



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

SEPTEMBER 2024

DEAR CONFRERES,

Cordial Greetings...

Annai Velankanni is a revered figure not only in Tamil Nadu but across India and the world. As the patroness of our province, the feast is a significant occasion for us to reflect on her maternal care, intercession, and guidance.

The story of Annai Velankanni is a testament to the power of faith and devotion. Legend has it that a Portuguese ship carrying a statue of the Virgin Mary was caught in a storm. The sailors, fearing for their lives, prayed to the Virgin for help. The storm miraculously subsided, and the ship was guided to the shores of Velankanni. In gratitude, the sailors built a small chapel where they placed the statue. Over the years, the site became a popular pilgrimage destination, attracting devotees from far and wide.



Let us celebrate the feast of Annai Velankanni with renewed fervour and devotion. We can do this by participating in masses and novenas, visiting the shrine, performing acts of charity, and reflecting on our relationship with Mary. As we celebrate the feast of Annai Velankanni, let us renew our commitment to our Salesian mission and seek her guidance and protection. May her intercession inspire us to be more effective in our work with young people and to witness to the love and mercy of God.

A Heartfelt Thanks for a Memorable Silver Jubilee Celebration

My heart overflows with joy and gratefulness as we have made a memorable experience of our province's Silver Jubilee celebration. The four days of festivities, starting with the gathering of the Yar Children at Moolakadu, followed by the Young Salesians at Yercaud, the Salesian Family at Manikandam, and culminating in the Grand Finale at DB Thanjavur, were truly glorious and profound.



The enthusiasm, participation, and prayers of all involved have made this a truly special occasion. I am particularly grateful to the rectors, confreres, and collaborators of each community for their tireless efforts in organizing and hosting these events. Their dedication and hard work have ensured the success of our celebration.



We extend our sincere thanks to the chief guest Rev. Fr. Stefano Martoglio, the Vicar of the Rector Major, Fr. Biju Michael, the Regional, all the Provincials of SPCSA, Provincials and Superiors from other congregations, Diocesan Priests and all the esteemed guests. I am particularly grateful to the Province of Chennai, Fr. Don Bosco, the Provincial, the provincial council and the loving presence of good number

of confreres. Our Mother province has been greatly generous in gifting us with 25 lakhs but that is only a small gesture of their bountiful love. The support of the FMA-INT has been overwhelming, and I am grateful to Sr. Majella, the Provincial and all our beloved sisters for their presence and love.

My dear confreres and the members of the Salesian Family, your fraternity and togetherness has made this celebration a great event in the history of our province. All those who were present and others watching through the You Tube have been greatly inspired by the synergy of the province. One of the provincials mentioned that given an opportunity he would love to bring his confreres to our province to witness our good spirits and vibration. I am grateful to the program committee and the media team for giving an excellent visibility to the celebration. May God bless all of us and take us forward to commit ourselves to the young with greater enthusiasm.



A Call to Local Communities: Celebrating Our Silver Jubilee

While the grand celebration of Silver Jubilee at the provincial level has concluded, I invite all our local communities to continue the festivities. This milestone is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and unwavering faith of our Salesian family. To commemorate this special occasion, I encourage each community to set aside a day to celebrate the Silver Jubilee with everyone involved in our mission. This could be a gathering of confreres, Salesian Cooperators, past students, parents, and other stakeholders. Let us come together to reflect on our journey, express gratitude for God's blessings, and reaffirm our commitment to our Salesian mission. This is an opportunity to strengthen our bonds and to inspire one another to continue our work with renewed enthusiasm.

Provincial Visitation 2024 – 2025

I am pleased to announce that I will be commencing my canonical visitation of the communities beginning in the [middle of this month](#). The detailed schedule has already been communicated to the Rectors. This visitation is a valuable opportunity for me to personally experience and gain a deeper understanding of the daily life of our communities and the confreres who serve within them. I encourage the leaders of our communities and the heads of various sectors to ensure that all necessary documents, particularly the SEPP and EPCC, are updated in accordance with the guidelines discussed during the recent leaders meeting. A comprehensive checklist will also be provided by the secretary. I believe that these regular visits and meetings will foster a more holistic understanding of the Salesian life and mission, promote meaningful community animation, strengthen relationships, and cultivate a sense of strong togetherness among our confreres.

Joint Council Meet with INM

The joint council meeting of INM and INT will be held on [12 September 2024 at DB Pre-novitiate, Dindigul](#). There are many plans for collaboration between both the provinces in various level to make our ministry visible, vibrant and reachable. On behalf of the province, I extend my warm welcome to Rev. Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy, the provincial of INM, all the councillors and the secretaries for this meeting and I thank them for their constant support and encouragement in our mission and collaborative ventures.

Quinquennium Meet

I cordially invite all of you who have been ordained in the past five years to attend the upcoming quinquennium meeting at [Mount Don Bosco, on September 6th and 7th, 2024](#). It is a time of spiritual renewal, fellowship, and shared experiences. This meeting offers a unique opportunity to connect with your own companions, recharge your spiritual energies, and gain new insights into your priestly ministry. May this gathering be a source of inspiration and encouragement as you continue your journey as Salesian priests.

Meeting for those due for Perpetual Profession

This meeting for all clerics who are scheduled to make their perpetual profession at the end of the current academic year (May 2025) will be held at [Don Bosco Provincial House on September 14, 2024](#). The participation in this meeting is crucial as it will provide an opportunity to discuss important matters related to the growth in Salesian vocation. Kindly ensure your arrival at the provincial house for supper on the previous day.

Zonal Level Meeting for those in Initial formation

A zonal-level meeting for clerics in initial formation will be held this month. The meeting is specifically for those clerics who come under the Thanjavur zone and is scheduled for [September 28, 2024, at DB Thanjavur](#). This meeting promises to be a vibrant opportunity for clerics to connect, share experiences, and be inspired by the lives and mission of one another. The Vice Provincial will provide further details regarding the meeting.

SYMFEST 2024

Recently, we witnessed the world-level Salesian Youth Synod (SYMSYNOD) organized by the youth ministry department from August 11 through August 16, with participation from nearly 400 youth from 93 countries. It was held first in Valdocco and then at Colle Don Bosco in the presence of Bp. Card. Ángel Fernández Artime, who wished to conclude his term as Rector Major with this great youth event. It was a grand youth gathering in the birthplace of Don Bosco to commemorate the bicentenary of his dream at the age of 9.

To have a similar celebration in the South Asian region, the DBYA-SA has decided to organize a large gathering of youth, titled SYMFEST 2024, in [Tirupattur, INM, from December 29, 2024, to January 01, 2025](#). Each of the 12 Salesian provinces in the region is expected to send 100 youth to the event. It is noteworthy that a similar gathering was organized in 2015 at Don Bosco School, Alaknanda, New Delhi, to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco, in the presence of the Rector Major.

The youth ministry department of our province has planned various activities and competitions in preparation for this event. I request the leaders and local youth service coordinators to cooperate and make this event a wonderful memory for our young people. This SYMFEST will replace our annual youth mela this year, and we will not have another in January.

Bon Voyage Cl. Mano Sebastian

Cl. Mano Sebastian will depart for Belgium on September 03, 2024. This year he has been assigned to do practical training along with a course on learning the language. I extend my heartfelt appreciation for his willingness to serve in Belgium. We wish him every success in fulfilling his assigned duties.

Cl. Eruthaya Valan who has opted for 'mission ad gentes' has reached Rome last week to go through one month course on missionary orientation. He had been asked to go to Africa Congo region to be a missionary. We wish him all the best for the missionary course.

Clerics Jerin and Aswin from Ireland are in our province for holidays for a month and we welcome them wholeheartedly. We wish them a happy stay and pray that they may get back to Ireland with renewed strength and vigour.

Cl. Leo Nepolian, who is in Belgium, had been in the province for holidays and now is gone back to continue the theological studies. It was wonderful to have him with us for the Silver Jubilee celebrations. We pray that he may prepare himself well as he will be ordained a deacon in the current academic year.

Let me take this opportunity to invite you my dear confreres to opt for missions as there are many invitations from many provinces. There is a request from MOR province for a cleric to do practical training, from SUE province for two priests to work in parishes and every year someone to go for mission ad gentes. Though we need more confreres to take up works in

our province, we have always been generous in giving missionaries to other provinces. Let us continue in this endeavour.

The Salesian Family Live-in

The Salesian Family live-in is planned every year on 02 October. This year it is planned for two days on [01 and 02 October at the Retreat, Yercaud](#). As I had shared during the meeting of last year, this gathering is organised to build up good relationships between the members. Hence, it is important to send members young and old, experienced and new and the like from all the branches of the Salesian Family. Let us enjoy and inspire one another in our growth in our Salesian vocation. The detailed programme will be sent by the Salesian Family delegate and let us make the best use of the opportunity.

Missionary Formation Course 2024

From our province, Fr. Jude Muthuselvan and Fr. Mohan Christuraj will be attending the missionary formation course at Shilling this year from 06 to 27 September and they will visit the Holy Land at the end of the course. We wish them all the best.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

06, 07	Fri, Sat	Quinquennium Meet @ Kottagiri
08	Sun	Feast of our Province Patroness Annai Velankanni
12	Thu	Joint Council INM & INT @ DB Dindigul / Curatorium meeting
14	Sat	Meeting for those due for Perpetual Profession @ DBPH
22	Sun	DB Thanjavur: ASC congress
28	Sat	Clerics Zonal Meeting for Thanjavur Zone @ DB Thanjavur

RECALLING EVENTS

SPCSA Council Meeting at DBPH Tiruchy

SPCSA (Salesian Provincial Conference of South Asia) council meeting was held in DBPH Kallukuzhy on 06, 07 August 2024. After participating in the silver jubilee celebration of our province, Rev. Fr. Biju Michael, the Regional, the Secretary of SPCSA, and all the provincials gathered in the provincial house for two days of meeting. I place on record the wonderful organization of the Provincial house community, seeing to the preparations and all the arrangements for the success of the meeting and comfortable stay of the participants.

Batch Meeting

Our province has organized the first batch meeting for the perpetually professed confreres on 23 and 24 August 2024, at the animation centre of the Sacred Heart brothers in Irudayakulam, near Ambasamudram. The confreres who made their first profession from 1992 to 2001 attended the meeting. My sincere thanks to all who have participated in the meeting with joy and enthusiasm. Let me exhort all the members to participate in the meeting without exception. I know all of us are busy with many assignments, but this occurs every two years and our efforts to come together will mean a lot to one another.

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 the Provincial and confreres of INS Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Muct Kumar Tirkey (57) on 04 August 2024.
- To the Provincial and confreres of INB Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. John Samala (86) on 12 August 2024.
- To the Provincial and confreres of INN Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Joseph Kezhakkekara (88) on 22 August 2024.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

SILVER JUBILEE OF THE PROVINCE OF TIRUCHY

God Bless Our Former Provincials

The Provincials in our Salesian Congregation have a pivotal role. As our Holy Rule puts it (C. 161), “Each province is headed by a provincial in union with the Rector Major and with love and pastoral zeal he carries out his service of building up a fraternal provincial community.” The growth of our Tiruchy Province in these 25 years owes itself to the fatherly leadership provided by its provincials.

Rev. Fr. James Theophilus, the first Provincial (1999 – 2005), gave a vision for the province not only for his tenure but for its entire existence. He called it “*vilimbugal maiyamaga*”



meaning ‘to make peripheries the center’. It has now become the leitmotif of the province. The first two Provincial Chapters under his leadership in 2001 and 2004, among other things, worked out the basic frame of reference for the province. The first Provincial Directory, the Formation Directory, and the Educative Pastoral Plan (EPP), the Organic Provincial Plan (OPP), the formation of Youth Movement, and a Formation Plan were brought out. “Together with the rural poor youth in the new millennium” became the voice of the province. During the time of Fr. Theophilus, the number of Salesian priests

increased from 54 to 73, the Salesian brothers from seven to nine, clerics from 80 to 92, and the total number of Salesians from 148 to 178. In 2002, two new houses were added, Kuthenkuly Polytechnic College, and Nettur parish.

Rev. Fr. Amalraj Susai, who took over as the next Provincial (2005 – 2011) continued the province’s journey towards the “periphery”. The educational services of the province were evaluated, and prevention of school dropouts was taken up seriously. An agro-based

training centre along with a youth research centre was conceived. The Province ventured into new frontiers: centre for HIV/AIDS affected/infected, de-addiction ministry (JANANAM), and services for the refugees, the tribal, and the ex-prisoners. Working with the laity in a more prophetic way was discussed, and drawing up a policy for the Catechetical Ministry was initiated. In 2006, Rev Fr. Pascual Chavez, the Rector Major, visited the Province to attend the conclusion of the Centenary Celebrations of the arrival of the first Salesians in India, in Thanjavur. During this period, the number of Salesian priests and Brothers reached 94, and the total number of Salesians 202. Three new houses were opened during his period: Kazhiappanallur near Tharangambadi (2007), Namakkal (2008), and Salem – Moolakadu (2009).



Rev. Fr. Albert Johnson became the third Provincial (2011 – 2017) with a call for a qualitative difference in life and mission of the province. During his time policies were approved for the Rural Ministry, Young at Risk, Social Communication, Vazhikaatti (Career Guidance and Job Placement), and CAUVERI, the Development Office of the province. The concept of starting a Youth Village, and a comprehensive ministry for young prisoners, released prisoners, migrant youth, refugee/replaced youth, and young transgender received approval. An educative pastoral plan was worked out for the parish ministry. In 2011, the Casket of Don Bosco’s hand arrived in the province and in November 2016,



Rev Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, the Rector Major visited the province. During this period, the number of Salesian priests and Brothers touched 127, and the total number of Salesians 220. Two new presences were opened: Sayalgudi (rural ministry) in 2014 and Keeranur Agro-based Training Centre in 2015.

Rev. Fr. Antony Joseph, fondly known as ‘Anna’ (meaning the elder brother), took over as the fourth Provincial (2017-2019). He had already rich experience of being the Provincial Economist for nine long years. His period was marked by the famous Chapter-theme of “what kind of Salesians for the youth of today?” In this context, Tiruchy was the only province, most probably, to organize a Youth Chapter to discuss the above theme with youth themselves. It became a great eye-opener for the entire Salesian world. All 70 youth leaders and 10 Salesians participated in it. During his time, the number of Salesian priests and Brothers reached 146, and the total number of Salesians 238. To our great sorrow, on the 11 September 2019 Rev. Fr. Antony Joseph died due to liver failure. He will



always be remembered for his unassuming and affectionate ways and of course for his immense contribution to the growth of the province.

Taking over from Fr. Anna was rather easy for me, having been the Vice Provincial under him for three years. During my time as Provincial, the province finalized and approved the policies for the Youth Department, for Higher Education, and for Integral Ecology in the



Salesian Youth Ministry. Once again, the need for working together with the Salesian Family and the lay people in a prophetic way was taken up. Of course, this period is marked by a three-year preparation for the Silver Jubilee of the province, and its very celebration. In this context, a scientific study of the province was carried out with the help of an external expert, and the findings were presented in a special symposium organized for the purpose. Therefore, immediately after the Silver Jubilee celebrations it will be my task to take up for discussions the pointers of the study. Two new houses, Surya Nagar in 2021, and

Kallikudi in 2023, have been added to the province on the eve of the Silver Jubilee. As we celebrate the 25 silver years of the province, the number of Salesian priests and Brothers has touched 175, and the total number of Salesians 250.

At this moment my heart overflows with joy and gratitude to the Lord. We thank our patroness, Our Lady of Velankanni, and repeat with our founder and father Don Bosco, "She did it all." I would like to place on record the sacrifices of each and every confrere in building up the province and I thank them in the name of the congregation.

I remember in a special way our deceased confreres and their memorable contribution. They are our constant intercessors in heaven. Of course I thank the various members of our Salesian Family, and all the lay collaborators because of whom our mission is ever enriched. Let me also take this opportunity to tell the youth of our province that our consecration and dedication on their behalf would always be at their service.

The entire Silver Jubilee preparations have been spearheaded by Fr. Victor Antonyraj with his team members, Fr. Amaladoss, Fr. Barnabas, Fr. John dharman and Fr. Jeyan Joseph. God bless them for their hard work and generosity. The Silver Jubilee celebrations proper have been planned and executed by the Rectors Fr. Ricopar, Fr. Arul Maran, Fr. Charles Joseph, Fr. Ashok Lawrence and Fr. Suresh Felix and their community members. It is always wonderful to see the energy and enthusiasm displayed to the maximum in our presences with the best contribution of the confreres.

I am personally grateful to all the provincial council members for their constant advice and to the Vice Provincial, Fr. Xavier Michael, the Economer, Fr. Amaladoss and Fr. Ashly, the secretary, for traveling with me closely all these years assisting me in all matters concerning

the welfare of the confreres and the development of the province. Let us continue to journey together towards the great joy that our father and friend Don Bosco wished for us in this world and beyond!

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!