trust in Divine Providence. I remember well the team that visited me in the provincial's office requesting for the funds to continue building the church, and I had nothing but encouraging words. "Our dreams were shattered," one of them

remarked. But the team under the leadership of Fr. George went around the world, knocking at every door possible, trying out the least possible efforts, and at last the work was accomplished. Not only the church but the bell tower, the flag post, the way of the cross, and the grottos of the patron saints of the substations. In short, the whole campus looks like a spiritual valley, and one going inside cannot come out without touring around everything built there.



My dear confreres, I can go on and on enumerating more and more aspects, but words cannot describe my happiness and joy at the great sacrifice these confreres have made in the past years. God bless them all, especially Fr. George Fernandez. We have seen for ourselves what positive work can do! Great things can happen when confreres work together.

Vilathikulam Mission

All of us witnessed another wonderful monument to St. Anthony in the form of a beautiful and attractive church in Vilathikulam, blessed and inaugurated a few months ago through the instrumentality and apt intervention of another young rector, Fr. Suresh Felix. We can only imagine the various edifices built by Don Bosco in his time. But I feel Don Bosco is active and alive even today through the dedication and commitment of young confreres who have deep faith and enduring perseverance. It is true that there were a number of problems in the Vilathikulam mission in the past few years. The confreres did not know what to do, and the diocese also did not come to our rescue either. I personally went around the villages as vice provincial, trying to usher in peace and unity, but my efforts went in vain. But then came Fr. Suresh Felix and set things right at such a rapid speed that the Bishop himself was overwhelmed with joy at seeing the completed church. What had been pending for six years was finished in six months. All for the glory of God. We are grateful again to all the benefactors and donors who contributed generously, and we remember with gratitude the entire team that went around to gather the required funds to accomplish the mission.



01. Building the People of God: What I admire in Vilathikulam is the unity among the people, which existed from the very beginning. Since I was there as rector and parish priest, I know very well the mindset of the people. They were together despite differences like caste, power, money, etc. Even the other denominations used to gel



with us during various occasions of prayer and worship. I guess that is restored now, and Fr. Suresh has somehow visited all the houses of the entire parish and built up the people, and hence the church is completed in record time. I strongly feel that the unity of the people should not be destroyed by us Salesians because of our egos and selfishness. We should be

able to let go of everything about ourselves for the sake of communion among the people of God. Hence, I would say the church in Vilathikulam stands as a symbol of unity, and I am sure there will be more people frequenting the church and its sacraments in the future.

02. Following the direction of the Superiors: Not because I am the provincial, I am bringing this insight, but I truly admire the love and obedience Fr. Suresh Felix has for superiors, and the way he carries out their directions is really praiseworthy. I know for sure that Fr. Suresh is not having a bed of roses in the community. All of us know it. There is no secret about it. But his positive outlook towards life and his mission is greatly inspiring. I also know very well that there were some of the people who were stiff-necked and hard-hearted, who did not understand things in the right spirit and at times fought with him for various reasons.



But he kept his cool and carried out his duty with calmness and serenity, following the advice of his elders and superiors. We must be grateful to God that his patience and perseverance have been greatly rewarded and are bearing fruit.

03. Pastoral zeal for souls and innovations in animation: It is very important to follow the motto of Don Bosco, Da mi hi animas. Every soul matters, and nothing should be lost. We should respect every person and try to bring all the lost sheep back to the fold. I am happy that this focus is kept up by the community in Vilathikulam under the leadership of Fr. Suresh and that all decisions are made to achieve this purpose. It is also wonderful to see the



animation of anbiams, or prayer groups as they call them now, music training for interested people, prayer and worship in villages every month and on festive occasions, preparation for confession before village feasts, etc., all efforts to save souls and bring them back to God. I am sure the effects of these efforts will be visibly seen in the coming years.

There are many more aspects that I can refer to, but I am sure you understand my feelings and emotions in thanking the Lord for these wonderful Salesians who work with the heart of Don Bosco, and may God bless them and keep them in good health and happiness.

My dear confreres, by mentioning the names of these Salesians, I am not leaving out the names of other Salesians who are doing well and burning with love and enthusiasm in their communities and mission areas. I want to be inclusive. As and when possible, I always appreciate and admire every Salesian who works hard with the right motivation. Let us celebrate the achievements of our own brother Salesians. Let us appreciate them. They deserve our hugs and pats on the back. They have done well. And we should take pride in their success and glory. I am sure there will be many more Salesians who will pick up good motivation from them and perform well in their projects and initiatives.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



**St. Joseph,
Pray for us!**