

DEAR CONFRERES, SALESIAN FAMILY AND BELOVED YOUNG PEOPLE

Cordial greetings of peace and joy to you all ...

As we turn the pages of our liturgical calendar, we are drawn to two significant moments that celebrate the life and role of the Blessed Virgin Mary: her nativity and the feast of Our Lady of Velankanni. These feasts, though distinct, are interwoven with a profound spiritual message for us, the Salesian family of the Trichy Province.

The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on September 8th, is a beautiful celebration. It marks the birth of a humble child who would one day become the Mother of God. This is not a day of grand theological pronouncements, but a simple recognition of God's meticulous plan. In the silence of her birth, we see the foreshadowing of her "fiat"—her "yes" to God's will. The birth of Mary reminds us that the greatest works of God often begin in the most unassuming ways, in the ordinary lives of simple people.



This celebration leads us into the heart of another, equally cherished feast: the Feast of Our Lady of Velankanni, celebrated on September 8 itself. Velankanni, often called the "Lourdes of the East," is a place of immense faith and devotion, a sanctuary where people from all walks of life, regardless of their religious affiliation, come to seek solace and healing from "Annai" – our Mother. The basilica stands as a testament to the miraculous intercession of the Blessed Mother, a place where prayers are answered and faith is renewed. The stories associated with Our Lady of Velankanni—the apparitions to a shepherd boy and a lame buttermilk vendor—speak to the special love of Mary for the marginalized and the poor. She chose to appear not to the powerful and the influential, but to the simple and the vulnerable. The example of Our Lady of Velankanni reinforces our mission to be a voice and a presence for those who have been forgotten by society.

As we celebrate these two feasts, let us reflect on the enduring lesson they offer. The nativity of Mary reminds us that we are all part of a divine plan, born for a purpose. The Feast of Velankanni reminds us that our Mother walks with us, especially in our moments of suffering and need. Let us entrust ourselves and our entire province to the loving care of the Blessed Mother. May Annai Velankanni continue to intercede for us, guide our steps, and fill our hearts with the grace to serve our young people with the same love, humility, and trust in God that defined her life.

Provincial Visitation 2025 – 2026

I am pleased to announce that I will be commencing my canonical visitation of the communities beginning in the middle of this month. 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 there. I encourage the leaders of our communities and the heads of various sectors to ensure that all necessary documents are made available. 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.

Quinquennium Meet

I cordially invite all of you who have been ordained in the past five years to attend the upcoming quinquennium meeting at [The Retreat - Yercaud, on 12 and 13 September 2025](#). It is a time of spiritual renewal, fellowship, and shared experience. 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 2026) will be held at [Don Bosco Provincial House on September 20, 2025](#). 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 27, 2025, 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.

Bon Voyage

Cl. Kingston has reached UK on August 22, 2025. Fr. Johnpaul will depart for Belgium on September 10 and Fr. Peter Arockiaraj for UK on September 15. I extend my heartfelt appreciation for them to serve and study in various parts of the world. We wish them every success in fulfilling their assigned duties.

Missionary Formation Course 2025

From our province, Fr. Bernard Moses and Fr. John Kennedy are attending the missionary formation course at Shilling this year from 22 August to 26 September 2025 and they will visit the Holy Land at the end of the course. Br. Arockiadoss too will join them for the Holy land trip. We wish them all the best.

Installation of INB Provincial

The twelfth Provincial elect of the Province of Bombay, Fr. Ashley Miranda SDB will be installed as the Provincial of the Salesian Province of St. Francis Xavier on 08 September 2025, by Fr. Biju Michael, the General Councillor for the South Asia Region at the Shrine of Don Bosco's Madonna, Matunga, Mumbai. Let us wish him all the best and pray that he may be filled with grace and blessing to lead the province with zeal and fidelity of Don Bosco.

Missionary Animation Coordinators

Like the other departments that are functioning in our congregation, the mission department emphasizes besides the Province Delegate for the Missionary Animation, the need to appoint coordinators for the missionary animation at the local level. This will help the communities for regular animation and establish or empower the missionary groups at the local level. Thus for better animation at the local level, hereafter the local youth service coordinators will also be the coordinators for the missionary animation. As we are celebrating the 150th year of the missionary expedition, it is all the more important to strengthen the missionary dimension of our congregation in our province and in our communities. Therefore, I request all of you to cooperate with the Province level missionary animation team towards creating the missionary spirit and missionary vocation.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

12, 13	Fri, Sat	Yercaud: Young Priests Meet @ Yercaud
15	Mon	Provincial Council
20	Sat	Meeting for those due for Perpetuals @ DBPH
27	Sat	Zonal Meeting for Young Salesians @ Thanjavur

RECALLING EVENTS

Province Foundation Day

The Foundation Day of our province was celebrated on 05 August 2025 at Don Bosco Media, Manikandam. We also felicitated our confreres who are celebrating their Silver Jubilee of Priestly Ordination and Religious Profession. The fraternal gathering in the afternoon with all the senior and junior Salesians with games was praiseworthy. I sincerely appreciate each one who participated and organized the day with great enthusiasm. A special word of thanks to the Rector and confreres of Manikandam community for hosting the events with utmost care and concern and the youth ministry delegate for shouldering the responsibility.

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 [INP Provincial](#) and the confreres at the demise of [Rev. Br. Franco Braganca](#) (85) on 02 August 2025.
- To [Fr. Santhanaraj](#) at the demise of his father [Mr. Ubagaram](#) (89) on 11 August 2025.

May the souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

SILVER JUBILEE OF THE PROVINCE OF TIRUCHY – WAY FORWARD

7. The Journey from Fear to Love

‘In the House of the Lord’ is a book that relates the themes of intimacy, fecundity and ecstasy to the movement from ‘the house of fear’ where most of us live most of the time, to the ‘house of love’ which is the home of God. Henri J M Nouwen explores each theme in relation to the fear which thwarts it and the love which fosters it and examines the implications of the themes for Christians today. Let me give you a short summary of the introduction from this book and derive some appropriate lines of action for our lives today.

From the House of Fear to the House of Love

We are fearful people. The more people I come to know and the more I come to know people, the more I am overwhelmed by the negative power of fear. It often seems that fear has invaded every part of our being to such a degree that we no longer know what a life without fear would feel like. There always seems to be something to fear; something within us or around us, something close or far away, something visible or invisible, something in ourselves, in others or in God.

Fear can make us upset and angry. It can drive us into depression or despair. It can surround us with darkness and make us feel close to destruction and death. Fear can become so intolerable that we are willing to do anything to be relieved from it, even killing ourselves.

There is a close connection between power and fear. Fear is one of the most effective weapons in the hands of those who seek to control others.

The agenda of our world is an agenda of fear and power. Look at the many ‘if’ questions. Look also at the many ‘how’ questions. Fearful questions never lead to love-filled answers. Underneath every fearful question many other fearful questions are hidden. Once I have decided that to have a child, I must be able to offer that child a college education, I get caught in many new anxious questions involving my job, the place I live, the friends I make and so on. Once I believe that God is out to get me for my bad behaviour, complicated moral schemes start to occupy my mind. Once I conclude that I cannot be happy without influential friend, I am in for quite an anxiety-provoking social life. Thus, fear engenders fear. Fear never gives birth to Love.

A careful look at the gospels shows that Jesus seldom accepted the questions posed to him. He exposed them as coming from the house of fear. ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of

heaven? How often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever? What authority do you have for acting like this? At the resurrection to which of those seven will she be a wife, since she had been married to them all? Are you the king of the Jews? Lord, has the hour come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel...?' To none of these questions did Jesus give a direct answer. He gently put these aside as questions emerging from false worries. They were raised out of concern for prestige, influence, power and control. They did not belong to the house of God. Therefore, Jesus always transformed the question by his answer. He made the question new and only then did they become worthy of his response.

Though we think of ourselves as followers of Jesus, we are often seduced by the fearful questions the world presents to us. Without fully realizing it we become anxious, nervous, worrying people caught in the questions of survival, our own survival, the survival of our families, friends, and colleagues, the survival of our church, our congregation, our country and the world. Once these fearful survival questions become the guiding questions of our lives, we tend to dismiss words spoken from the house of love as unrealistic, romantic, sentimental, pious or just useless. When love is offered as an alternative to fear we say Yes. 'Yes, that sounds beautiful but...' The 'but' reveals how much we live in the grip of the world, a world which calls Christians naive and raises 'realistic' questions. Yes, but what if you grow old and there is nobody to help you? Yes, but if you lose your job and you have no money to take care of yourself and your family? Yes but what if the?

When we raise these 'realistic' questions we echo a cynical spirit which says, 'words about peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life are wonderful but the real issues cannot be ignored. They require that we do not allow others to play games with us, that we retaliate when we are offended, that we are always ready for war, and never let anyone take away the good life we have so carefully built for ourselves.' But as soon as these so-called 'real issues' begin to dominate our lives, we are back again in the house of fear, even though we keep borrowing words of love and continue to experience vague desires to live in the house of love.

'Perfect love casts out all fear,' says St. John in his first letter. 'Do not be afraid, have no fear' is the voice we need to hear. This voice was heard by Zechariah when Gabriel, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the temple and told him that his wife would bear a son; this voice was heard by Mary when the same angel entered her house in Nazareth and announced that she would conceive, bear a child, and name his Jesus; this voice was also heard by the woman who came to the tomb and saw that the stone was rolled away. 'Do not be afraid, do not be afraid.' The voice uttering these words sounds all through history as the voice of God's messengers, be they angels or saints.

What are our fears? And what do we do about them?

01. It is unfortunate that as Salesians, we are caught by fear at every stage of our lives. During the phase of initial formation, I remember, the candidates do not freely converse

with superiors. These days, there is no genuine sharing even among candidates themselves. What will others think of me? Will they judge me wrongly? How will I face others if they come to know about my limitations and weaknesses? Will I survive in the congregation till the end? What if they come to know my secrets and personal areas of my life? These questions are endless. Somehow, many do not feel comfortable to be what they are. I do not know if the ambience in the formation houses does not promote sincere and genuine sharing among the members. Or there are times when the candidates go through difficulty and pain because of being sincere and hence they begin to behave like the others, putting up a show all the time. Whatever it may be, it's a fact that fear exists at least in most of the candidates during the years of formation.

But my experience was quite different in my younger days. Two of us companions were caught by the assistant and reported to the Rector during my Aspirantate. We did not commit anything wrong. Someone filled with the Holy Spirit had complained to the assistant and so the consequence. Finally, my companion too accepted the mistake, (though he did not commit a mistake) because he was afraid that he would be punished. I did not accept till the end because I did not do anything wrong. So, I was warned by the Rector that I would be sent home if I am caught again for mischief. I said that I could manage my life outside very well even if I was sent home. I do not know from where I got that courage to say those words. I was only spontaneous and true in my expression. To cut the story short, this was not the first time I was warned but many a times later. But I am surviving till today and was never sent home for being genuine and sincere. I guess we should never be under fear in expressing ourselves, particularly the truth. What matters is the way we express our emotions and sentiments.

02. Another aspect of fear is fear of being alone or standing single. There are some confreres who need support all the time. They can never stand on their feet. This is the beginning of groupism and casteism. This is the reason why we want to belong to a group, or a caste. We undermine ourselves, our qualities and capabilities and we are under imagination that if we belong to a group, the group will support us and they will stand for us in times of difficulty and trials. This may be true in a family or in a village where everyone is interdependent on many aspects of life. But we have left everything and have embraced religious and priestly life where we must form many individuals and groups. For this we need to stand strong and sometimes be alone. But it is unfortunate that some confreres fall a prey to some pressurizing groups and castes and at the end lose their life and become disgruntled, discouraged, unhappy priests and religious. Why should we fear anyone at all if we are true to our life and vocation? Why should we lean on some groups and castes? Are these groups in any way build up individuals, communities, the province and the common good? If they do so, then I can understand that they are the good ones, and we can work together. But very often they are not those who work for common good. On the contrary they promote their personal agenda and

vested interests. These are to be avoided and not feared. Let us boldly stand alone and fight against these pressurizing groups and castes.

03. Another common fear that I find among the confreres is fear of good confrontation, which is called carefrontation nowadays. I know there are some rebels who are on the opposite party all the time. They have to oppose everything in their life, disagreeing with all the proposals. If you ask them to suggest something they will never do. Good confrontation is a healthy dialogue initiated to help someone so that we can put an end to a problem, a misunderstanding or some fights that occur in life. What many confreres do is to talk about things to everyone except the one concerned and continue the problem or create more problems. This is only gossiping and grumbling which is destructive. On the other hand, what is constructive is a dialogue that can cultivate forbearance and bring peace. I have tried my best to introduce many assemblies of confreres as recommended by the extra ordinary visitor to solve the misconceptions of caste and divisions among the confreres, but they have been cleverly manipulated by some to pour out their personal vengeance and negative energies, thus publicly exhibiting their evil mindedness. Though I wanted to continue the practice of conducting assembly of confreres which will eventually be understood well, many have advised me to stop, because the intended purpose is defeated. But here is where some good confreres should come forward and confront the rebels either individually or in public and make them understand the reality of the province and collaborate for growth. Let us not fear the rebellion but patiently bring them back to the fold.

My dear confreres, I have just mentioned a few aspects of fear that came to my mind. There are many more aspects to be discovered and discussed. As St. John says, "Perfect love casts all fear," let us overcome evil with good. As I always say, we are not living with angels and saints in our communities but with ordinary human beings who are full of limitations and weaknesses. What is important is that we make efforts to cast out all fear through love. May our patroness, Our lady of Velankanni intercede for us all in this journey of getting rid of all fears.

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!