



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

DECEMBER 2023

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

As the joyous season of Christmas approaches, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warmest wishes to every one of you. May this holy time be filled with the blessings of peace, love, and joy. The spirit of Christmas is one of profound joy and hope, a time to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world. It is a time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, which is not about material gifts or extravagant celebrations, but about the simple joys of family, friendship, and community. As members of the Salesian Family, we are called to be beacons of hope and light in a world that often seems shrouded in darkness. As we gather with our loved ones this Christmas, let us open our hearts to a spirit of generosity and compassion. Let us reach out to those who are less fortunate, sharing our blessings and offering them comfort and support. May this Christmas be a time of renewal and spiritual growth for each of us. May we find joy in the simple things, strengthen our bonds of love and friendship, and deepen our commitment to serving the Lord and one another. Wish you all a blessed and merry Christmas!



Ordination in INT

On December 29, 2023, at 5.00 p.m., seven of our deacons will be ordained at Don Bosco School, Surya Nagar, Madurai. They will be ordained by Most Rev. Antony Pappusamy, Arch Bishop of Madurai. Dn. Clan Zacharias will be ordained along with the deacons of INM in Chennai. On behalf of the province, I wish them congratulations and pray for them specially as they intensely prepare for this important phase of their life. They will spend one month at home before and after the ordination. During the Provincial Community Day, the new priests will be honoured. They will continue to do their ministry in their respective communities till the end of May. Let us all assist them with our prayerful support.



We thank Fr. Don Bosco, the Provincial of Chennai, the Rector and staff of DBTC, Kavarapettai, Fr. Jose Koyickal, the Provincial of Bangalore, the Rector and staff of KJC and Fr. Paul Lyngkot, Provincial of Shillong, the Rector and staff of SHTC, who have

accompanied them in the past three years and helped them to make a firm decision to serve the Lord as ordained ministers. God bless them all with good health and happiness.

Salesian Brothers Day

Salesian Brother's Day is celebrated on 05 December each year in honour of Saint Artemide Zatti, a Salesian Brother, who dedicated his life to caring for the sick and dying during a typhus epidemic in Argentina. Zatti is known for his selfless service and his unwavering faith, and he is considered a model for all Salesian Brothers. The Salesian Brothers are known for their joyful and optimistic spirit, their dedication to hard work, and their love for young people. Salesian Brother's Day is a reminder of the important role that the Salesian Brothers play in the Church and in the world. They are an inspiration to us all, and we are grateful for their tireless service. May they continue to be a source of strength and inspiration to young people around the world. We pray that they may always remain faithful to their vocation and may continue to spread the love of Christ to all. We wish all the six Salesian Brothers (Br. George, Br. Arockiadoss, Br. Sagayaraj, Br. Chinnapparaj, Br. Edwin, and Br. Philip) of our province a joyous feast. May God grant them all good health and happiness.



All Commissions and Departments Meet

On December 02, 2023, all the Commissions and Departments of the Youth Ministry, as well as the Formation Commission, will gather for the mid-year evaluation in Don Bosco Provincial House, Tiruchy. The programme of the day in detail is already sent to you by the Youth Ministry Delegate of the Province. All the heads of Commissions and Departments are asked to bring the Implementation Report and Activities Report for the presentation and the format is already sent to you.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

- 02 Sat All commissions and Departments – Mid-year evaluation @ DBPH
- 05 Tue Salesian Brothers Day
- 23 Sat Provincial Council
- 25 Mon Christmas
- 27 Wed Ordinations in Chennai Province @ Perambur
- 29 Fri Ordinations in Tiruchy Province @ Surya Nagar

RECALLING EVENTS

Salesian Family Delegates meeting for South Asia was held at the Provincial House, Dimapur from 31 October to 04 November 2023. The meeting was animated by Fr. Joan Luis Playa, Delegate of the Rector Major for the Salesian Family, Br. Dominic Duc Nam Nguyen,

World Delegate for Salesian Cooperators and Past Pupils, Fr. Alejandro Guevara, World Spiritual Director for ADMA and Fr Biju Michael, Regional Councillor for South Asia. Some of the decisions like establishing consultative bodies of the Salesian Family, making annual participatory project and give experiential opportunities to those in formation by providing them with chances to participate in Salesian Family events organized by any of the Salesian Family units were made in the meeting. I thank Fr. Ferrington Poobalarayen, our province delegate for the Salesian Family for attending the meeting.

Youth Ministry Delegates meeting for South Asia was held at the Provincial House, Dimapur, from 01 to 04 November 2023. The meeting was animated by Fr. Miguel Ángel García, General Councillor for Youth Ministry on “the revised text on the Oratory-Youth Centre in the Youth Ministry Frame of Reference; joint Salesian and lay formation; the role of the Salesian in the educative and pastoral community; and the identity and accompaniment of the Salesian Youth Movement. I thank Fr. Charles Joseph, the Youth Ministry Delegate of our province, for attending the meeting.

South Asia Forum of Economers (SAFE) annual meet was held at Don Bosco Provincial House, Negombo, Sri Lanka from 06 – 08 November 2023. They had a day of animation by Rev. Br. Jean Paul Muller, the Economer General of our congregation. The other days were spent on sharing of the best practices in each of the provinces. I appreciate Fr. Amaladoss, our economer, who was also a resource person for handling a session on updates of FCRA.

Formation of Formators programme for the rectors and formators of aspirantate was organized from 06th to 10th November 2023 at Kolkata on “Formation towards psychosexual and celibate integration Manual for Formees, Volume I - Aspirantate”. Fr. Rajadevan, Fr. Thomas Louis, Fr. Siluvai Adimai and Fr. Soosadimai represented our province and I thank them for their contribution in formation sector.

Don Bosco Higher Education India (DBHEI) annual and General Body Meeting was held from 10 to 12 November 2023 at NBCLC Bangalore on “Educating our young to social responsibility and an entrepreneurship and startup culture.” I thank Fr. Victor Antonyraj, Fr. Peter Arokiaraj, Fr. Prince Raja, Fr. Robert and Fr. Dominic Savio who represented our province.

BOSCOM General Body Meeting was held from 17 to 19 November at Provincial House, Bangalore on “The evolving Communication Landscape – Pathways for effective Salesian Digital Ministry.” I appreciate Fr. Arockia Selvakumar, Fr. Eugene Florence and Fr. Diravya Rupen who attended the meeting from our Province.

The Don Bosco District Scouts and Guides had the culmination of the silver jubilee on 18 November 2023 at St. Bede’s Anglo Indian Higher Secondary School, Chennai. It was a well organized event with the participation of good number of scouts, guides, masters and salesians from various Salesian presences of Tamil Nadu. Congratulations to the entire team of Don Bosco District Scout and in a special way to Fr. Benjamin James Sdb of our province who is young and energetic in this movement and takes lots of initiatives.

Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco - National Council meeting cum Executive Committee Election was held at Citadel, Chennai on 24 and 25 November 2023. A total of eight members from Don Bosco Past Pupils - Tiruchy Provincial Federation along with Fr. Henry Dominic, the provincial delegate, took part in the meeting. Mr. S. Santhosh from Thanjavur unit, currently Province President was elected as the National Vice President and Mr. A. Michael Raj from Varadarajanpet unit was elected as the executive committee member of the Indian National Federation of the Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco. I congratulate Fr. Henry Dominic, who is creatively animating the group with great enthusiasm.

The Anniversary of Fr. Joseph Puthenkalam was held on 25 November 2023 at Mary Help of Christians Shrine, Amsam. The event started with a blessing at the cemetery and the Eucharist later. Some of the family members and relatives of Fr. Puthenkalam had attended the ceremony.

Congratulations to Fr. Joe Augustine sdb, who is elected as the Chairperson of SKIP (Skills for Progress) at the National level in Ernakulam, Kerala. I am sure with his many years of experience in the technical sector will bring in lot more benefits to our technical institutions in the coming years. We wish him all the best for his ministry.

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. John Rosario](#) (55) on 05 November 2023.
- To [the Provincial and confreres of IND Province](#) at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Thettayil Joseph](#) (69) on 13 November 2023.
- To [Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga](#), at the demise of his mother [Mrs. Marial](#) (89) on 17 November 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

TOWARDS SILVER JUBILEE - YEAR 3: SPIRITUALITY OF WITNESS GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

As I am going around the province for the canonical visitation, I am grateful to the Lord for the wonders and miracles taking place in the personal lives of confreres and the amazing development that has taken place in various Salesian presences. Though we have a few challenges in our daily community living, I must say that the commitment and dedication of our confreres are truly inspiring and emulating. I feel it is because of the good and rich traditions of our elders who have gone before us. They had lived their lives in simplicity and poverty, but with a great sense of fidelity and credibility.

We are unable to cope with the lack of infrastructure and comforts today with so much development of roads and vehicles. But our ancestors had none of these. They had to walk and go on cycles and scooters. With the latest Apple and Android phones, we are unable to communicate proper information to one another, whereas our elders had to write letters and wait for replies for days and weeks. We find it difficult to satisfy ourselves with the variety of food we get every day while they had to manage with what was given by the administrator. We frequently complain of not getting enough time for ourselves when they were able to do everything well and yet get ample time for all the community events. There are confreres murmuring because they do not get more pocket money while they have to depend on the community for everything and have to request money every time it is needed. We are unable to be happy with the present state of religious life, but they were so happily living their religious life amidst suffering and misery.

Yet, I am grateful to the Lord for the senior confreres who have gone before us, giving us a good example. Fr. VT Sebastian, I remember meeting him in Madurai Lourdes Shrine, who had no complaints about his sickness and suffering, though he was going through agony and pain. He always had a smile on his face and spent a lot of time with people who visited him, inspiring them with his positive attitude. All know that he had lived his life in authority and leadership, not only in the Salesian presence but also in other congregations and dioceses. It is true that he found it difficult to live his retired life in sickness and ill health, but his enthusiasm was great, and he always encouraged others with his sweet smile. He was growing old gracefully.

Fr. Xavier Rodriguez sdb was a confrere in my community at Manikandam during his last years of life. I remember some confreres sharing about his strict discipline when he was Rector in some of the communities. But I was deeply impressed by his loving attitude and humorous behaviour at Manikandam. He used to profusely thank me whenever he received what he wanted, may be some fruits and drinks. He was doubly happy when I used to take him to convents and he repeatedly thanked me because he knew that I would take him next time too. Jokes apart, he really enjoyed his life at his old age and wanted to do some work and contribute his share to the community. I used to tell the administrator to give him all the coins to be counted and he was very happy to do the work. It was wonderful to see him grow old gracefully.

Fr. John Nedumpuram sdb was my confessor in the Aspirantate at Tirupattur. All of us remember well about his goodnights on chastity. But I was really inspired by his zeal for souls. He used to passionately narrate all his experiences at Oragadam in the Chengalpattu region and Bommikuppam in the Tirupattur region. One of my classmates, named Johnson, in 12th grade, had a fall and was fractured in his leg. He could not write his half-yearly exams and was suffering from pain. One day, Fr. John visited him in the infirmary, and I was serving food to my companion. He told the aspirant, "My dear Johnson, I know that you are in pain and suffering very much. But offer all these for the people of Bommikuppam." Such was his zeal for souls. I also remember that even at his old age, he

used to join us for games, particularly volleyball. He also spent long hours in confession and enjoyed being with us aspirants. He was another confrere who grew old gracefully.

Fr. KC Philip, who was a confessor in Madhakottai at the end of his life, was another confrere who inspired me greatly. I have not lived with him, but I have heard very much about him, especially about his silent way of going about, not craving attention and recognition. That is also the reason he died quietly. He went to bed and did not get up in the morning. He had passed away in peace at night during his sleep. I am sure the Lord was very good to him for the wonderful and exemplary life that he led. He too was a confrere who grew old gracefully. I am sure the Salesians loved him much and I have not heard anyone comment negatively about him negatively.

There are many more on the list whom I can describe, but I guess these few Salesians drive home the message of how we too can be inspiring and exemplary. This is exactly the spirituality of witness that we are reflecting on in the third year of preparation for the Silver Jubilee of our province. I was a little upset when I heard a lot of rumours and gossips about the decisions taken in the province about many matters of formation and mission. It is true that backbiting and grumbling will be there always till the end of the world but what is sad is that when opportunities are given for dialogue and discussion, people do not interact or share their views. On the contrary, they go around talking to everyone about everything, which brings down the positivity of confreres and reduces their interest in missions. Hence, let us be generous in motivating others and their zeal for work. If there is something to clarify, let us approach the right people at the right time and offer our ideas and suggestions. This will construct the province and its growth. But gossips and grumbings will not only ruin the province but also the one who does it because he knows very well that it is not right to spread rumours and false news.

May the birth of the baby Jesus help us all to become witnesses to the good news in all aspects. As we are part of a young and vibrant province, let us become positive agents of promotion and celebrate the silver jubilee of the province meaningfully. Let us follow the giants of spirituality who have gone before us and their legacy of growing old gracefully.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



Merry Christmas!