



## PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

APRIL 2024

### DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

As the Easter season fills our hearts with light and hope, I extend to you all my most heartfelt greetings. This holy time reminds us of the transformative power of Christ's resurrection, a victory that shattered the darkness of death and ushered in a new era of redemption. Don Bosco, deeply inspired by the Risen Christ, dedicated his life to leading young people to holiness. His motto,

"*Da mihi animas cetera tolle*" fosters us to accompany young people on their journeys of faith, fostering within them a spirit of joy and hope. Let our interactions with young people radiate the joy of the Risen Christ. Through our words, actions, and enthusiastic faith, we can inspire them to embrace a life filled with God's love. The world



around us can often feel dark and discouraging. Just as Jesus overcame death, let us empower young people to face challenges with resilience and hope. Let us be a source of support and encouragement, helping them find meaning and purpose in their lives. May the blessings of the Easter season fill you with an abundance of joy, peace, and the renewed strength to carry forward Don Bosco's mission.

### Provincial Chapter PC 09

The Ninth Provincial Chapter of our province is held from [02 – 06 April 2024 at The Citadel, Chennai](#). All the Chapter members have arrived on 01 April 2024 for supper. As we are in the silver jubilee of our province, may the chapter be a time of grace and comfort for our togetherness to reflect on our life as Salesians and to realize the dreams of Don Bosco for the province of Tiruchy. I am lovingly grateful to Fr. Don Bosco, the provincial of INM and the confreres of the Citadel community for going out of the way to make everything comfortable and memorable for all of us in the chapter. I am sure this will be remembered with love in the history of our province.

### Anniversary of Fr. Selvadurai Paulraj

One year ago, the Lord called home our beloved Fr. Selvadurai who dedicated his life to serving God and his people. He was a beacon of faith and a friend to many. He embodied the spirit of Don Bosco, devoting his life to the education and welfare of the needy children

and young people. His love for prayer, devotion to the Blessed Mother and thirst for the salvation of young people touched countless lives, leaving an indelible mark in our hearts.

The first death anniversary mass for Fr. Selvadurai will be held on [10 April 2024 at Mary Help of Christians Shrine, Amsam](#). There will be a blessing at the cemetery at 10.30 am followed by the Holy Eucharist at 11.00 am. Some of the family members and relatives of Fr. Selvadurai will also join the ceremony. I invite as many Salesians as possible to participate in this mass in memory and pray for the repose of his soul.



### **Annual Retreats – Fr. Eunan Mc Donnell**

The province completed the first retreat of this year in January and will have three retreats this month. The second retreat from [08 to 13 April](#), the third from [22 to 27 April](#) and the fourth from [29 April to 04 May](#). All the retreats will be held in The Retreat – Yercaud. Fr.



[Eunan Mc Donnell, the provincial of the Salesian province of Ireland](#) will preach all the three retreats. On behalf of the province, I welcome him wholeheartedly to our province and for a wonderful experience with our confreres during the retreat. Retreat is a great opportunity that we have once a year to spend six days of silence and solitude and to

experience a spiritual renewal. I exhort all the confreres to reach the place on the previous day for supper and to make a meaningful retreat. As it was proposed, all the retreats will be silent retreats this year.

### **Keela Eral NAAC Accreditation – B Grade**

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) peer team came for a two-day visit to Keela Eral college for the assessment. As a result, the college has been accredited with [Grade B](#) in its first cycle of [NAAC Accreditation with a CGPA of 2.25 points](#). I express my gratitude to the Rector and confreres of the community, the principal and the teaching staff, non-teaching staff and all the students of the college for their valuable contributions and hard work in getting the credit. May God bless their effort for the growth of the college and in bringing more admissions.



### **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 07 and 08 April 2024 during the provincial council meeting. Let us continue to pray for all the young Salesians so that they may happily grow in their Salesian religious vocation.

### **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 Economist by the [end of April 2024](#). This will be collected and sent to the Rector Major.

### **PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH**

02-06	Tue - Sat	INT 09 <sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter @ Chennai
07, 08	Sun, Mon	Provincial Council
08-13	Mon - Sat	II Retreat – General Patronage @ Yercaud
10	Wed	First Anniversary of Fr. Selvadurai @ Amsam
14	Sun	Blessing of the Community Hall @ Savariaralayam
22-27	Mon - Sat	III Retreat – General Patronage @ Yercaud
29-04	Mon - Sat	IV Retreat – General Patronage @ Yercaud

### **RECALLING EVENTS**

**All Commissions and Departments Meeting** was held on March 11, 2024, 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. Charles Joseph, the youth ministry delegate of the province for coordinating the meeting.

**Diaconate Ordination:** On behalf of the province, I congratulate Deacons Arul Sebastian Amaladoss, Ajilash Dhas Joseph, and John Paul Mariaraj who were ordained deacons on March 18, 2024, at Bangalore and Deacons Sabinson Babiyans, Selvaraj Palraj, Sesu Raj Anthonisamy and Vimal Joseph who were ordained on March 19, 2024, at Chennai. We congratulate them 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 02, 2024, at Don Bosco Provincial House, Kallukuzhy. Fr. Suresh



Felix, the rector of Vilathikulam community, animated them on the topic 'Evangelical Counsels.' In the afternoon, they were taken for a Lenten pilgrimage to Poondi Shrine. I thank Fr. Xavier Michael and Fr. Suresh Felix for animating the clerics. Let us continue to pray for these clerics as they are preparing for the total commitment in their religious life.

**INT PC09 – Zonal Meeting and Pre-Chapter Meeting:** The zonal meetings for the discussion on the chapter documents were held on 07, 08 and 09 March 2024 in DB Keela Eral, DBAI Salem and DBPH Kallukuzhy respectively. There was a good participation of confreres from all our communities with wonderful sharing of knowledge and experience. I express my gratitude to all the rectors and confreres of the hosting communities for making all the arrangements. The pre-chapter meeting was held on 21 March 2024 at DBPH Kallukuzhy. Fr. Pavulraj SJ, the Rector of St. Joseph's College community, Trichy animated the chapter members. I thank the moderator and all the members of the pre-capitular committee for their effective planning and successful execution.

**The Annual Retreat for the domestic staff** of our communities was held in Adaikala Annai Church, Elakurichi on 16 March 2024. Fr. Jerald Vianneyraj preached and animated the domestic staff. There were all together 36 participants. We thank the preacher, Fr. Amaladoss, the Economer and Fr. Johnpaul for organizing a meaningful retreat for our domestic staff and the other Salesians who accompanied the staff.

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

10.04.2023 – Fr. Selvadurai Paulraj died at Coimbatore at the age of 46.

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 LKC Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Dilan Marisal () on 05 March 2024.
- To the Provincial and confreres of ING Province at the demise of Rev. Br. Angelus Tete (71) on 22 March 2024.
- To Fr. Thomas Louis, at the demise of his mother Mrs. Annammal (81) on 30 March 2024.

*May the soul rest in peace!*

### **COMMUNITY REFLECTION**

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

##### **Spreading the Fragrance of Goodness**

After the ordination, I was sent to Savariyarpalayam parish for the pastoral ministry. I had very good formation as a young priest, for which I have been grateful to God all my life. Everyone knows well about the organization of the parishes in the Dindigul region. Nattamais (village leaders) control the parish priest and his decisions. So too was the

system in that parish as well. The people cannot approach the priest on their own; rather, they must be accompanied by the Nattamai of their area. People cannot express their requests to the parish priest, but the Nattamai will speak on behalf of them. The parish priest cannot decide on anything concerning the parish, but he must just obey the wishes of the Nattamais. In such a context, I made a house visit of all the families of the parish as soon as I became the parish priest and worked towards forming anbiams and the parish council. It was not an easy task at all. I went through agony and suffering every day. The Nattamai system opposed me in everything because I was making efforts to create an alternative system for the governance of the parish and its administration.

At that time, the parish priest of the Cathedral Church was Rev. Fr. Peter Raj, fondly called Kallarasu, who recently passed away due to ill health. He had been my professor at the Poonamallee seminary too. He came to know all the happenings and fights in the parish where I was and gave me a piece of advice that can never be forgotten. "My dear Agilan, I know that you are undergoing pain and agony every day in your parish. But remember, not even in prayer should you think of retaliating against your people, especially those who are working against you. Pray for them and be good to them. You will receive your reward in heaven." He reminded me of the Bible, Mt 5:44-45, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." I am grateful to him for not only advising me but also for standing with me, encouraging me to go through challenges, and to remain a good priest always. May God rest his soul.

Being good is difficult, and spreading the fragrance of goodness is more difficult. But once we taste the sweetness of being good, we will never give it up for anything. On the contrary, we will spread that goodness to everyone around us, and it will catch up like wildfire. Unfortunately, people who are good are silent and unnoticed. They do not come out in the open to fight against evil. Not that they would succumb to pressure, but they do not want to lose their goodness in the fight. I feel the spirituality of witness invites us not to remain silent and quiet. We cannot be happily going to heaven alone. We must accompany as many as possible to heaven. That's the reason why Don Bosco advised his Salesians to pray by making the boys pray. Let me give you some lines of action in this line about how we can spread the fragrance of goodness around us.

**01. Credibility and Authenticity Stand First:** There are many good preachers, but it is very difficult to live with them. One of the provincials shared with me in the meeting, "I have four preachers in my province. They go around preaching to the whole world and converting everyone, but they cannot fit into a community or take directions from the leader." If I were to be in his place, I would put all four in one community and allow them to choose a leader by themselves. I will appoint the one chosen and make sure they live together for a few years. It is better to spoil one community than to distribute four and spoil four communities. I know some of you

are smiling as you read these lines, but the fact is true. We always want the other to be correct and better. But when it concerns us, we always justify ourselves. I quote the Bible: "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye." Mt 7:3-5. We have some confreres who think highly of themselves. But their life is so low. Some are obsessed with the thoughts of themselves alone, their degrees, portfolios, advantages, and the like. Good and credible people never put themselves in the limelight or take the front seat in life. Rather, they always give their place to others at every given opportunity and happily remain silent.

**02. Good People Stand for Values:** There is a new culture creeping into our religious life. When someone makes a mistake, we keep quiet and wait for someone else to correct the offender. Or make a lot of noise about the superior, who is not making efforts to punish the offender. I guess good people will not watch and pray when evil is taking the upper hand. Rather, they will make every effort to put off the fire from the beginning and fight till the end, even if the fire destroys the whole place. God looks into our efforts, not the results. The Church is built on the blood of martyrs. The congregation has flourished because of the innumerable sacrifices of the Salesians who have gone before us. Therefore, each of us should have the urge to stand for values. We should visibly show this in our actions too. For example, when someone is talking nonsense during a meeting, anyone should be able to put an end to it at the earliest. Why should we wait for the leader to stop him? I am not suggesting this because I am a leader now. I am just reflecting the attitude of many these days. Some people begin their arguments by saying, 'I disagree with him' or 'I too agree with him.' Why should one agree with another or disagree with anyone at all? Rather, you should agree with the idea proposed or disagree with a suggestion given. Good people stand for values and do not support people blindly because they like them or they belong to the same group.

**03. United We Stand, Divided We Fall:** One should not misunderstand this statement and take it for numerical unity. I mean, good people should stand together against evil. There may be divisive forces against good people, but they should not succumb to pressure and tactics. Rather, they should be together, and there should be unity in quality and quantity. Unfortunately, we do not find this in our times. Many are wanting to keep away from standing for good and coming out openly in public. They fear of being excluded from the group. I ask a question: What have you gained by belonging to your group all these years? Have they assured you of heaven or at

least some happiness in this world? You should fear God and not humans, and the least for those who promote their own groups. Have your heads on your shoulders and be bold to stand for what is right. And more so, all those who stand for what is right should stand together. This is the unity that I am referring to, and this will take us to real happiness, which can never be taken away from us.

**04. Forgive and Forget:** After doing all that we can, the final attitude should be 'let go.' It can happen that things do not happen the way we have imagined. Or evil may dominate and take pleasure in a momentary success. Good people never get discouraged, and at the same time, they never lose hope as well. 'This too will pass away,' is their guiding principle, and they will continue to work harder towards achieving more good. The wounds and worries do not linger any longer in them; rather, they easily forgive the offenders, forget the situations, and go ahead with fresh vigor and energy. It is the goal that matters, not the stumbling blocks during the onward journey of life. This is what the Christian doctrine inspires us, and Jesus is our best model: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Lk 23:34.

As we are in the Easter season, my dear confreres let us rise and soar high in ideals that promote good and spread the fragrance of goodness everywhere and at every opportunity. It's easy to give up. Jesus died, but on the third day, he rose again and lives on forever. So too, we should live forever spreading the fragrance of goodness. My fervent prayers for all of you in this Eastertide are that the resurrected Jesus may be with us always, especially in the journey of our life of goodness.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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**Happy Easter!**