



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

SEPTEMBER 2023

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

We are ready with grateful hearts to celebrate the feast of the patroness of our province, **Our Lady of Velankanni, on 08 September**. It is also the solemnity of the nativity of the Blessed Mother. As we are in the Silver Jubilee year of our province, it also brings more joy and meaning to celebrate this great feast of Mother Mary for her tender love, powerful protection and innumerable graces upon each confrere and various ministries of our province. The primary theme portrayed in the liturgical celebration of this feast day is that the world had been in the darkness of sin and with the arrival of Mary, there began a glimmer of light. That light which appears at Mary's holy birth preannounces the arrival of Christ, the Light of the World. Her birth is the beginning of a better world. The entrance antiphon at Mass states: "Let us celebrate with joyful hearts the birth of the Virgin Mary, of whom was born the Sun of Justice, Christ our Lord."



Therefore, let us make this day more solemn with a festive Eucharistic celebration together with all the confreres of the community and beneficiaries of our mission. Dear confreres and Salesian Family members, I wish you all a very happy feast of the nativity of our blessed Mother.

Planning for Provincial Chapter

The letter of the Rector Major has already been circulated after his nomination as cardinal, stating that the next General Chapter will be anticipated by a year and that **GC 29 will commence in February 2025**. Once the Rector Major convokes the General Chapter, the provincial chapters will be convoked and all the documents should reach the Generalate by June 2024. Therefore, I exhort all the confreres to be prepared to make all the necessary modifications in our programme in order to process the preparation of the provincial chapter and the chapter itself. The dates and other details will be communicated to you once the Rector Major announces the convoking of the chapter.

Rectors Meeting and Province Level Silver Jubilee Inauguration

A day of meeting is scheduled for the rectors and leaders of our province on **19 September 2023 at DBPH Kallukuzhy** to plan for the upcoming provincial chapter and to inaugurate the silver jubilee year of our province at the province level. Therefore, I cordially invite all

the rectors and leaders of our communities to participate in this meeting and to offer your valuable suggestions.

Silver Jubilee Updates

We, as a province, are marching towards the celebration of the silver jubilee of our province. In the month of August, we have begun the one-year intensive preparation at the community level with the [hoisting of the silver jubilee flag, everyday prayer for the jubilee and holy hour of adoration every month](#). I am amazed to see the various creative measures taken by the individual communities to inaugurate the silver jubilee year at the community level, along with young people and lay partners. My sincere appreciation to all of you. May the year of jubilee bring more enthusiasm and new vision into the lives of all of us. Following the three-year plan, so far, we have reached more than [fifty percent of solar installation](#) in all our presences and we have planted [62,590 trees](#), making efforts to reach the target of one lakh trees.



Quinquennium Meet

The meeting for those in their first and second years of ordination in INM and INT will be organized on [07 and 08 September 2023 at Life Centre, Dindigul](#). 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.

Meeting for those due for Perpetual Profession

The clerics due for perpetual profession this year (May 2024) will have a meeting at [Don Bosco Provincial House on September 16, 2023](#). You are expected to attend this meeting without fail and reach the provincial house for supper on the previous day.

Zonal Level Meeting for those in Initial formation

Two zonal-level meetings are organized this month for the clerics who are in the initial formation. The first zonal meeting is for the clerics who are in the [Madurai zone on 23 September 2023 at Surya Nagar](#). The second is for the [Thanjavur zone on 30 September 2023 at Don Bosco Thanjavur](#). I am sure all the clerics will attend these meetings joyfully as it is an animation at the province level. The details will be communicated by the Vice Provincial.

Bon Voyage to Cl. Anthiyok, Fr. Benedict Rajkumar and Fr. Joan Marshal

Cl. Anthiyok will leave for [Belgium on 17 September 2023](#). He will do his practical training in the province of Belgium. I express my sincere gratitude to him for his readiness to serve in Belgium. I thank God for infusing such zeal in the minds of our young Salesians to go to the new frontiers and to work for young souls. I also thank Cl. Anthiyok for his enthusiastic presence and hard work in the provincial house for the last three months. We wish him all the best in carrying out the assigned responsibilities successfully.

Fr. Benedict Rajkumar and Fr. Joan Marshal will leave for [France on 19 September 2023](#). They will pursue courses in media in the province of France. I thank Fr. Benedict for his contribution to the media team in Manikandam and Fr. Joan Marshal for his encouraging presence in the provincial house, helping out the Vazhikatti department and Sengipatti Field School in animation. We wish them all the best so that they may equip themselves with the latest skills in media.

SPCSA Council Meeting in Sri Lanka

The 46th Salesian Provincial Council of South Asia (SPCSA) Meeting will be held from [31 August to 5 September 2023 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Dungalpitya in Sri Lanka](#). Fr. Andrea Bozzolo, the Rector Magnificus of the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome, and Fr. Jaroslaw Rochowiak, the Secretary General of the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) also will attend the meeting and interact with the Provincials regarding their visits to the three theologates in India. Several of our confreres have been working in Sri Lanka in the past years. We are grateful to the vice province of Sri Lanka for the wonderful arrangements made for the meeting and let us pray that these days may be profitable to all the provinces by way of fruitful decisions and meaningful animation and governance by the provincials.

Lourdes Shrine - K. Pudur

We are grateful to God and the Blessed Mother for the blessings we have received upon the community of Lourdes Shrine, K. Pudur, Madurai, for the past 48 years. In 2025, we will celebrate 50 years of Salesian presence at K. Pudur. As a monument of our Salesian presence in the soil, we have planned to erect a new church to Our Lady of Lourdes. Soon, the present church will be demolished. Before that, the community has planned to celebrate [18 days of Thanksgiving Eucharist from 24 September to 11 October 2023](#). Therefore, the Lourdes Shrine-K. Pudur community invites all of us to [come together as a community](#) to celebrate Thanksgiving Mass in the shrine. Kindly inform the Rector of Lourdes Shrine - K. Pudur, about your availability.



PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

07-08	Thu-Fri	Quinquennium Meet @ Life Centre - Dindigul
08	Fri	Feast of the Patroness of the Province
16	Sat	Meeting for those due for Perpetual Profession @DBPH
18	Mon	Provincial Council
19	Tue	Leaders Meeting @ DBPH (Planning for the Chapter and Silver Jubilee)
23	Sat	Madurai Zonal Level Meeting for Clerics @ Surya Nagar
28	Thu	URAVU Correspondents Meet @ DBPH
30	Sat	Thanjavur Zonal Level Meeting for Clerics @ DB Thanjavur

RECALLING EVENTS

Salesian Cooperators Promise Day was organized on 13 August 2023 at Don Bosco Pallithammam. Twenty-six aspirants made their promise after half a day of animation and recollection. We welcome the new promised members into the Salesian Family and wish them all the best for their future collaboration in the Salesian mission. I thank Fr. Barnabas, Sr. Rosy fma and Sr. Nirmala fma, the provincial delegates of SDB and FMA, for all the preparation and the rector and confreres of the Pallithammam community for making all the arrangements.

Past Pupils' Annual General Body Meeting was held on 13 August 2023 in Don Bosco Surya Nagar, Madurai. There was good participation from the various units in discussing their present status and planning for the future. Thanks to Fr. Henry Dominic, SDB Provincial Delegate of Past Pupils, for coordinating the meeting with meticulous planning and utmost care. Sincere thanks to all the local delegates for accompanying the association and to the rector and confreres of Surya Nagar community for hosting the meeting.

Post Novitiate Curatorium Meet was held on 16 August 2023 at the Retreat, Yercaud. The provincials, vice provincials of INM and INT and the formators of the post-novitiate were present for the meeting. I thank the rector and confreres of the Retreat community for organizing the meeting.

INM and INT Salesian Brothers Meet was held on 19 August 2023 at Citadel, Chennai. The central theme for the day of animation was "Salesian Brother in the 21st Century," with reference to the role of brothers in communities. It was a day of meeting and sharing of the experience and contributions of the Salesian brothers in the various ministries of the provinces. I thank all our brothers for their active participation in the meeting. I also express my thanks to the provincial of INM and the rector and confreres of the Citadel community for hosting the event.

Ilamai Leaders and Animators Formation (LAF) was held on 19 and 20 August 2023 in Don Bosco, Manikandam. It was a gathering of youth leaders and animators from the provinces of Tiruchy, Chennai and Bangalore. A total of seventy participants from the three provinces attended the meeting. The meeting was aimed at empowering the participants with leadership skills, spirituality and the ability to connect with the youth of today effectively. My sincere thanks to Fr. Rozario Antony, the youth director of our province, the youth directors of INM and INK and all the youth service coordinators of the communities for encouraging the participants to attend the meeting. I also express my thanks to the rector and confreres of Manikandam Community for hosting the event.

VDB South Asia Retreat in Bangkok: The Spiritual Retreat for the Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB) of Thailand, India and Cambodia took place from 11 to 16 August at the FMA house in Baan Than Praphon, Thailand. There were 26 participants and 8 ecclesiastical assistants.

Fr. Britto Gerard from our province, together with the VDBs Sheela and Agnes, attended the retreat. The concluding Mass was presided over by Fr. Anthony Boonlert, the Salesian Provincial of Thailand. It was an enriching experience of spirituality for all the participants.

Province Secretaries' Meet in New Delhi: The Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia (SPCSA) conducted a four-day meeting at the SPCSA House in New Delhi from August 22–25 for all the secretaries of the provinces. They discussed administrative, legal, and technological matters. In his opening remarks, Fr. Biju Michael, the Regional Superior for South Asia, welcomed Fr. Garino Guido, Secretary General of the Salesian Congregation, and all participants. Fr. Guido led insightful sessions on organizational maintenance, legal and canonical compliance, and Salesian regulations. Gathering data on personnel, institutions, and apostolic works across the Salesian provinces in South Asia was a salient feature of the meeting. Fr. Ashly Steephen our secretary, attended this meeting and came back rejuvenated.

SAFC Meeting in Chennai: The South Asia Formation Commission (SAFC) Meeting was held from August 2–5, 2023, at the Salesian Provincial House in Chennai. 23 Salesians from across South Asia participated in the meeting. Br. Raymond Callo and Fr. Jose Kuttianimattathil from the Formation Department at the Generalate conducted the meeting and provided guidance on various formation topics relevant to the region. Fr. Arul Maran from our province attended this meeting and shared the best practices of our formation houses.

Education to Faith Coordinators' Meet at Nitika: The Province Coordinators for Education to Faith met at Nitika Don Bosco, Kolkata, on 29 August 2023. Fr. Sivy Koroth SDB, the regional coordinator, organized the meeting. Fr. Pauria, the provincial of INC, celebrated the Eucharist for the members. Fr. Patrick Lepcha gave the inaugural speech on Salesian Youth Ministry in South Asia. The coordinators presented catechetical activities in their provinces and shared experiences and challenges. Fr. Jeyan Joseph and Fr. Vianney from our province attended this meeting and shared their experiences of catechetical animation in our province.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

10.09.2014 – **Fr. Francis Kaidathara** died at Tiruchy at the age of 67.

11.09.2019 – **Fr. Antony Joseph** died at Tiruchy at the age of 55.

CONDOLENCES...

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

- To **Fr. John Bosco Lourdusamy** at the demise of his brother **Mr. John Anthvan** (45) on 07 August 2023.
- To **Fr. John Vellayil** at the demise of his sister **Mrs. A.J. Mary** (100) on 18 August 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

TOWARDS SILVER JUBILEE - YEAR 3: SPIRITUALITY OF WITNESS EXEMPLARY LIFE BECOMES A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

It has been the experience of all of us that we remember those who have been outstanding in virtues, even if they are not talented or have not left a legacy of monuments behind them. Often, the simplicity of life inspires us more than the complexity of sermons, ideas and talks given to the best of their capabilities. We come to know the real colour of a person only when we live with them, not when we listen to the enchanting speeches ably delivered by them using a variety of phrases and idioms. That is why the theme Spirituality of Witness is taken as the final theme of the preparation for our Silver Jubilee of the province.

Fr. Puthenkalam of good memory is a great inspiration to me in various aspects of life. It is true that he was a hard man, demanding too much from the novices and confreres. But there was so much love and concern in his heart that only those who lived with him could witness it for themselves. He was a person who grew old gracefully. There was a smile on his face till the end of his life and he had no ambition or expectation. That is why he lived very long and lived his life to the fullest, spreading the fragrance of joy and happiness in every community in which he lived. I am sure that there is no one who will speak badly of him or his character, though he used to hit and poke with his walking stick almost everyone he met on the corridor. There was a lot of love and humour behind such behaviour, which he cherished till the end of his life.

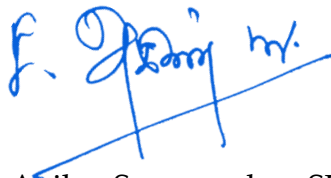
An incident comes to mind that happened in my novitiate days. We used to squat on the floor during the meditation every day before the mass. I did the same and things went well for months. One day, I was a little tired and so I went near the pew and leaned on it while squatting on the floor. I had closed my eyes and was reflecting on something I read in the imitation of Christ. It so happened that day that there was some snoring during the meditation and Fr. Puthenkalam was upset about the scene created. He called me after the mass and shouted in his usual spirits. "Ease and comfort have entered into yourself and today you were leaning on the pew and snoring during the meditation. You silly chap, I don't want to see you near the pew anymore", were his words, which hurt me deeply because I did not sleep at all. Later, he came to know that it was the assistant who snored and slept. But as soon as he knew that I was not the one, he called me and asked me if I was hurt by his scolding. I was silent and he asked me for pardon for his rash judgement and encouraged me to pray better. I was moved with emotion and cannot forget this act of love and humility. The novice master need not ask pardon from a novice, even if the novice master was wrong. But Fr. Puthenkalam was an exemplary religious. Hence, his behaviour was inspiring and motivating. May God rest his soul.

My dear confreres, we have one life to live. We must make the best use of it. According to me, the best way is to become a source of inspiration for others through our lives. It's ok if

people are against us; let us not retaliate. It may be irritating to notice a confrere who is adamant and does not listen to us as leaders. Let us be patient. There may be someone who purposely wants to spoil our name and character. Let us pray for them. At the end of the day, nothing matters more to us than acts of love. And this is our Salesian spirituality. This is what will motivate and attract people to our charism and the congregation. As we are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of our province, let each of us take a powerful look at the Good Shepherd and become a witness to his most sacred heart of love. I am sure if all of us are moved by love, there is no need for anything else. May God bless us all and our father, St. John Bosco, make us his witnesses to the young entrusted to our care.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB

Provincial – Salesian Province of Tiruchy, INT.



**Annai Velankanni,
Pray for us!**