

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

AUGUST 2025

DEAR CONFRERES, SALESIAN FAMILY AND BELOVED YOUNG PEOPLE

Cordial Greetings...

As we approach the auspicious date of August 15, our hearts are filled with a dual sense of joy and gratitude. This day holds profound significance for us as Salesians, as faithful Catholics, and as proud citizens of India. We are called to celebrate both the Solemnity of the [Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary](#) and the [Independence Day of our beloved Nation](#).

The Solemnity of the Assumption reminds us of God's magnificent grace bestowed upon Mary, body and soul, into heavenly glory. It is a powerful testament to the hope of our own resurrection and eternal life, and a call to emulate Mary's unwavering faith, humility, and complete surrender to God's will. For us, Salesians, Mary is our Help, our Mother, and our Guide. Her "fiat" echoes in our mission, inspiring us to bring Christ to young people and to be instruments of God's love in a world that so desperately needs it.



Simultaneously, we commemorate India's Independence Day, a day that marks the triumph of countless sacrifices and the dawn of a new era for our nation. It is a moment to reflect on the invaluable gift of freedom, to honour the visionaries who shaped our constitution, and to renew our commitment to building a just, equitable, and harmonious society. As Salesians, we are deeply invested in the future of India, especially through our educational and social development initiatives that aim to empower the young and the marginalized.

While these two celebrations are distinct in their nature, their convergence on August 15 offers us a unique opportunity to intertwine our spiritual devotion with our patriotic fervour. We are called to be good Christians and upright citizens. May our Blessed Mother, Mary Help of Christians, intercede for us and for our beloved India. May God bless our efforts to form young people who are good Christians and honest citizens, truly living out the values of the Gospel and the spirit of our Constitution.

Province Foundation Day

Our hearts fill with gratitude as we prepare to commemorate a very special day in the life of our Province, the Foundation Day on [05 August 2025 at Don Bosco Media, Manikandam](#). This day marks the birth of the journey of our province, a journey rooted in faith, fuelled by zeal, and dedicated to the mission of saving souls, especially the young and the poor with the motto: Making the periphery, the center. It is a moment to look back with thanksgiving at the providence that has guided us, the charism that sustains us, and the fidelity with which we strive to live out the dream of Don Bosco. It is a timely reminder of our collective identity and the shared responsibility we bear in continuing the Salesian mission in southern Tamil Nadu and beyond. Let us use this occasion to renew our commitment to the values of our Salesian consecrated life: reason, religion, and loving-kindness, always at the service of the young.

This year, our Foundation Day celebration is made even more joyous as we have the privilege of felicitating our confreres who are celebrating their Silver Jubilee of Priestly Ordination and Religious Profession. Twenty-five years of dedicated service to God, to the Congregation, and to the young. To our dear Jubilarians, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and profound gratitude. Their lives are a testament to perseverance, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to the Salesian vocation. Their fidelity is an inspiration to us all, especially to our younger confreres, reminding us of the enduring beauty and fruitfulness of a life consecrated to God.

Silver Jubilee of Ordination	-	Fr. Felix Arulnathan, Fr. Victor Antonyraj
Silver Jubilee of Profession	-	Fr. Arockia Selvakumar, Fr. Dominic Bernatsha, Fr. Dominic Savio, Fr. Henry Dominic, Fr. Jayaseelan, Fr. John Barnabas, Fr. John Kennedy, Fr. Martin Joseph, Fr. Simonraj, Fr. Stanley Jayakumar

Let this day be an occasion to reinforce our bonds of fraternity, to pray for new vocations, and to recommit ourselves to being faithful and fruitful Salesians, always ready to respond to the call of God and the needs of the young. May Mary Help of Christians, our Mother and Guide, continue to watch over our Province and all our confreres. May the spirit of Don Bosco fill our hearts and guide our steps.

Initial Visit

I have completed the initial visit to all our communities, along with the Economer. I thank all the leaders, sector heads, administrators, and the confreres for preparing all the documents needed for the initial visit with the utmost concern for the welfare of the young people who are entrusted to our care. I wish and pray that all our efforts and planning may

add joy and vigour to the apostolate and reap abundant fruits for all the beneficiaries through the intercession of our Blessed Mother and the guidance of Don Bosco.

Following the initial visit, we will tabulate and prioritize the needs of the individual communities and plan for various proposals to the agencies or work towards CSR funding so that we will be able to meet the requirements in the best way possible within this academic year. The individual communities also will be asked to collaborate with the initiatives of the province so that together we can achieve the targeted results.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

05	Tue	Province Foundation Day @ Manikandam
15	Fri	Independence Day
19	Tue	Provincial Council

Tri Monthly Recollection

Quarterly Assessment of the Temporary Professed

RECALLING EVENTS

Leaders Retreat and Leaders Meet

The annual retreat for the Rectors and Leaders of our communities were organized meaningfully from June 30 to July 05, 2025, at The Retreat, Yercaud. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the Rectors, Leaders, and the other confreres who participated in this enriching spiritual experience. The serene atmosphere and focused reflection provided a valuable opportunity for all to renew their spirit and commitment to our mission for the young. Following the retreat, the Rectors and Leaders gathered for a day of meeting to discuss our shared vision and plan for the year ahead. These sessions were productive and filled with a spirit of responsibility and collaboration, essential for guiding our province forward. On behalf of all the participants, I would like to express a special word of thanks to the rector and confreres of The Retreat, Yercaud community for the warm hospitality, meticulous planning, and generous service. I also extend my thanks to the entire province for your prayers for all the Rectors and Leaders.

Young Salesians Meet

On July 18 and 19, 2025, the young Salesians of our province, who are currently engaged in practical training and college studies, participated in a two-day animation program at The Retreat, Yercaud. The sessions were led by Fr. Arul Maran, the provincial delegate for formation, and Fr. James Sundar, who covered a range of relevant topics. The young Salesians showed commendable enthusiasm and active participation throughout the animation sessions, an outing, and the family circle. Their engagement and vibrant spirit are a testament to their commitment to their vocation. I would like to extend a special note of thanks to the animators for their insightful presentations and dedicated guidance, the young Salesians for their active and energetic participation and the Rector and confreres of The Retreat, Yercaud, for their exceptional hospitality and meticulous arrangements.

SPCSA Assembly and Council

The SPCSA Assembly was held on 08-09 July at Don Bosco Skill Mission, Bangalore. During the inaugural address, Fr. Biju Michael, General Councillor for South Asia, invited the members to envision the post-GC29 six-year plan (2025-2031) for the South Asia Region. Later, the Rector Major, Fr. Fabio Attard, addressed the assembly online. He dwelt on the theme 'Mary arose and went in haste' (Lk 1:39), which is the title of his first letter to the Congregation as Rector Major. He also presented four priorities that the Congregation needs to focus on during the next six years: Following the example of Don Bosco, we strengthen the centrality of Christ in our lives; A charismatically updated pastoral proposal with competence and professionalism: Artificial Intelligence and the educational pastoral challenge; the Salesian Pontifical University. The regional networks in South Asia then presented the reports for the rest of the two days. After the presentations concluded, Fr. Biju Michael animated a 'Conversation in the Spirit' (sharing in groups) on the question: What should be the priorities we focus on as a region during this sessennium?

The SPCSA Council met on 10-11 July. The usual agenda of approving the plans and budgets of the regional networks took place. Finally, the SPCSA Council came out with the priorities that would be included in the Six-Year Plan (2025-2031) for the South Asia Region. They are strengthening the centrality of Jesus Christ in our personal and community life, building fraternal and apostolic communities, giving preferential options for the poorest young people, relooking at our formation processes (particularly ongoing formation), forming and involving our lay partners in the Salesian mission, and effectively engaging in digital media ministry.

I am sure as a province we will take up the above topics and come out with our own 6-year plan in the coming months. I invite all the communities to engage in meaningful discussions regarding these topics and suggest ideas and proposals to the Silver Jubilee Way Forward team under the leadership of Fr. Robert Simon so that the team can collate all the ideas and present the final plan to the provincial council.

Anniversary of the Deceased Salesians

27.08.2007 – [Fr. Rosario Perez](#) died at Madurai at the age of 46.

CONDOLENCES...

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

- To [Cl. Maria Aswin](#) at the demise of his father [Mr. Pilavendran](#) (57) on 02 July 2025.
- To the [INC Provincial](#) and the confreres at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Fabianus Kujur](#) (64) on 05 July 2025.
- To the [INK Provincial](#) and the confreres at the demise of [Rev. Fr. George Pudussery](#) (91) on 07 July 2025.

- To the [INN Provincial](#) and the confreres at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Zephyrinus Baxla](#) (74) on 08 July 2025.
- To [Fr. Christopher Jeyaraj](#) at the demise of his mother [Mrs. Kulandaiammal Simon](#) (93) on 23 July 2025.

May the soul rest in peace!

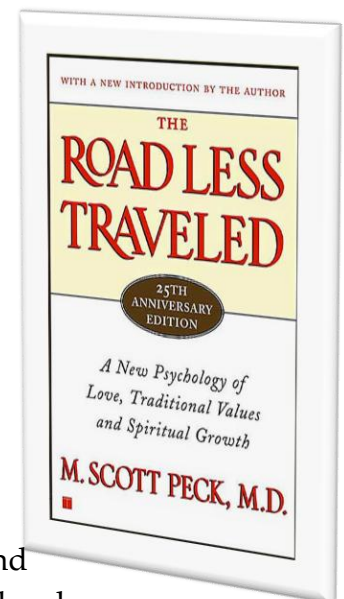
COMMUNITY REFLECTION

SILVER JUBILEE OF THE PROVINCE OF TIRUCHY – WAY FORWARD

6. A Disciplined Life

When I was the assistant in the Novitiate in the year 1993, I read the book “The Road Less Travelled,” and it has left a deep impression on my life since then. I am sure, as I have gone through changes in my attitude and outlooks in my own life, I wish it happens at least to a few who read this with openness and interest.

Morgan Scott Peck (1936–2005) was an American psychiatrist and best-selling author who wrote the book *The Road Less Travelled*, published in 1978. Peck was born on May 22, 1936, in New York City, the son of Zabeth (née Saville) and David Warner Peck, an attorney and judge. His parents were Quakers. Peck was raised a Protestant (his paternal grandmother was from a Jewish family, but Peck's father identified himself as a WASP and not as Jewish). His parents sent him to the prestigious boarding school Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, when he was 13. In his book, *The Road Less Travelled*, he confides the story of his brief stay at Exeter and admits that it was a most miserable time. Finally, at age 15, during the spring holiday of his third year, he came home and refused to return to the school, whereupon his parents sought psychiatric help for him, and he was (much to his amusement in later life) diagnosed with depression and recommended for a month's stay in a psychiatric hospital (unless he chose to return to school). He then transferred to Friends Seminary (a private K–12 school) in late 1952 and graduated in 1954, after which he received a BA from Harvard in 1958 and an MD degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1963.



The book consists of four parts. In the first part, Peck examines the notion of discipline, which he considers essential for emotional, spiritual, and psychological health, and which he describes as "the means of spiritual evolution." The elements of discipline that make for such health include the ability to delay gratification, accepting responsibility for oneself and one's actions, a dedication to truth, and "balancing." "Balancing" refers to the problem of

reconciling multiple, complex, possibly conflicting factors that impact an important decision—on one's own behalf or on behalf of another.

Discipline

‘There is no worse bitterness than to reach the end of your life and realise you have not lived. Once we truly know that life is difficult—once we truly understand and accept it—then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters.’ This is the most famous statement of Scott Peck. I have experienced the same in my life too. Life is a series of problems. There is no use moaning over them, but we must solve them. This is discipline. Solving problems is a painful thing, particularly those arising from uncomfortable situations. And this process arouses pain, fear, anxiety, anguish, and despair. This is the reason we call them problems. Actually, problems are good because they teach us. For example, let us think of children at school. They learn to solve problems of mathematics and fair better every time they solve a problem. It was Benjamin Franklin who said, “Those things that hurt, instruct.” This is the reason why wise people welcome problems. Most of us are wiser. We avoid problems. We ignore them or try to forget them. Sometimes we take drugs to forget the pain, and we never try to solve them. This tendency to avoid problems is the cause of mental illness. Thus, most of us are lacking complete

mental health. But it is important to face problems and solve them. This is discipline. In other words, discipline is a technique of solving problems in life.



We come across many people who avoid problems. I remember travelling with a confrere in Chennai many years back. There were four of us, including the driver, who was an Anbu Illam boy.

As we were navigating through a busy road and trying to stop at a shop, the driver lost control and scratched a costly car owned by a famous person in the city. Immediately, the person came out of that car and started yelling at us. The rector and I were trying to face the problem and dialogue with the person to come to some conclusion. Meanwhile, another Salesian who was with us in the vehicle disappeared from the scene, and we had no clues where he went. Finally, the problem was solved, and we accepted to meet the expense of the damages because we were in the wrong and started to move from the scene towards our destination. Suddenly the missing confrere appeared and joined us and continued the journey as if nothing ever happened. He never asked us what happened and how we solved the problem, even afterwards.

There are others who always talk about the problem. Their mission is only that. They follow the NDA (Not Doing Anything) policy. What is that? You talk about one problem. The second problem appears, and you talk about the second problem, and the first problem

disappears. You don't need to do anything to solve a problem but simply keep talking about the problems, and they disappear one by one, not because they have been solved but because the attention is shifted from one to another, from the former to the latter. Wonderful! Isn't it? How easily people solve problems! But this is not what I mean by discipline. Discipline is not avoiding problems or running away from problems or even acting as though problems don't exist but only in facing the problems and solving them one by one.

1. Delaying Gratification

All of us want to do the easy thing first and the difficult things later. Imagine a student writing an exam. The candidate will respond to the questions known well first and later, if there is time, will try to attend to the difficult ones. This is ok for an exam but not for life. Consider eating a cake. The icing will be very sweet and eating it first will not give you the full taste of the cake because the rest of the cake will not be sweet. Rather, eat the cake first and finally the cream on top so that when you finish eating the cake, you have the experience of the sweetness till the end. Enjoying one hour of work and suffering six hours of pain is certainly not better than one hour of pain and six hours of pleasure. Experience pain first, and this is the decent way to live. You have to tell the children to finish the homework first and watch TV later. This is called delaying gratification. This technique will help us to go through life and enjoy it to the full.



But there are some who do not follow this style. They are the problematic students. They cut classes, do no work, get into drugs, and finally the police are after them. 'Play now and pay later' seems to be their motto. Such people end up in accidents, psychiatric hospitals, or jails. The reason for this is not found scientifically yet. But mostly, the parents are the causes. Usually, punishments are the causes. This kind of discipline is meaningless because it is undisciplined discipline. These parents are undisciplined, and therefore they are such models for their children. 'Do as I say, not as I do.' So, when parents live as they want without discipline, the child thinks that is the way to live.

There are many of us Salesians who also belong to this category. We want life to be easy at first. We do not want to face problems and challenging situations. We are happy when everything is set well for our life and mission. There are not many confreres who want to work hard, take risks, undergo pain, or leap into the dark. It is always for the other. I will be cosy and comfortable, do the minimum, and continue to give ideas for an ideal province and a community. But I will not move my finger to get into the field and contribute my best for the welfare of the other. But am I happy and fulfilled after all this?

After my ordination, I was in two communities in their beginnings. Life was so much fun. I remember well in Savariarpalayam, we had to pump water in the tap outside the gate, make the boys line up, and pour the water into the overhead tank to meet our daily needs. Later, we buried a syntax tank into the ground near the gate to avoid carrying water and climbing on the ladder. Gradually we built a sump to store more water and later dug a bore well to supply water, and the story goes on. There was only one room in our residence, and I was living on the terrace under a roof with coconut leaves. When there was a strong wind, my table and the whole place used to be full of dust, and I had to sweep several times to keep the place neat and tidy. Needless to say about the other facilities. But we were so happy. There was no talk about the province or the provincial or any other matter of usual religious politics at the table, but we were all the time worried about how to uplift the poor people and educate their children. This sharing is not to describe how hard the life was in the beginning with odds, but rather how happy we were even amidst such challenges. But life has changed now. We have a beautiful church, a wonderful community hall, and sufficient rooms in the residence. I am certain the community would do greater things now with more confreres and facilities.

2. Love

When we love something, it is of value to us. When something is of value to us, we spend time with it, enjoying it and taking care of it. E.g., a car or a rose garden or the same with children. Good discipline requires time. Parents take time to do things with children. They listen to them, encourage them, reprimand them, pat them on the back, suffer with them, and so on. "If my parents are willing to suffer with me, then suffering must not be so bad, and I should be willing to suffer with myself," the child says to himself/herself. This is the



beginning of self-discipline. But some unloving parents make promises of love and say how much they love and value their children but do nothing at all. The children can easily know this. On the other hand, when loved, they may feel at times neglected, but unconsciously they know that they are valued. 'I am a valuable person.' This must be gotten in

childhood, which is very difficult in adulthood. Self-discipline is also self-caring. Abandonment by parents is equal to death for children.

Problem-solving takes time. Many think by delaying, the problems go away. Problems do not go away. They must be looked through. Some even ignore problems. But we must stop ignoring problems. We must take them one by one and solve them. Thus, we grow. Confronting problems is difficult. It is like choosing to suffer now in the hope of being happy later, rather than viz. So too with the children, the longer the problems, the more painful and difficult to solve.

3. Accepting Responsibility

We cannot solve life's problems except by solving them. We must accept responsibility before solving it. 'This is not a problem.' 'I hope another will solve it.' This will not work. Neurotics accept too much responsibility, and character disorders do not accept any at all. The former make themselves miserable, and the latter make everyone else miserable. Thus, no problem can be solved until an individual assumes responsibility for solving it. When you blame others, the problems remain. Eldridge Cleaver said, "If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem." The difficulty we have in accepting responsibility for our behaviour lies in the desire to avoid the pain of the consequences of that behaviour. Whenever we seek to avoid responsibility for our behaviour, we give it to somebody else. That is, we give our power to others.

4. Dedication to Truth

Everything is changing. What we perceive in childhood is appropriately transferred in adulthood. The healing of the spirit has not been completed until openness to challenge becomes a way of life. A life of willingness to be personally challenged. For example, 'Don't talk behind me; I am your parent.' 'If you challenge me, you will be dismissed.' Like these tendencies to avoid challenges are omnipresent. A life of total dedication to the truth is a life of total honesty. A continuous and never-ending process of self-monitoring to reassure that our communication invariably reflects as accurately as humanly possible. The truth, or the reality, as we know it.

Why do people lie? To avoid the pain of challenge and its consequence. Lying is an attempt to circumvent legitimate suffering and hence is productive of mental illness. Lying is short-cutting. It is right and proper that we should avail ourselves of any legitimate shortcut to personal growth. The keyword, however, is 'legitimate.' For example, when we read the synopsis of a book, we get the knowledge of the book by saving time and energy. But this is cheating. Because we save more time and energy, but knowledge is not obtained.



There are two types of lies. Black and white. White in itself is not false but leaves out the significant part of the truth. Black is the statement we make that we know is false. What must a person dedicated to the truth follow? 1. Never speak falsehood; 2. The act of withholding truth is always potentially a lie; 3. The decision to withhold truth is not based on personal needs; 4. It should be considered upon the needs of the person from whom the truth is being withheld; 5. The assessment of another's needs should be known only by love; 6. What is assessment?—that of the capacity to utilise the truth for his own spiritual growth; 7. This is only an effort to understand and not to overestimate.

Dear confreres, I have given in gist some techniques of discipline as proposed by Scot Peck, which can be of great use to us and our lives. As I said in the introduction, these techniques have given me great insight into my life in changing my attitudes. I know I need to dwell on the above topics more, giving my personal reflection. But I leave it to the readers to do the reflection. All of us accept the fact that we need to be disciplined in our lives. More so as we are religious priests who are very close to the young. We need to be role models to the young, which means that we should be disciplined first so that the young could be inspired by us. I wish you all a meaningful journey of disciplined life in this academic year. At least let us try to discipline ourselves so that our life may be happy always.

Prayerful best wishes to all in the Family,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



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



Maria Assumpta
Pray for us!