



## PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

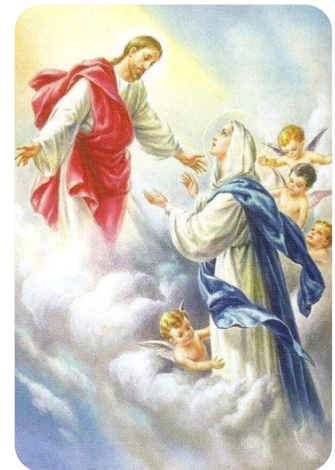
AUGUST 2023

### DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

The month of August brings us two important celebrations on the same day, August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother, and the Independence Day of our Mother Country.

The writings of St. Alphonsus de Liguori inspired me a lot to understand the Dogma of the Assumption. Below is the narration from his seventh discourse, "The Assumption of Mary": "And now death came; not indeed clothed in mourning and grief, as it does to others, but adorned with light and gladness. But what do we say? Why speak of death? Let us rather say that divine love came and cut the thread of that noble life. And as a light, before going out, gives a last and brighter flash than ever, so did this beautiful creature, on hearing her Son's invitation to follow him, wrapped in the flames of love, and in the midst of her loving sighs, give a last sigh of still more ardent love, and breathing forth her soul, expired. Thus, was that great soul, that beautiful dove of the Lord, loosened from the bands of this life; thus, did she enter into the glory of the blessed, where she is now seated, and will be seated, Queen of Paradise, for all eternity." Glories, p. 420.



Assumption is nothing but the glorious reward of God to the Blessed Mother for the exemplary life she lived on earth with purity, obedience, and responsibility. May the assumed Mother intercede for each one of us to receive the same glory by following her virtues of purity, obedience, and responsibility.

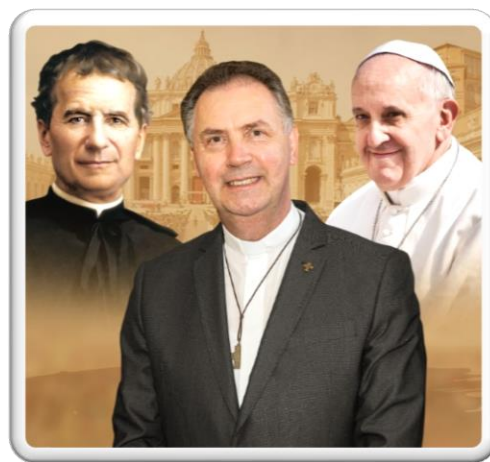


August 15 is also a very auspicious day for us Indians as we celebrate the Independence Day of our country. It is a day of opportunity to pay homage to all the freedom fighters of our country with utmost gratitude for the vision they had for each one of us to be relieved from slavery and bondage. Let us all play our part to make their dream come true in the lives of all the citizens of our country.

I wish you all a very happy feast of the Assumption of Our Lady and the Independence Day of our Nation.

### **Congrats to our Beloved Rector Major, the Cardinal Elect**

Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, our beloved Rector Major, has been nominated as Cardinal by Pope Francis on July 9, 2023. It is a great joy and honour for the whole Salesian world and a privilege and opportunity to serve the Mother Church even more closely. Fr. Angel is well known in the Church and among other religious people for his effective leadership and cordial approach. After the announcement, the Rector Major has written a letter to the entire congregation, informing us that he will continue his office as Rector Major until July 31, 2024. From then on, the Vicar General will assume ad interim governance of the congregation. The 29th General Chapter will be anticipated by one year and will begin in February 2025, during which the new Rector Major will be elected.



On behalf of all the Salesians, Salesian Family members and beneficiaries of our province, I wholeheartedly congratulate our dear Rector Major and assure him of our prayers and support in his new role as Cardinal in the Church.

### **Letter of the Rector Major after the South Asia Team Visit 2023**

All of us remember well the Rector Major's Team Visit for the South Asia region, which was held from 01 to 03 March 2023, at Don Bosco Provincial House, Hyderabad. The Rector Major, members of the General Council, all the Provincials and Provincial Councils of South Asia, and the various SPCSA delegates were present for the event. The discussions and deliberations of this meeting were studied at the recent plenary session of the General Council, following which the Rector Major has sent an official letter to all the confreres of the South Asia Region. He has presented his impressions of the region and offers some important guidelines for the future. Along with this circular, I am sending you this letter of the Rector Major.

I request all our Rectors to kindly ensure that the letter is studied together by the confreres in the community and the required decisions are made for the implementation of the guidelines offered by the Rector Major. We will also take up these recommendations in our Leaders Meet and Provincial Council and offer detailed lines of action to the communities and the confreres in the coming months.

### **Province Foundation Day**

We celebrate the Foundation Day of our province on August 5. We are completing 24 years and entering the 25th year, the Silver Jubilee Year, of the beginning of our Province. We had planned for three years of preparation for the Silver Jubilee celebration and we are beginning the third year of preparation on August 5, 2023. All that we had planned for the

three years is being actualized one by one. As we discussed in the last leaders meeting, along with the other plans, we will have one-year intensive preparation starting August 5, 2023, in all our communities.



I request all the Rectors and Leaders to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee Year at the community level, in the month of August on a convenient day when you can gather all the members of the Salesian Family and the young people. The province level inauguration of the Silver Jubilee Year will be held in September during the Leaders Meeting after getting guidelines from the Rector Major regarding 29<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. The Silver Jubilee committee will send you the flag, the prayer card, and other materials. With a grateful heart, let us prepare ourselves, Salesian Family members and the young people to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of our province meaningfully.

We remember with love and affection the following Jubilarians of the year:

Silver Jubilee of Ordination - Fr. Casimir Raj,  
Fr. Robert Simon,  
Fr. Santhanaraj Ubagaram

Silver Jubilee of Profession - Fr. Daniel Pusparayar,  
Fr. Gamaliyel Francis,  
Fr. George Fernandez

### **Initial Visit**

The initial visit to our communities has been completed. I sincerely thank the leaders and members of the communities for preparing appropriate plans for various sectors of the community for the whole year and for sending a copy to the province secretary on time. I wish you all the best in actualizing all the plans with care and concern.

### **Bon Voyage to Fr. Ananda Rex, Br. Broon**

We wish the very best to Fr. Jeba Ananda Rex Michael who has left for Manila, Philippines on 27 August 2023 to begin his doctoral research in Psychology. We wish him all the best.

Br. David Broon will be attending the course for the new missionaries, which will be organised in Rome in the months of August and September 2023. He will return to the province after the course to make arrangements for his visa to work in Albania, in the Province of IME. We thank God for instilling missionary zeal in him and pray that he may be happy and convinced of this special vocation.

## World Youth Day 2023

Fr. Francis Xavier Antony and Antony Sagayaraj, a member of Ilamai are the participants from our Province for the World Youth Day 2023 celebrations to be held in Lisbon, Portugal. The World Youth Day will be held from August 1–6, 2023. After the celebration, they will visit some of the prominent places in and around Italy. They have left on July 31, 2023. Fr. Robert Simon is the general coordinator for the trip. A group of 58, which includes the youth and the Salesians who will be representing the South Asian Salesian Youth



Movement for World Youth Day. Fr. Prabin Soosadimai also participates in it with the youth from Sulthanpet Diocese. We wish them a very meaningful and joyful experience with the Youth of the World who will flock to Lisbon for the celebrations.

The theme for WYD 2023 is: “Mary arose and went with haste” (Lk 1:39). In his WYD message to the young people, Pope Francis writes: “After the Annunciation, Mary could have focused on herself and her own worries and fears about her new condition. Instead, she entrusted herself

completely to God. Her thoughts turned to Elizabeth. She got up and went forth, into the world of life and movement.” The Holy Father then goes on to add: “The haste of the young woman of Nazareth is the haste of those who have received extraordinary gifts from the Lord and feel compelled to share them. It is the haste of those capable of putting other people’s needs above their own. Mary is an example of a young person who wastes no time on seeking attention or the approval of others – as often happens when we depend on our ‘likes’ on social media. She sets out to find the most genuine of all ‘connections’: the one that comes from encounter, sharing, love and service.”

## PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

|        |          |   |
|--------|----------|---|
| 05     | Sat      | Province Foundation Day                                   |
| 12     | Sat      | ASC Local Delegates of SDB & FMA Meet @ DBPH Kallukuzhy   |
| 13     | Sun      | ASC Promise Day @ Pallithammam                            |
| 13     | Sun      | AGB of Past Pupils @ Surya Nagar, Madurai                 |
| 19     | Sat      | Salesian Brothers INT and INM Meet @ Citadel              |
| 19, 20 | Sat, Sun | Ilamai Leaders and Animators Formation (LAF) @ Manikandam |
| 23     | Wed      | Provincial Council  |
| 31     | Thu      | YaR Day Campaign  |

*Tri Monthly Recollection*

*Quarterly Assessment of the Temporary Professed*

## RECALLING EVENTS

### Diaconate Ordination

Clerics Clan Zachariyas and Doss Jepison of Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, were ordained deacons on July 01, 2023. They are back in the province for their ministry in

the parish communities. We congratulate them and wish them all the best for their diaconate ministry.

### **Leaders Retreat and Leaders Meet**

The annual retreat for the Rectors and Leaders of our communities was held from July 03 to 08, 2023 at The Retreat, Yercaud. I appreciate all our Rectors, Leaders, and few other confreres for their prayerful participation and for maintaining silence throughout the Retreat. I thank the Rectors and Leaders for their active participation in the Leaders meeting and for their valuable suggestions for the preparation and execution of the Silver Jubilee celebrations. I extend my sincere thanks to the Rector and confreres of The Retreat, Yercaud community, for hosting all the annual retreats for the confreres with great hospitality.

### **Quinquennium Meet**

The meeting for those in their third to fifth year of ordination of INM and INT was organized on 21 and 22 July 2023 at Don Bosco, Kotagiri. It was a one and half days of programme with animation, group discussion in the batches and interaction with the provincials. I appreciate our young priests for their presence and the enthusiasm and openness exhibited during the meeting. I am grateful to Fr. Don Bosco, the provincial, Fr. John Alex, the vice provincial and the Rector and confreres of Don Bosco Kotagiri for their excellent planning and execution of the meeting.

### **Young Salesians Meet**

All the young Salesians, who are doing practical training and college studies in our province, had two days of animation in Don Bosco, Nettur, on July 29 and 30, 2023. They were animated by the members of the formation commission and interacted with them. I thank all the clerics for their active participation, the formation commission for their presence and animation and the Rector and the confreres of Don Bosco Nettur community for making all the arrangements for organising the event.

### **Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians**

27.08.2007 – Fr. Rosario Perez died at Madurai at the age of 46.

### **CONDOLENCES...**

On behalf of the province, I offer my sincere condolences,

- To Fr. Robert Simon at the demise of his father Mr. David (86) on 27 July 2023.
- To the family of Fr. Thommai Rajan of good memory, at the demise of his mother Mrs. Berchmans Mary (87) on 28 July 2023.
- To the Provincial and confreres of ING Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Chenginiyaden Thomas (80) on 30 July 2023.

*May the souls rest in peace!*

## COMMUNITY REFLECTION

### TOWARDS SILVER JUBILEE - YEAR 3: SPIRITUALITY OF WITNESS

I am reminded of one of the incidents during my practical training. We were a big community with many Salesians. The Rector was a very good person who was kind and understanding. He had a secretary who was a student at the school. The Rector relied on him for everything and believed him so much that he used to give him the keys to his office in his absence. I don't know if we, the Salesians, were not loyal enough to be given the keys. Everything went well for months and it so happened that some money was missing from the cupboard. This has never happened before in the history of the house and that too from the Rector's office. It was natural for all of us to doubt the secretary because he had the keys. But the Rector did not doubt him, and he sent a cleric to find out from some priest in Thanjavur who used to foretell things. We did not know who the culprit was and that was not communicated to anyone, but that is not important either. An interesting fact that I want to mention is that, besides taking money from the cupboard, there was a message left in the cupboard: "Practice what you preach." All of us had a good laugh, but I guess the message has a lot to say to all of us Salesians.



We are entering the third year of preparation for the Silver Jubilee of our province. The theme is the spirituality of witness. Though the factual meaning of the word witness is to give witness, in the religious sense, it is being a witness oneself. A witness is a person who does not have a gap between what he says and what he is. According to me, this is a simple definition that everyone can understand. People would like to see us as those who live by what we believe. That is the reason why some people can speak with conviction and others cannot because they do not live by what they believe. Hence, the best gift that we can give to the young in this year of jubilee is to be witnesses. Not a mere witness but a spiritual witness.

There are three elements in Christian witness: message, signs to convince, divine help to awaken and draw others to God. I believe all three are blended into one in the spirituality of witness, namely, we become the message, we are the signs of conviction and we become the agents to take people to God through our simplicity of life.

- 1. The Message:** The disciples on the way to Emmaus carried the message to the other apostles that Jesus was risen and that they had seen him and recognised him at the breaking of the bread. It was not the information that made the apostles believe, but the experience they had with Jesus during the entire episode. The two disciples did

not carry the message of resurrection; rather, they became the message of resurrection. They became witnesses to the resurrection. (Lk 24:13-35) Mary Magdalene, the first one to meet Jesus after the Resurrection did not recognize him in the beginning. But when Jesus called her by name, "Mary," she recognized him and called him "Rabbouni." Later, she went to the apostles and told them that she had seen the Lord. Here too, it was not the information of seeing the Lord that made the apostles believe but her testimony and experience of seeing the Lord. (Jn 20:1-10)

It's the same with the Salesians who lived with Don Bosco. 'Monk or no monk, always with Don Bosco,' was the expression of Don Cagliero, for whom nothing else mattered but being with Don Bosco. He became another Don Bosco in Patagonia because Don Bosco had become part and parcel of him. I guess all of us have to become witnesses of this kind. It is not the message that we carry but we become the message. As a media person, I am reminded of the watchword of Marshall McLuhan, who said, "The medium is the message."



- 2. Signs to Convince:** In the reference to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, the signs to convince were their vivid description of the entire experience with Jesus. The fire and passion that were present during their sharing the message with the apostles was so great that, though they did not believe in the beginning, later they accepted and believed. Thomas, who did not believe, had a special treatment from Jesus and he too made the profound statement, "My Lord and my God." The same was true with Mary Magdalene, who was so filled with Jesus that she could not contain herself and shared the experience with the apostles one by one. Though they were reluctant in the beginning, later they all believed.

The experience of the Salesians who were with Don Bosco made such an impact in the congregation because of the good documentation they did and the nostalgic feelings and traditions they shared with other Salesians later. They became the signs and needless to say that anyone who heard the name Don Bosco, they were burning with zeal and enthusiasm. All of us Salesians living here and now must become witnesses of this kind. Not a follower of Don Bosco but another Don Bosco himself.

- 3. Divine Helps to Draw Others to God:** When we become a message and there are so many signs to convince people because of our lives, drawing people to God is automatic. The apostles did not believe the disciples of Emmaus at once. The same was the case with Mary Magdalene and the apostles. But because of their testimony and experience with Jesus, the apostles believed. So, it's not only human intervention that makes someone a witness, but divine help too. I personally feel that we need not

work towards this divine element; it will naturally happen because of our passion and purity of intention. That is the reason, I always refer to the individual commitment and dedication of Salesians, which becomes more of a witness than a collective atmosphere or the sacred tradition faithfully followed.

**Conclusion:** My dear confreres, after having visited all the houses in the past two months during my initial visit, I am grateful to God for the innumerable blessings we receive from God, day after day. Don Bosco's charism is vibrant and active in all our presences. If only we have more fire, passion and enthusiasm like the first Salesians who lived with Don Bosco, the effect would be doubled and multiplied in the present context. This will happen only if we become witnesses to Don Bosco's spirituality. I wish and pray that all of us become another Don Bosco today for the young in our own capabilities and potentials. May Don Bosco mould us and make us friends of the young.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



**Maria Assumpta,  
Pray for us!**