



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

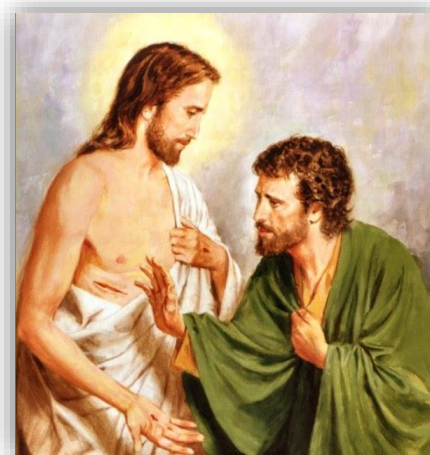
JULY 2023

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

It is wonderful to see a lot of planning in the communities to enhance the mission and the lives of young people as I am making the initial visit these days. It is also the same with the departments and the sectors in the province. May the Lord, through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, bestow his favour on each of us to carry out all our plans in the best way possible throughout the academic year.

In the month of July, we celebrate the [feast of St. Thomas, the Apostle](#), who according to the scripture confesses his love for Christ. Upon hearing that Jesus was returning to Judea, where animosity of the authorities was growing, he immediately said to the other apostles, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (Jn 11: 16). After seeing and experiencing Jesus, he was willing to do anything for him even to the extent of giving his life for him. Travelling to distant lands, he eventually arrived in India and was martyred for sowing the seeds of faith. May he intercede for us to imbibe such a closeness for Christ, our Lord.



We wish the Provincial and the confreres of Chennai Province a very happy feast as they celebrate St. Thomas, the Apostle, as their patron. We also remember to pray and congratulate all the Jubilarians too. We thank God for them and for their lives of hard work and inspiration. May God bless them with good health and happiness.

Leaders Retreat and Leaders Meet

The annual retreat for the Rectors and Leaders of our communities is scheduled from [July 03 to 08, 2023 at The Retreat, Yercaud](#). I cordially invite all our Rectors and Leaders to participate in this meaningful spiritual experience. There will be also few other confreres attending the retreat. Everyone is requested to arrive at the venue by July 2 evening. Following the retreat, all the Rectors and Leaders will have a day of meeting. I invite the whole province to pray for all our Rectors and Leaders that they may enjoy good health and serene atmosphere throughout the Retreat days.

Young Salesians Meet

All the young Salesians, who are doing practical training and college studies in our province, will have two days of animation in Don Bosco, [Nettur on 29 and 30 July 2023](#). I recommend the leaders to make sure that all the clerics attend the meeting and enjoy the fraternity and moments of togetherness.

Diaconate Ordination

Clerics Clan Zachariyas and Doss Jepison of Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, will be ordained deacons on [July 01, 2023](#). We congratulate them and wish them all the best. They will be back in the province for the diaconate ministry. We thank Fr. Paul Lyngkot, the Provincial of Shillong, the Rector and staff of SHTC, Shillong, 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:

Clan Zackariyas	-	Madhakottai
Doss Jepison	-	Vilathikulam

Initial Visit

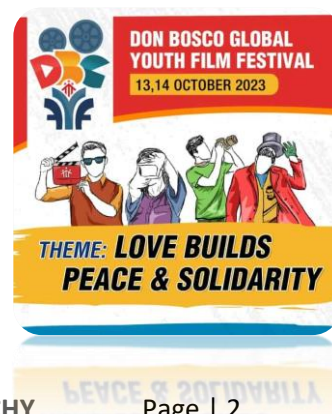
The initial visit is going on these days, and I have visited thirteen communities. The remaining communities will be visited this month. I once again urge the leaders of the communities to organise a meeting with all the members to plan the Salesian Community Plan of Life (SCPL), the Salesian Educative Pastoral Plan (SEPP) and the Youth Pastoral Plan (YPP) and send a copy to the Province Secretary.

Quinquennium Meet

As a joint venture, we have planned the batch meeting this year with the confreres of INM for those in the quinquennium period. They are separated into two groups: those in their first two years of ordination and those in their third to fifth year of ordination. The second group, with three to five years of ordination, will have the meeting on [21 and 22 July 2023 at Don Bosco, Kotagiri](#). I exhort all the confreres belonging to this group to attend the meeting without fail and enjoy the companionship of each other together with the confreres from INM and to have renewed apostolic vigour and enthusiasm. I am grateful to Fr. Don Bosco and his council for such a cooperation in the animation of the confreres.

Don Bosco Global Youth Film Festival

Don Bosco Global Youth Film Festival, organized by the Social Communications Department (Rome), is scheduled to be held on [13, 14 October 2023](#). The theme chosen for this film festival is "Love builds Peace and Solidarity." All the young people from our institutions, between the age of 14 and 25 can participate in this film festival. The films should not exceed five minutes in duration and can be in any language. The last date for the submission of entries is 31 July. This is a wonderful and excellent opportunity for



our youth to express their thoughts on the theme of peace and solidarity, as well as to showcase their creativity.

May I exhort all our Rectors to encourage youngsters from our institutions and parishes to participate in this global Salesian event. Kindly contact the Social Communication Delegate for more details regarding this and I hope our province will send many entries for this Salesian global event.

Transfer of Fr. John Madasseril

Fr. John Madasseril has been transferred to Kavaraipettai as a confessor at Don Bosco Theological Centre at the request of the Provincial of Chennai. I am confident that his presence would be memorable in the lives of students of theology because he has vast experience in various formation houses. We pray that he may enjoy good health and happiness.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

03-09	Mon - Sun	Leaders Retreat/Leaders Meet
09	Sun	Provincial Council
13	Thu	Animation of Asst. Parish Priests @ Vilathikulam
14,15	Fri, Sat	Ilamai- General Body Meeting @ Manikandam
16	Sun	ASC Local Council Members Meet @ Auxilium, Sirudur
21,22	Fri, Sat	Quinquennium Meet (3 to 5 years of Prisethood) @ Kotagiri
29,30	Sat, Sun	Young Salesians Meet @ Nettur

RECALLING EVENTS

New Administrators Training

The training for new administrators was held from 22 to 24 July 2023 at Don Bosco Provincial house. Fourteen administrators joined the training and learned the various techniques and latest updates involved in accounting and auditing. I thank all of them for their enthusiastic participation and the Economer, staff and Fr. Johnpaul for organizing and animating the training.

Sector Level Animation and Meetings

The animation of various sectors of our province, such as commissions and departments were conducted in the month of June. They were organized in different communities where the various sectors are functioning. This method is envisaged to visit various centres for sharing the best practices and to have a detailed study of the particular sector as well. Congrats to all the heads and members of the sectors for the active participation and the meticulous planning. Special thanks to all the communities which hosted the meetings.

Installation of Rectors

The installations of the new Rectors were held in the respective communities. I wish them all the best and assure them of our support in carrying out their role as father and friend to everyone entrusted to their care.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

07.07.2007 – **Fr. Nedumpuram John** died at Vellakinar at the age of 85.

15.07.2015 – **Br. Nicolas Ouseph** died at Salem at the age of 26.

30.07.2007 – **Fr. Kutianni Philip** died at Madhakottai at the age of 73.

CONDOLENCES...

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

- To the **Provincial and confreres of INS Province** at the demise of **Rev. Br. Mathew Vazhamplackal** (87) on 03 June 2023.
- To the **Provincial and confreres of INC Province** at the demise of **Rev. Fr. Thomas Polackal** (86) on 12 June 2023.
- To the **Provincial and confreres of INS Province** at the demise of **Rev. Fr. Jose Valiaveetil** on 19 June 2023.
- To the **Provincial and confreres of INK Province** at the demise of **Rev. Fr. Ittira Mondoth** (84) on 22 June 2023.
- To **our Rector Major** at the demise of his mother **Mrs. Isabel Artime Garcia** on 24 June 2023.
- To **Br. Clan Zackariyas** at the demise of his sister **Mrs. Stelis Sagaya Nirmala** (36) on 28 June 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

MISSION TO THE YOUNG - DIALOGUE TAKES US CLOSER TO THE YOUNG

My dear Salesians and the members of the Salesian Family,

I want to remember an interesting incident from the days of my Practical Training. I was sent to the Novitiate as the assistant of novices for my third year of PT. Fr. Stephen Kuncherakatt sdb of good memory was the Rector and Novice Master. I admired him for his love and concern for the confreres including the novices. He was convinced that Dialogue was an important tool for formation. I did not fancy that because I was a product of Fr. Puthenkalam Brand, and he never liked to waste time on discussing things endlessly, but we should all get into action. Hence, I had differences of opinion with Fr. Stephen regarding his style of dialogue. But I obeyed him happily because he was the boss, and I was supposed to execute his plans and ideas. There was a young priest in the community who also advised me, "My dear brother, you better say yes to the Novice master for everything, otherwise, he will dialogue with you till you say yes."



As he was sharing with me these words in the dining hall, it so happened that the Vice Rector, a holy man indeed, had a difference of opinion with Fr. Stephen on some decision made that day. After breakfast, Fr. Stephen took the Vice Rector for a walk and tried to dialogue with him regarding the difference of opinion. The dialogue continued during the break and after lunch. After Tea, the two went for a longer walk, and I guess the dialogue went on and on. Finally, during dinner time, the Vice Rector said yes to the Novice Master and the dialogue was over. The young priest turned to me and smiled, saying, "Now do you understand the meaning of what I told you in the morning? This is what will happen to you if you disagree with anything that the Novice master tells you."

Well, I did not understand the whole truth of dialogue then. But going through the years of formation and after many discussions and personal talks with the confreres, I have come to know that Dialogue is indeed very helpful. The incident to which I have referred is only the humorous side of dialogue, but there is so much more behind it that we fail to recognize it at first. Art. 66 of our constitutions tells us, "In matters of importance, we seek the will of the Lord together in patient brotherly dialogue, with a deep awareness of shared responsibility." Hence, I want to enumerate in detail the value of Dialogue in our Salesian Religious life in this circular.

DIALOGUE: Dialogue is basically positive in nature and when done well, it achieves the purpose. Allowing the person to be himself and he choosing to change is the best effect of dialogue. The foundation takes time and is difficult and expensive indeed, but once done well, the building is fast and secure. Dialogue is like the foundation for pluralism. Raimon Panikkar is a proponent of interfaith dialogue. Ecumenism is vibrant in the Catholic Church and is the result of such concepts and ideologies. Hence, dialogue is the most important tool that helps us build up relationships in communities and thus ensuring happiness in living together and celebrating the differences of people. Pope Francis, in his *Fratelli Tutti*, enumerates dialogue in one of the chapters which is so touching. Let me summarise the pope's mind on dialogue in four points.



- Dialogue is respectful, strives for consensus, and seeks the truth. Dialogue opens the way to a culture of encounter so that encounter becomes a passion, a desire, and a way of life. Those who dialogue recognize, befriend, and respect other persons.
- Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and finding common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word "dialogue" (FT 198).
- A country flourishes when constructive dialogue occurs between its many rich cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic

culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture (FT 199)

- **Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns (FT 203).**

1. **Availability:** From my personal experience, I can say that dialogue is very helpful in our daily lives. I have really enjoyed listening to people and feeling their emotions. Particularly when I was in Manikandam, I spent several days and weeks just being available to people, listening to them, and doing nothing else. Initially, I thought I was wasting my time, but only later did I find that so many others were able to focus on their work because of my being available to them. Welcoming guests as part of hospitality services was an essential requisite. Actually, that brought in so many groups and its quite surprising that some of them call me up even today to book the rooms there. Hence, I would say that being available to people is the first step to dialogue.

How many of us are available to those who visit our community?

How many Rectors/Leaders are available to confreres for Rendiconto?

How many of us Salesians spend our time youth on a regular basis being with them, listening to them and guiding them?

2. **Communication:** The art of communication is so important in our relationships with people. We are not able to communicate what we think, and often we miss out on what we actually want to say. Because of our ego and emotions, words are not controlled, and we give vent to our anger. Good communication means that we respect individuals and sit down for discussion, whatever the situation or mood. We should be able to take in the yells and criticism despite our good deeds. Mature people are not usually disturbed by hatred and envy. They will be patient till the end, even if their wishes are not fulfilled.



Though most of the confreres were able to understand the transfers that I communicated to them, there were one or two who could never come anywhere near my proposals. I was patient with them. I never got angry with anyone at all because, all the time, my preoccupation was how best to communicate with that confrere. God be praised! I guess they finally understood the reason for my proposal. I hope so.

Do we share information to our fellow confreres and much more to the Rector?

Are we able to be free and comfortable in sharing any information?

Can we strike relationships genuinely and sincerely?

3. **Confrontation/Carefrontation:** All of us are humans, and we have our pros and cons. Sometimes the whole world knows us, but we fail to accept our character. There are some darker areas in each of us. But we should always be ready for confrontation. This is not to prove who is right and wrong, but to dialogue so that we can come together in order to get the best out of us. We should be able to maintain at least working relationships so that the worst will not happen to us. I had to confront quite a few confreres in matters related to the community and the mission. But there are so many versions that I get confused. There is so much colouring, editing, censoring, adding, and magnifying of the facts that it is impossible for me to grasp the truth. When I ask for clarifications, they get upset and tell me that they are hurt to a great extent. People also spread rumours, and the pity is that there are many to listen to them and encourage them. The gospel is spread far and wide, and all the cell phones are busy sharing the spicy news. When there is dialogue, I am sure all these will disappear. There will be carefrontation taking place in every community.

Are we ready for confrontation when the situation demands?

Can we put an end to all gossips and criticism and talk to individuals concerned in all sincerity and openness?

Do we confront people who spread rumors and tell them to stop once and for all?

4. **Positivity:** Dialogue presupposes positive thinking. A person who wants to constructively build relationships alone will enter into dialogue because he knows for sure that it will somehow help the other person understand his openness and readiness to accept different views and ideas. If this is sincere and genuine, I am sure it will be greatly rewarded. Positivity will thus spread to more individuals, and there will be togetherness and pluralism happening for real. This is what I call the spirituality of communion. It is the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it, and to value it as a gift from God. Nasty judgements, unjust criticism, calculated coldness, and subtle manoeuvres will disappear, and there will be genuine, humble, and good communication in positivity. If someone is better than we are, we can learn from them. We can learn to enjoy others' successes as well.



Do we consciously make effort to be positive in our communication and relationships?

Are we concerned about the welfare of others? Can we take pleasure in the growth and good performance of others?

Why should we give up our goodness for the sake of the others? Do we persevere in our struggle to do good even when things go wrong, or our name is spoiled?

5. **Seeking God and Truth:** We must rely more on God than our human efforts and brilliant strategies. Ultimately, we must seek the truth through dialogue. That is the

reason why there should be sincere openness in dialogue. There should also be discernment to know and do good, whatever may be the situation. We have heard the serenity prayer, "Lord, give me the courage to change what I can, the serenity to accept what I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference." We must do our best, and God will do the rest. We have to accept the fact that some of us are bent on our egos. Even after many years of preparation, seminars and courses, retreats, and counselling, it is hard to get rid of our attachments to selfishness, power, money, and evil desires. We have become stiff-necked people. The mind's fixation on the negative is very strong. More people are suffering from personality disorders. In the bargain, God and Truth disappear from their realms. But dialogue will ensure seeking the truth and eventually moving towards God.

Do we rely on God and continue to live our life despite of challenges and problems?

Do we sincerely pray for enlightenment and guidance of God in our decisions and deliberations?

Do we stand for Truth and hold on to principles of Truth in all our discussions?

CONCLUSION: "Friendly talk with the superior is one of the best opportunities for dialogue, both for his personal advantage and for promoting the good running of the community." Art. 70. I feel this is very much true in our lives in the Salesian community. Not only the Rector, but every Salesian should practice this dialogue in their lives. That is why I introduced a session of dialogue after every retreat this year. It was wonderful to see many confreres coming out openly to ask questions and get clarifications regarding the province and its governance. We, the provincial team, tried our best to answer all the queries with proper facts and information. I feel we should all grow in this aspect of dialogue and sincerely strive towards collaboration and support. I am sure our father and founder, Don Bosco, will guide us and inspire us in this effort.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB

Provincial – Salesian Province of Tiruchy, INT.



**Happy Feast of
St. Thomas, the Apostle!**