



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

April 2023

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

Easter, the glorious season of Jesus Christ's Resurrection, falls in this month of April. The resurrection of Jesus gives us hope for life after death, joy after sorrow, success after struggle, and heaven after earth. Jesus triumphed over death and emerged from the dark cave that encased him, bringing life, light, hope, and good news to all. Jesus is always present and available to appear to us as he did to the women and apostles, and to accompany us as he did to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. As we prepare to celebrate the joyous season of Easter, let us imbibe the spirit of the apostles, women, and disciples who longed for Jesus at a time when they deeply missed him, so that he may appear to us, comfort us, and encourage us to go forth and proclaim His Good News.



Perpetuals and Renewals

I thank the Rectors and the leaders for having prepared the young clerics for their next phase of formation. I thank the local council for receiving the applications and for going through the admission procedure, of those due for renewals and perpetual profession, admission to the novitiate and pre-novitiate. The forms have reached the provincial's office. The admission process by the provincial council will be done on 01 April 2023 during the provincial council meeting.

Summer Ministry

Summer brings extra joy to our Salesian communities, with a variety of special programmes for children and young people. Furthermore, students who have completed their philosophical studies as well as those who are pursuing theological studies join our communities to spend their vacation meaningfully and to joyfully support all the special programmes planned by the communities. I wish you all, dear confreres, a fruitful summer ministry with many children and young people. May they come to know and appreciate the joy of our Salesian communities and mission. At the same time, I exhort and encourage all Salesians to participate in regular community life and work together to make this summer memorable.

Lenten Contribution

All the leaders of the communities are requested to send the Lenten Contribution to the Provincial Economer by the **end of April 2023**. This will be collected and sent to the Rector Major.

Maritime Academy and English Medium School in Kuthenkuly

The Maritime Academy is a project of the diocese of Thoothukudi in the polytechnic campus at Kuthenkuly as a monument in view of the centenary of the diocese. St. Sebastian Trust will be the legal entity for the maritime academy, but the diocese will be independently doing the administration in collaboration with our Polytechnic College. It will offer two diploma courses, namely, GP rating and SPSL. Graduates of these courses, whether with school certificates or other degrees, will have a variety of options to immediately get employed in the ship. The foundation stone was laid on March 2023. Let us pray and hope that this initiative of collaboration with the diocese of Thoothukudi may enhance the lives of the young people.

There has been a continuous request from the community of Kuthenkuly to start an English medium school in the campus as there are no good Catholic schools along the coast for 70 kilometres from Kootapuli to Thiruchendur. Fr. Siluvai Ignaci, the founder of the St. Sebastian Trust, also has promised financial assistance to start the English Medium School. Therefore, with the permission of the Bishop, we are beginning the English Medium School from the coming academic year with the admissions for KGs, First, and Second Standards. The girls' hostel building will be converted into classrooms for children immediately to begin the classes. A new building will be put up in the coming year for the school. May the Lord bless this initiative and make us instruments to reach out to many children to offer them a good future and career.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

01,02 Sat,Sun Provincial council
17-22 Mon-Sat II Retreat - General Patronage

RECALLING EVENTS

The Team Visit at Hyderabad: The Team Visit was held in the Provincial House, Hyderabad, from March 01–03, 2023. Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, Rector Major, and his General Council animated and reviewed 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, took part in the team visit. The SPCSA assembly was held on March 5-6, during which the report of all the networks was presented and discussed. The SPCSA council was conducted on March 7-8, during which many of the appointments for the networks were proposed and done. We are grateful to the province of Hyderabad, specially the provincial team who made our stay comfortable and happy. God bless them all.

All Commissions and Departments Meeting was held on 11 March 2023 at Don Bosco Provincial House. During the meeting, the youth ministry plan for the coming academic year was discussed and finalized. I thank all the members of the various Commissions and Departments for attending this meeting and Fr. Ricopar Royan for coordinating the meeting.

Diaconate Ordination: On behalf of the province, I congratulate Deacons Antony Shajan Alexander and Rex Jayakumar Arputha who were ordained deacons on 18 March 2023 at Bangalore and Deacons Xavier Vinodh Raj Longinus, Aldon Jibose Antonypitchai, Immanuel Karthik Leo and Justin Kumar who were ordained on 19 March 2023 at Chennai. We thank God for the gift of these Deacons to our province and wish them all a relevant and fruitful diaconate ministry in the province.

Meeting For Those Due for Perpetuals: The clerics who are due for perpetuals this year had a meeting on March 18, 2023, at Don Bosco Provincial House, Kallukuzhy. Fr. Jeyan Joseph, the director of Christodayam, animated them on the topic 'Salesian Identity and Mission to the Young.' In the afternoon, they were taken for a Lenten pilgrimage to St. Thomas Church, Malayadipatty and prayed the way of the Cross. I thank Fr. Xavier Michael and Fr. Jeyan Joseph for animating the clerics. Let us continue to pray for these clerics as they are preparing for the total commitment in their religious life.

ADMA Annual Meeting: A day of meeting and animation was organized for the members of ADMA at the province level March 12, 2023, at Lourdes Shrine, K. Pudur. Eighty-nine members from our presences participated in the meeting. They were given orientation on the devotion to Mary Help of Christians. I congratulate Fr. John Bosco Lourdusamy, provincial delegate for ADMA for coordinating the meeting and the Lourdes Shrine, Madurai community for hosting the meeting.

The Annual Retreat for the domestic staff of our communities was held in Pallithammam on 25 March 2023. Fr. George Fernandez gave the talk to the domestic staff. There were all together 24 participants. We thank the preacher, Pallithammam Community, Fr. Amaladoss, the Economer and Fr. Johnpaul for organizing a meaningful retreat for our domestic staff. I would like to remind our communities that all the domestic staff should be given opportunity to attend this retreat. I see that the attendance is very poor this year.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

15.04.2016 – **Fr. Packiaraj Rayan** died at Thanjavur at the age of 67

27.04.2010 – **Fr. Sebastian Vayalipara** died at Madurai at the age of 80

CONDOLENCES...

On behalf of the province, I offer my sincere condolences

- To the **Provincial and confreres of INK Province** at the demise of **Rev. Fr. Thomas Vailatt** (93) on 13 March 2023.

- To the [Provincial and confreres of INS Province](#) at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Bosco Minj](#) (76) on 15 March 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

MISSION TO THE YOUNG - 5

Intimacy in the Mission will Make us Happy in Religious Life

My dear confreres and the members of the Salesian family,

As I am spending a lot of time with the confreres these days regarding the transfers and planning for the future, it occurs to me that our lives as religious are primarily meant for others. In our case as Salesians, for the young. If holiness is the only purpose of our religious life, then we need not be Salesians; we could either embrace a monastic life or join some school of spirituality. If we want to do only pastoral ministry and not worry about the mission entrusted to the community, then we can become diocesan priests or even lay preachers who are sharing the word of God excellently well. If we are worried only about ourselves, how many degrees to add after our name, then religious life, and particularly Salesian life, is not the vocation for such individuals. We are supposed to be jacks of all trades. Mission should be the top priority of our religious life. That is the reason we are active contemplatives. In fact, Don Bosco found two forms of vocation, namely, the priest and lay brother, precisely because more work could be done by the lay brother, and the lay brother is a religious with half sleeves. Thus, we understand the importance of mission in our congregation. I call this "Intimacy in the mission." Let me enumerate how we can make our mission into our passion.

I must acknowledge many of our confreres who have finished their doctorates successfully, carrying out their roles as Rector and other portfolios given to them. They have not failed in their duties in the least. Hats off to them, and God bless them for their commitment and dedication to the mission. They do not want to give up the mission for the sake of their studies. This is what is inspiring and exemplary. The mission is so intimate to them that they cannot think of alienating themselves from it. This is intimacy in the mission. At the same time, it is surprising to come across confreres who want to take up only one role in the community. If it's positive and they want to excel in that field, I can understand. But often, it's not that. People want to do the minimum so that they can be 'comfortable.' There is a culture today that if I have to do my doctorate, I have to be relieved of all other duties so that I can be focused on my studies. This is not wrong. But this is the minimum, and I know very well that our confreres are intelligent and potentially good enough to do the impossible. To these confreres, there is no intimacy in the mission.

In my circular last month, I elaborately depicted two missions of our province and how they are flourishing today despite many hurdles and challenges. It is because confreres in

these houses were wedded to the mission. The mission became so intimate to them that they spent their entire lives, their passion, their vision, their skills and talents, and everything of them in the mission. On the contrary, I am scandalised by some other confreres who are like pharisees, not moving the tip of their finger for anything at all. Celebrating one mass per day becomes crucifixion for them. Taking an initiative in the community becomes unthinkable. I wonder how these people get good sleep at night. Needless to say, the amount of talk going on among these confreres, preaching the good news from the roof top, criticising, grumbling, and backbiting, growing in negativity all the time. God forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. Mission has gone out of their minds. This cannot continue in our religious life. Salesian life will become a burden to these persons.

Don Bosco's words, "I have promised God that I would give of myself to my last breath for my poor boys," quoted in Article 01 of our Constitution, continue to say, "To ensure the continuation of this mission, the spirit inspired him to initiate various apostolic projects, first among them our society." Hence, if we take the mission out of our lives, the congregation cannot exist. Going on further, our nature and mission are to be "signs and bearers of the love of God for young people, especially those who are poor." (Art.02) Pope Francis talks about the smell of the sheep, which clearly tells us that we are to be among the people and that our mission is to be with the people. He goes on to say that the best, the most qualified and efficient members of the congregation, should be sent to the peripheries and the neglected of society, meaning to say that we should find joy and fulfilment in the mission, particularly serving the marginalised and the poor. But, my dear confreres, how difficult is it to find confreres to work in the peripheries? I began giving options to the confreres so that they would contribute their best to the mission. But today, confreres in the quinquennium period are giving me options. 'Either I will do this, or I must be sent for studies.' The mission is suffering acutely at the hands of some of the confreres.

Let us keep the following as the foundation of our mission as Pope Francis says:

- 1. Attractiveness:** "If one follows Jesus, happy to be attracted by him, then others will take notice. They may even be astonished."
- 2. Gratitude and gratuitousness:** There is no reasoning or calculation in the mission. There is also no sense of obligation. Mission is a reflection of gratitude. I have received so much from God and the congregation. It is time that I begin to give and contribute my best.
- 3. Humility:** Happiness and salvation are not our own possessions, or a goal achieved by our merits. The gospel of Christ can only be proclaimed with humility, without arrogance.
- 4. To facilitate and not to complicate:** Mission does not add unnecessary burdens on people who are already worn out, nor does it impose demanding programs of formation in order to enjoy what the Lords gives easily.

5. **Proximity to Life in progress:** Mission means reaching people right where they are and just how they are.

What are the pitfalls to avoid?

1. Self-absorption which carries the risk of self-promotion and advertising one's own initiatives.
2. Control anxiety: the desire to assume supremacy and control over the very communities that ecclesial bodies are meant to serve.
3. Elitism: the unspoken notion of belonging to an aristocracy.
4. Isolation from the people.
5. Functionalism which leads to secular models of worldly efficiency.

The Pope concludes his message recalling the words of Saint Ignatius, "Think about doing your work well, 'as if everything depended on you, while knowing that everything in fact depends on God'."

As we are entering into the summer and as we will be having many young Salesians with us in our communities, let us become motivators and inspirers, like Don Bosco who was having the mission as the uppermost aspect of life in mind. The same was perpetuated by the many followers of Don Bosco, the early Salesians who were so much involved in the mission. Thus, we who are the Salesians today should enjoy intimacy in the mission so that the charism of Don Bosco may spread to everyone in the world, especially to the poor and the marginalized of the society.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



Happy Easter!