

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

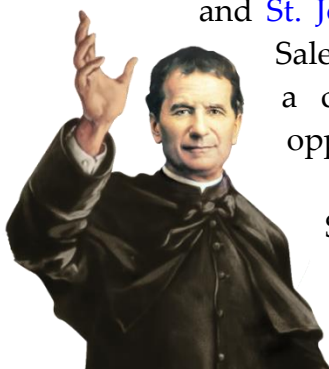
As the curtain draws on 2023 and we stand on the threshold of a brand-new year, our hearts are brimming with gratitude and hope. Gratitude for the countless blessings that we have received as a province, the vibrant energy of our young people, the unwavering dedication of our confreres, the enduring faith of our communities, and the boundless love of God in all our initiatives. And hope for the incredible possibilities that lie before us in the dawning year of 2024.



As we step into 2024, let us be ignited by the joy of Don Bosco, a joy that finds expression in our interactions with the young, in our dedication to their education and welfare, and in the simple act of sharing a smile. Let us continue to serve with boundless compassion, reaching out to those in need with open hearts and helping hands. And let us remember that we are not alone, but part of a vibrant Salesian family, a family that finds strength and support in its shared faith and mission. May the new year 2024 be **a year of abundant blessings, a year of fruitful ministry, and a year where the light of Don Bosco shines** even brighter in the hearts and lives of the people of Southern Tamil Nadu.

Feast of our Patron and Founder

As the crisp air of January draws near, so do two joyous occasions that hold immense significance for our beloved congregation: the Feasts of **St. Francis de Sales on 24 January** and **St. John Bosco on 31 January**. These remarkable saints, patrons of our Salesian charism, offer us not just inspiration but a clear path to navigate the challenges and opportunities of our time.



St. Francis de Sales, the Gentle Bishop, reminds us of the power of love and kindness in spreading the word of God. His unwavering conviction that "holiness



consists simply in doing the duties of our state in a perfect manner" resonates deeply with each of us as we strive to fulfil our roles within the Salesian Family. Whether we are educators, caregivers, youth ministers, or simply everyday witnesses to faith, St. Francis de

Sales beckons us to radiate God's love through our every word and action. St. John Bosco taught us the transformative power of joy and optimism. He saw not just the needs of the disadvantaged youth, but their potential for greatness. His belief in "educating the heart along with the mind" continues to guide our educational and pastoral mission, reminding us to nurture not just academic intelligence but also the spark of faith and resilience within each young person entrusted to our care.

May the coming month be filled with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment as we celebrate the lives and legacies of St. Francis de Sales and St. John Bosco. Let their gentle strength and joyful optimism guide us as we continue to build a Salesian world, one act of love and kindness at a time.

Pongal – A Feast of Gratitude

Pongal, a vibrant four-day festival celebrated by the Tamil community, is a joyous ode to the harvest season, a heartfelt expression of gratitude to God, and a festive acknowledgement of the bond between humans and nature. More than a festival, it is a vibrant tapestry woven with threads of gratitude, tradition, and community. It's a celebration of life, of nature's bounty, and of the human spirit that finds joy in giving thanks. We are not only celebrating the bounty of the earth but also the abundant blessings that grace our lives as humans. We are called to be **Sowers of hope, tillers of faith, and reapers of compassion in the fields of our ministry.** Just as the farmer prepares the land with dedication, so too must we prepare our hearts to receive God's grace and share it with the world.



Dissemination of Strenna 2024

The Strenna of our Rector Major for 2024 is "[The Dream that Makes you Dream: A Heart that Transforms Wolves into Lambs.](#)" The dissemination of Strenna will be held for all leaders of our community on Saturday, 06 January 2024 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Kallukuzhy. Later, the Leaders will organise a day of animation on the Strenna in their respective Salesian presences, inviting all the Salesian Family members and young people from the neighbourhood before 15 February 2024. Communities nearby can decide to have the Strenna presentation together to experience more fraternity and sharing.



Consultation for Rectors

I am making consultation for the appointment of the Rectors of the communities who are completing the term of office on 24 May 2024. The list is given below:

S. No.	Name	Period	Place	Completing
1.	P Ricopar Royan	2018 – 2024	Vellakinar	Two Terms
2.	P Daniel Sebastian	2018 – 2024	Kazhiappanallur	Two Terms

3.	P Peter Singarayar	2018 – 2024	Moolakadu	Two Terms
4.	P Thoams Louis	2018 – 2024	DB Thanjavur	Two Terms
5.	P Victor Antonyraj	2021 – 2024	Keela Eral	One Term
6.	P Amala Jeyarayan	2021 – 2024	Jawaharpuram	One Term
7.	P Benjamine Gnanapragasam	2021 – 2024	Melanmarainadu	One Term
8.	P Herbert Amos	2021 – 2024	Namakkal	One Term
9.	P Ferrington Poobalarayan	2021 - 2024	Madhakottai	One Term
10.	P Amalraj Susai	2021 - 2024	Therespuram	One Term
11.	P Gamaliyel Francis	2021 - 2024	Varadarajanpet	One Term

Since it is a matter of importance for our Province, I request the sincere and responsible cooperation of all our confreres so that suitable confreres are chosen for the respective roles. Kindly suggest names after prayer and due reflection. You are recommended to [send the forms to me directly by email on or before 20 January 2024](#). Those who do not have access to email can send in sealed envelopes. Kindly send the form after saving the file in your name so that it is easy for consolidation.

Together with this circular, I am attaching the form for the consultation process.

Congrats to Fr. John Zosiama and Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal - Provincial Elect of INS and ING

Our Rector Major Rev. Fr. Angel Fernandes Arttime has nominated Fr. John Zosiama as the



new Provincial of the Salesian Province of St. John Paul II (INS) and Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal as the new Provincial of the Salesian Province of Mary Help of Christians (ING) for the six-year period from 2024 – 2030. Fr. John Zosiama has been serving the province as the vice provincial in the past years. Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal has been a provincial councillor and principal of Don Bosco School Pan Bazar in the



past years. On behalf of the province, I extend my hearty congratulations and prayerful support to Fr. John Zosiama and Fr. Sebastian Kuricheal. May God bless them and their ministry as the leaders of the provinces.

Annual Retreat

The annual retreats of the province are being planned. The province will host five retreats this year: [four general patronages and one guided retreat](#). The Vice Provincial has already sent the retreat details to the Rectors and Community Leaders. I urge the Rectors and Leaders to ensure that all members of the community participate in this annual spiritual moment without fail.

Salesian Brothers Congress

The 9th Salesian Brothers Congress of South Asia has been organized from 30 December 2023 to 03 January 2024 at Don Bosco Provincial House, Kolkata. The theme taken for the congress is 'Salesian Brother in the 21st century: Identity, Fidelity and Leadership.' We wish all the Salesian Brothers in a special way the brothers from our province a fruitful experience during the congress. I will be present with them on the 2 January.

Congratulations to Fr. James Sundar

I congratulate Fr. James Sundar for the successful completion of his doctoral studies. He had been doing his doctoral studies in Dharmaram College, Bangalore. He **accomplished his doctoral studies on 27 November 2023** on the topic "Brahmanubhava: An Enquiry into the Philosophical – Religious Ways of Experiencing God in Ramanuja's *Visistadvaita* and its Implications to the Conflicting Situations of India.' I appreciate him for his hard work and completing the studies successfully.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

06	Sat	Strenna Presentation for Leaders @ DBPH, Tiruchy
12-17	Fri - Wed	I Retreat – General Patronage @ Manikandam
18	Thu	Provincial Council
24	Wed	Administrators Meet @ DBPH, Tiruchy
26-27	Fri, Sat	Youth Mela'24 @ Manikandam
31	Wed	Feast of St. John Bosco

RECALLING EVENTS

All the Commissions and Departments of the province gathered for the mid-year evaluation in Don Bosco Provincial House, Tiruchy on 02 December 2023. I thank all the heads and members of Commissions and Departments for your valuable participation and the presentation of the report with proper details and methodology. The meeting was conducted for one day as recommended in the previous year. I thank Fr. Charles Joseph for coordinating the whole day programme.

Perpetual Profession of Cl. Maria Jerin and Cl. Maria Paulson Aswin was held on 08 December 2023 at Mary Help of Christians church, Pallakenry, Limerick, Ireland. These two clerics have been sent to the Salesian province of Ireland on contract. Cl. Jerin is doing his first-year theology and Cl. Aswin is doing his second year practical training. As they have committed themselves perpetually to work for God in the Salesian congregation, on behalf of the province, I wish them congratulations. We pray that they may continue their journey with zeal, joy and enthusiasm.



The ordination ceremony of seven of our deacons was held on 29 December 2023 at Don Bosco Surya Nagar, Madurai. I extend my sincere thanks to Antony Pappusamy, Archbishop of Madurai, who conferred the ordination. I express my heartfelt appreciation to Fr. Xavier Michael, the vice provincial, Fr. Amaladoss, the economist, Fr. Jeyan Joseph, the director of Christodayam and Fr. Joe Augustine, the Rector of Surya Nagar, and all the confreres of the three communities of Madurai for looking into details of the entire programme. Dn. Clan Zazharias was ordained along with the deacons of INM in Chennai.

The relief works in Thoothukudi was carried out in a spectacular way by the community of Keela Eral under the guidance of Fr. Amaladoss, the economist and Fr. Amalorpavaraj, the Rector of DBAI, Coimbatore. We owe our big thanks to the generosity of SOGO, who helped us with substantial food materials and service. AMAZON and NESTLE are the other corporates who also came in a big way to support us with needed food supplies. We cannot forget our Salesian agencies abroad who always support us in emergency situations. God bless them all and keep them happy in their lives. I sincerely appreciate the efforts taken by the Rector and the confreres of DBICAS, together with the good will of the staff and wonderful cooperation of the students. I am sure their hard work will be rewarded greatly by the blessings of the almighty God in their lives. I want to thank the Rectors and communities that came to help by way of money and materials. It was wonderful and timely intervention. God bless your generosity. Let us continue to help people in need.

CONDOLENCES...

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

- To the Provincial and confreres of INB Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Lawrence D'Souza (77) on 12 December 2023.
- To the Provincial and confreres of INM Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Maria Selvam (85) on 30 December 2023.
- To Fr. Amala Aswin, at the demise of his mother Mrs. Maria Goretty (66) on 14 December 2023.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

TOWARDS SILVER JUBILEE - YEAR 3: SPIRITUALITY OF WITNESS

Living the Salesian Spirituality with Passion and Enthusiasm

As we go through the theme of General Chapter 29, we are reminded about our fundamental attachment to Jesus Christ, who has called us to follow him closely. I feel the new year 2024 is yet another opportunity for all of us to renew our commitment to the Lord and our fidelity to our vocation to holiness. As I go around the communities for visitation, I am reminding our communities and our confreres about the basics of our religious life, which is our spirituality and our identity. I had dealt with this theme during the visitation of the previous academic year. The question is, are we faithful to our spirituality, or are we

enjoying our spirituality? All those who enjoy Salesian spirituality, according to me, are certainly living a witnessing life, and they become motivators and inspirers for the present generation of young people. Let us further our thoughts on this theme in this circular.

I remember someone narrating the life of a young Salesian priest in Yercaud many years ago. I guess he is no longer in the congregation, but he lived a wonderful life as long as he was in the congregation. He was a very talented person, very much interested in young people and youth ministry. In fact, he used to animate the youth with passion and enthusiasm. He was sent for higher studies in media to the USA already in those years because he was very skilful and had the technical brains. Fr. Egidious Sola, who was the novice master in Yercaud for many years, became a confessor later in the post-novitiate. He used to always pull this young priest and make fun of him because he was not present for the morning prayer and meditation. He liked him very much because the young priest was witty and humorous. But I recall the words of Fr. Sola: "It's true that the young priest missed his morning prayer and meditation with the community sometimes, but I found him making the meditation later before lunch, and he always substituted the times he missed."

According to me, this is witnessing life. It's true that all of us are humans, and we are unable to be faithful to our prayer moments every day. But do we feel that we have missed our prayer? Are we making efforts to substitute the prayer that we have missed? If so, then we are certainly enjoying our spirituality, and this style of life will surely motivate and inspire the other confreres of the community and the young people as well. But what is happening in some of our communities is bothering me these days. There are some confreres including the rectors, who are absent for prayer moments. Some of them say that they are sick and taking medicines. Hence, they are not able to get up early in the morning for prayer moments. But these same confreres can get up early in the morning when they must travel to attend some functions elsewhere. They can get up when they must go for marketing. They happily rise in the morning when it is their turn for chaplaincy to go to the convent. There is no problem when guests are in the house. They can manage heavy schedules. They don't need reminders at all. The alarm works well and correctly.

What about community prayer and other practices of piety? Why are people frequently absent and make no efforts to substitute for the missed moments? Sometimes the brothers are always there for prayer, and the fathers take turns and are present now and then. Fortunately, there are not many communities like this, and not many confreres are absent. But still, one can bring down the spirit of the community, and as the Bible says, though the ninety-nine are good, we must go after the one that is lost.

The new year is a good time to renew ourselves and start all over again. We can give a new push and vigour to our spirituality and identity. Young people look up to us and we have to become witnesses of holiness to them. May this new year bring abundant blessings from the Lord and make us witnesses of spirituality. As we are marching towards the silver jubilee of our province, I invite all of us to work towards this ardent task of becoming

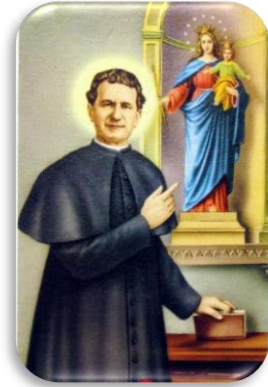
motivators and inspirers, especially for the young people who are entrusted to our care. As Don Bosco told Michael Rua when he was appointed as the Rector of Mirabello, "Be like Don Bosco in Mirabello," so too, let us become Don Bosco to everyone around us and in each of our communities. I am sure the charism of Don Bosco will reach far and wide through our witnessing lives. I pray for your all, for your good health and happiness all through the new year.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



**Happy New Year
2024**