



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

FEBRUARY 2025

DEAR CONFRERES,

Greetings and blessings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! As we journey through this month of February, our hearts and minds are drawn to two significant figures in our Christian faith: the Holy Family of Nazareth and Our Lady of Lourdes. They offer us profound examples of faith, love, and humble service, virtues we strive to emulate as Salesians.

The Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, represent the quintessential model of community life. In their humble home in Nazareth, they lived a life of prayer, hard work, and mutual love and support. Despite facing numerous challenges, they remained steadfast in their faith and committed to God's will. Their example reminds us of the importance of fostering strong family bonds, nurturing faith within our communities, and living a life of simplicity and humility. As Salesians, we are called to be fathers, brothers, and friends, creating a family spirit wherever we serve, especially among the young. Let us reflect on how we can better embody the virtues of the Holy Family in our communities and apostolates by fostering an atmosphere of love, respect, and support.



This month also commemorates the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on 11 February. The apparitions of Mary to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes remind us of the unwavering love of Blessed Mother and her role as Mediatrix between God and humanity. The message of Lourdes is one of hope, healing, and conversion. The thousands of pilgrims who visit Lourdes each year seeking solace and healing testify to the enduring power of Mary's intercession. As we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, let us renew our devotion to Mary, our mother and guide. Let us ask for her intercession for ourselves, our communities, and all those we serve. Let us also reflect on how we can better promote a culture of prayer and penance in our lives and in our ministry.



Preparation of Young Salesians for Renewals and Admissions

I request the Rectors and Leaders to encourage and guide our young Salesians as they prepare and apply for their next level of formation, the renewal of vows or perpetual profession. I exhort the Young Salesians to spend qualitative time in prayer, making use of

Rendiconto and spiritual direction as beautiful opportunities to examine oneself and evaluate the commitment in religious life, and thereby becoming stronger and devoted to religious vocation.

The province Secretary will send the details of the list of those due for renewals and perpetual professions and the documents related to the same. I exhort the leaders to ensure cooperation in promptly sending back the forms.

Commemoration of Deceased Confreres

According to our tradition, on the 1st of February, we remember the enduring legacy of those who have gone before us, our diseased Salesians who dedicated their lives to the charism of Don Bosco. This day offers us a precious opportunity to remember with gratitude their contributions to the Salesian mission, their unwavering commitment to the young, and the impact they had on the lives of those they served. It is a time to reflect on their examples of faith, dedication, and Salesian spirit, which continue to inspire us today. Let us remember the words of Don Bosco himself, who emphasized the importance of remembering those who have served the Congregation. By honouring their memory, we strengthen our own commitment to living out the Salesian vocation with renewed zeal and dedication.

Jamboree 2025

The 75th Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Bharat Scouts and Guides is currently captivating Manapparai, Tiruchirappalli. This grand jamboree, unfolding from January 28th to February 3rd, is a spectacle of youth with an astounding 25,000 participants, including international students, adding a vibrant global dimension. The event is a whirlwind of exciting activities, ranging from ingenious pioneering projects and thrilling adventure valley to a captivating global village development showcasing diverse cultures. The jamboree also features a mesmerizing march past, a vibrant colour party, exhilarating folk dances, a state day exhibition showcasing regional talents, rousing band performances, heart-pounding rock climbing, and exhilarating parasailing.



We are immensely proud that the Don Bosco Scouts and Guides District is actively participating in this momentous occasion. From our province, a dedicated team of eight students, two scout masters, and Fr. James Benjamin are wholeheartedly engaged in the Jamboree 2025. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Fr. James Benjamin on his esteemed selection as a member of the State Gateway Committee, a testament to his invaluable contributions to the scouting movement.

Diaconate ordination of Cl. Leo Nepolian

Cl. Leo Nepolian who is in Belgium on temporary contract, doing the theological studies, will be ordained a deacon by Mgr. Luc Van Looy SDB at Don Bosco, Oud-Heverlee, Belgium on [February 02, 2025](#). We congratulate him and wish him a relevant and fruitful diaconate ministry. We thank Fr. Bart Decancq, the Provincial of Belgium, Fr. Wambeke Wilfried, the Rector, and the other confreres of Belgium province, who are accompanying Cl. Nepolian and help him make a firm decision to serve the Lord as ordained minister. Fr. Amaladoss and I will be attending the celebration. We wish Leo Nepolian all the best for the important occasion in his life as a priest.

Clerics Zonal Meeting

Two zonal-level meetings have been scheduled for this month for the clerics who are in the initial formation doing practical training and college studies. The first zonal meeting is for the clerics who are in the [Tiruchy zone on 15 February 2025 at DBPH, Kallukuzhy](#). The second is for the [Salem zone on 22 February 2025 at DBAI Salem](#). I am sure all the clerics will attend these meetings joyfully as it is an animation at the province level. The details of the meeting will be communicated by the Vice Provincial.

Grievance Committee of the Province

Our province has established a Grievance Committee, headed by Fr. Robert Simon, with Fr. John Dharmanathan and Fr. Amalorpavaraj Annppan as members. This committee aims to provide a safe and accessible space for individuals, including Salesians, members of the Salesian Family, mission collaborators, students, and young people, to voice their concerns regarding any issues they may encounter in our mission places.

The Grievance Committee upholds the principle of equal access for all, regardless of their position or status. It is committed to fostering a positive and harmonious environment in our province by addressing and preventing discrimination, harassment, and other forms of misconduct. It strives to ensure that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Let us make use of this opportunity to do good and promote happiness in the lives of everyone.

My Abroad Trip

The 29th General Chapter (GC29) of the Salesians of Don Bosco is held in Turin from February 16 to April 12, 2025. Fr. Amaladoss, Fr. Robert Simon, the delegates for the chapter, and I will be attending the chapter. Prior to the chapter, Fr. Amaladoss and I will travel to Belgium to participate in the diaconate ordination of Cl. Leo Nepolian. Subsequently, we will journey to Ireland to meet Cl. Jerin and Cl. Aswin. Therefore, in my absence, kindly contact Fr. Xavier Michael, the Vice Provincial, for guidance and direction. I also delegate him to make the Provincial Visitation of the remaining communities of our province.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

15 Sat Zonal meeting for those in Initial Formation @ DBPH Tiruchy

22 Sat Zonal meeting for those in Initial Formation @ DBAI Salem

Tri Monthly Recollection

Quarterly Assessment of the Temporary Professed

RECALLING EVENTS

Dissemination of Strenna 2025

On Saturday, January 4, 2025, a meeting was held at Don Bosco Provincial House, Kallukuzhy, to disseminate the Strenna to all leaders within our Salesian communities. Fr. Stanuslaus Swamikannu expertly presented the Strenna, enriching the discussion with relevant and insightful examples. I extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Stanuslaus Swamikannu for his valuable time and the impactful way he shared the Strenna with our leaders. I also wish to thank Fr. Ferrington Poobalarayan, the Salesian Family delegate, for his meticulous planning and successful organization of this important event.

Provincial Community Day and Silver Jubilee Way Forward

The Provincial Community Day, a vibrant celebration of our Salesian family, was held on January 18, 2025, at Savariarpalayam. Following a delightful lunch, we engaged in a meaningful animation and a lively discussion, focusing on the silver jubilee way forward, for our province. This day was a source of immense joy and encouragement for all Salesians, providing a cherished opportunity to reconnect with fellow members of our province and express our sincere gratitude for their invaluable contributions. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the rector and confreres of Savariarpalayam and Don Bosco Pre-novitiate communities for their meticulous planning and warm hospitality, ensuring a truly memorable event for all. My deepest gratitude also goes to Fr. Xavier Michael, the Vice Provincial, for his visionary planning of the entire program, and to all our esteemed jubilarians and confreres who graced the occasion with their presence.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

01.02.2023 – Fr. Marcel Lincoln died at Tiruchy at the age of 60.

13.02.2017 – Fr. Edward Xavier died at Sri Lanka at the age of 68.

CONDOLENCES...

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

- To Fr. Charles Joseph at the demise of his father Mr. Antony Selvaraj (76) on 04 January 2025.
- To Fr. Immanuel Fernandez at the demise of his father Mr. John (63) on 05 January 2025.
- To the Provincial and confreres of INP Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Chrysologus D'Cunha (82) on 06 January 2025.

- To Fr. Don Bosco (INM) at the demise of his father Mr. Lourdusamy (91) on 08 January 2025.
- To the Provincial and confreres of IND Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Kulathunkal Joseph (85) on 09 January 2025.
- To the Provincial and confreres of INC Province at the demise of Rev. Fr. Panackachaly Abraham (90) on 29 January 2025.

May the soul rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

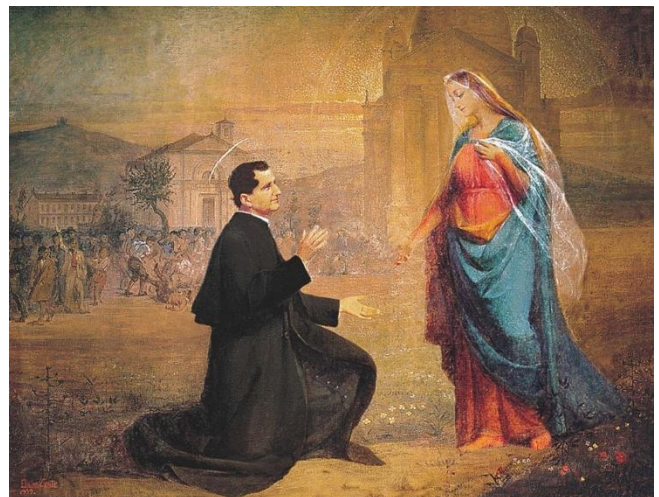
SILVER JUBILEE OF THE PROVINCE OF TIRUCHY – WAY FORWARD

4. Grace of Unity – II

My dear confreres and members of the Salesian Family,

Let me wish you a very happy feast of our father and founder, St. John Bosco. May he inspire us and motivate us to dedicate our lives to the young people entrusted to our care. I remember each and every one of you today in my prayers in a special way, that as we share the Salesian vocation in God's calling, we may be truly happy and fulfilled in our lives.

Continuing with the theme of Grace of unity in our life and works, let me describe the results of this union with God. In one word, we can call it 'Spiritual Regeneration.' People who experience the grace of unity will not only enjoy the joy at the time of experience but will continue to live in happiness from then on. There will be spiritual renewal happening constantly and continuously. It may happen that there will be challenges along the way, but they will be strengthened in faith, and there will be an abundance of faith because they are no longer themselves, but they are full of God and goodness. The old things pass away, and they will become new. (2 Cor 5:17) Maybe they had a bitter past, but now they will be redeemed by the love of God, and there will be newness. Or the grace of unity will extend their horizons to something new and fresh. There will no longer be fresh but only spirit. (Eph 4:22) The spirit will change everything. They will be full of spirit to the extent of not losing the newness and the freshness. Even if challenges continue to happen, they will not lose hope. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. (Gal 2:20) They will walk by the spirit. (Gal 5:16) They will live by the spirit. (Rom 8:13) And they will move from the surface to the depths.



We begin to live the true life, a fuller life, and a greater life. God becomes our greatest attraction in life, and no more wealth or power or influence or ephemeral relationships or charm in this world because we have discovered the “hidden treasure,” the “pearl of great price,” something more complete, more permanent, more real, and more lasting than anything we can ever think of, and what our souls have always longed for. Therefore, striving after holiness must become the most important project of our lives. God is the source of all holiness, and we can become holy only to the extent that we are connected to him, the infinite source of holiness, and this is achieved through union with God. When we are united to God, the love of God is poured into our souls in a powerful manner, and we experience pure, tender, intense, and unconditional love, which expresses itself in service of our neighbour so that everything we do is God in action, even though it may not appear to be so to others. Thus, union with God makes us divine, lifting us from the ordinary to the extraordinary, as Don Bosco gave us the way to holiness.

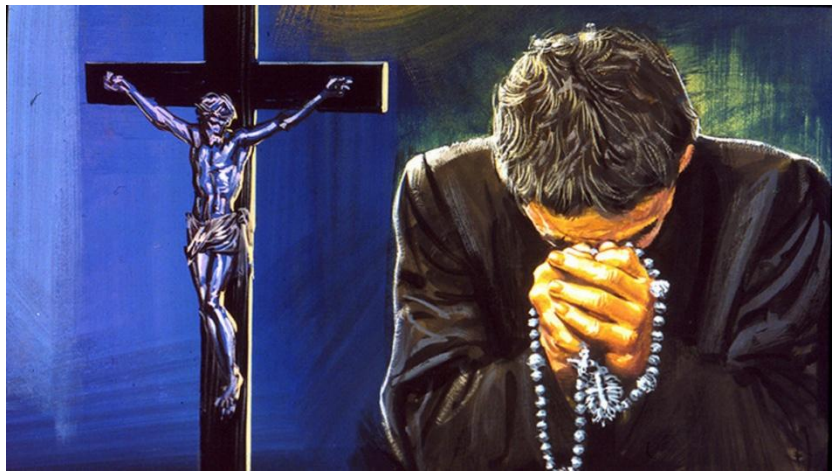
Secondly, Union with God manifests itself in abundant apostolic fruitfulness. Our God is an active God. He is actively involved in the universe and in the lives of his people. God is at work in the world in and through us. The good works of a Christian are not a self-produced or self-generated or self-actuated activity but part of Christian living and union with God flowing into good works. If we are not united to God, whatever we do has less meaning, less value, and less potential to contribute to the building of the Kingdom of God. Conversely, if we are one with God, then he will live and work in us and through us, producing much fruit for his Kingdom. Jesus tells us, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). In this way, our union with God leads to apostolic charity marked by self-sacrifice and disinterested service. Charitable works help us to go out of ourselves and be at the service of our neighbour. If the good works are done in union with God and for his glory, what we do becomes ecstasy of action. Those who are united with God will radiate goodness everywhere, and there will be lots of good works taking place in and around them. Good vibrations will spread all along, and there will be no end to it. This world will become a better place for everyone. Love will be abounding because we are no more humans merely, but we are full of God, and there will be nothing happening without Him.

Don Bosco and Union with God

Don Bosco was one of the saints in whose life constant and continuous union with God (“grace of unity) was deeply manifested. He was even defined as “union with God.”. As a man of prayer, Don Bosco profoundly felt the need for God at all times, especially in his apostolic initiatives and commitments. As a result, though his whole life was characterized by enormous activity, it was made holy by constant and continuous prayer. It has been observed that until Don Bosco was declared a saint, many people saw him primarily as a man of activity and not as a saint. Only very few people knew that all his activities were the outcome of his intimate union with God. The nearer people came to Don Bosco, the more they had a chance to peep into his personal life, and the greater veneration they had for his

person. In Don Bosco, prayer and work formed a unity in his life, and his much-admired prodigious activity was the result of this “grace of unity.”. Hence, it is a mistake to separate the activity of Don Bosco and his prayerful moments. As article 86 of our Constitution tells us, Don Bosco, docile to the Holy Spirit, lived an experience of humble, trusting, and apostolic prayer in which prayer and living were spontaneously united (cf. C.86).

The secret of Don Bosco’s success in life and mission was his constant union with God. Other saints, united to God, would go into ecstasy, a state that takes them out of the world and immerses them into the things of God. But Don Bosco’s ecstasy was an ecstasy of action that consisted of immersing himself in work for the glory of God and the good of his boys. His union with God in prayer did not suffer because of his work: it remained uninterrupted and continuous as it was the outcome of his participation in the divine love. Don Bosco’s enormous activities and continual union with God never ceased till the end of his life. They were intertwined, each with the other, and made him a perfect blend of nature and grace. For him, life was a constant prayer, and prayer was a way of life. We need to



learn from him the art of union with God in the midst of our manifold activities. In article 21 of our Constitution, we read, “The Lord has given us Don Bosco as our Father and Teacher. We study and imitate him, admiring in him a splendid blending of nature and grace. He was deeply human, rich in the qualities of his people, open to the realities of this earth; and he was just as deeply the man of God, filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and living, ‘as seeing Him who is invisible.’” (C.21).

During the process of canonization of Don Bosco, there was a question raised against Don Bosco, “When did Don Bosco pray?” After going through the entire process and analysis, it was Pope Pius XI who said, “When did Don Bosco not pray?” It is true. Don Bosco did not spend hours in the church, but he was united with God all the time. He was deeply absorbed with the thoughts of God as he climbed up the stairs and as he came down. He was talking about the status of the soul whenever he had conversations with young people. He relied on God and the divine providence in all his initiatives and undertakings. He was so busy with activity that he had hardly any time to spend in prayer. In fact, he was exempted by the Pope from reciting the breviary. But there was no time that he was not united with God. That’s the reason we call him a man of God and a man for others. He was fully human and fully divine.

Union with God is Central in Salesian Spirituality

Union with God is central to Salesian spirituality. It is a personal journey towards God through prayer, listening to God, silence, solitude, contemplation, practice of the presence of God, and doing God's will. We may be busy with planning, analysis, and goal setting for our mission, but without the experience of deep union with God, we may run the risk of drawing up plans and goals that are ours and not God's. If Jesus, though exhausted by his mission, felt the need to withdraw to the mountains so as to commune with his Father in prayer, then, surely, we need to do likewise. The credibility of our mission depends to a great extent on our ability to establish an intimate union with God. Only if we have mastered the art of habitual union with God, as Don Bosco did, will we be able to say with the apostle John, "We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life" (1 Jn 1:1).

There are many obstacles to union with God. We live in a culture filled with noise, stress, anxiety, and distractions, which are hindrances to our communion with God. At the same time, our culture tells us that we need to be busy and productive, and so we are convinced



that we have to be always "doing" something, accomplishing some tasks, or else we will be unproductive or wasting time. This emphasis on "doing" rather than "being" makes it hard for us to be relaxed and recollected to pray, to contemplate, to enter into deep silence, and to be united with God. The document of GC 27 reminds us: "By uncritically responding to social needs and demands, we are silent as regards the experience of God and run the risk of no longer understanding our specific mission as

religious in today's world." (GC 27, 2) Without the experience of deep union with God, our spiritual sources will dry up, we will lack energy, we will live a fragmented life, and our mission will become our petty personal projects for our own personal glory.

We are familiar with the biblical passage of Mary and Martha: Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to him speak, while Martha was running around trying to get things done and even complaining to Jesus to tell Mary to help her. But Jesus replied to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and anxious about many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, and it will not be taken from her" (Lk 10:41-42). Jesus tells Martha and us that resting at his feet and being attentive to him is the one thing necessary and that everything else is secondary. In other words, our communion and oneness with God are more essential than getting things done through feverish activity. Salesian

spirituality is a synthesis of interior life and action. We are to cultivate union with God in imitation of Don Bosco and achieve “grace of unity” in order to become contemplatives in action. In our Constitutions, we are told, “He [Salesian] cultivates union with God, aware of the need to pray without ceasing in a simple heart-to-heart colloquy with the living Christ and with the Father whom he feels close at hand. Attentive to the presence of the Spirit and doing everything for God’s love, he becomes like Don Bosco, a contemplative in action” (C.12).

Conclusion

As we are grateful to God for the gift of Don Bosco to us, the Salesian family, I also feel that as Salesians we should imitate Don Bosco in his union with God. I can understand that there are problems and misunderstandings in our lives that occur due to human calculations and considerations. But what is important is that we must be faithful to our call and grow happily as well. In this effort, there is no point in blaming anyone, including superiors. There will always be new ones taking up responsibility. Why should we spoil our lives fighting and gathering negativity around us all the time? Wise people will always make use of opportunities to grow, to accomplish something good for themselves and others. It’s not worth fighting a losing battle in the sense of living in tension always. We should have the maturity to let go and proceed forward with hope. This is what our Pope Francis recommends for all of us as pilgrims of hope. It’s true that we cannot be at peace with one another all the time, but we should be at peace with God and surrender everything to Him. He knows what is best for us, and there will be nothing happening without His will. We may feel that everything is failing and falling apart in our life. Anchored in hope, let us march forward in life.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



**Our Lady of Lourdes,
Pray for Us!**