

SALESIAN PROVINCE of ANNAI VELANKANNI TIRUCHY

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PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

FEBRUARY 2026

MY DEAR CONFRERES,

Greetings and Prayerful Wishes.

We are entering into February 2026. On the very first day we are asked to remember and [pray for the deceased confreres of our congregation](#). Regulation Number 76 asks every priest to offer a mass on the day following the liturgical solemnity of Don Bosco for the deceased confreres. In a special way we remember the deceased confreres of our province on this day; praying for them and asking them to intercede for the needs of our province. They are the extension of INT in heaven.

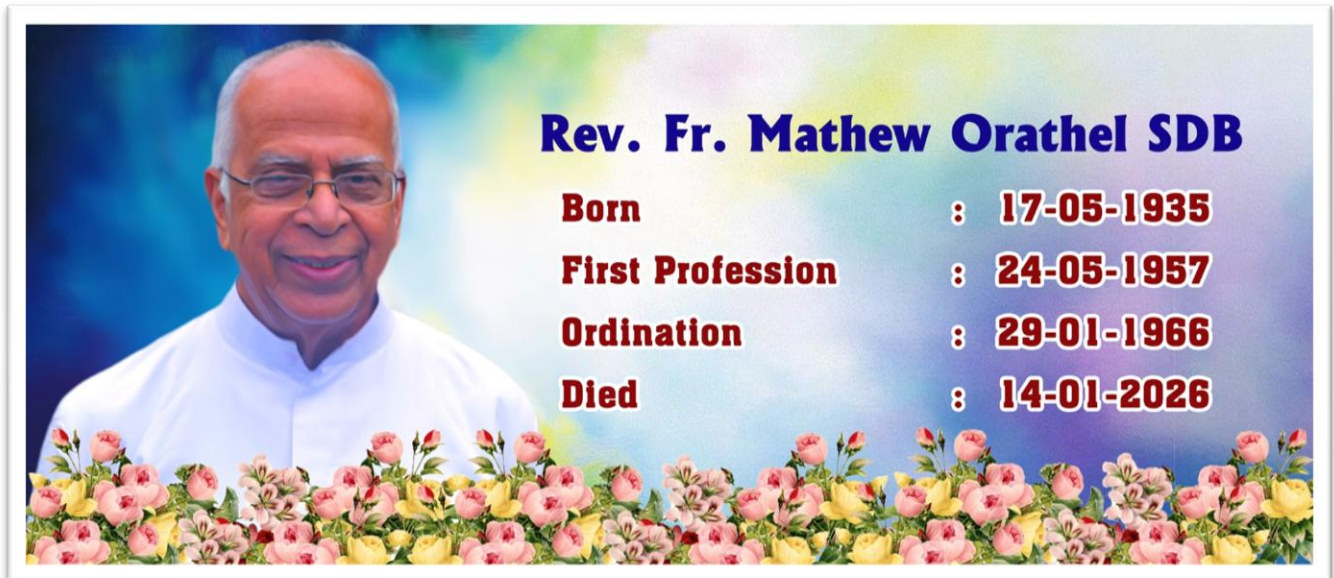
We are beginning the season of Lent in this month on 18th with [Ash Wednesday](#). It is a time of renewal in our lives by returning to the Lord and regaining the Divine Grace. Don't miss the opportunity to animate the laity, Salesian family and young people, during this season, towards conversion of heart, through various well planned spiritual renewal programme in our centers. Reminding you about the Lenten penance that we should practice as community, in order to prepare ourselves for Easter and to share with the poor. (R.73)

We also celebrate the Salesian proto martyrs [Sts. Luigi Versilia and Calistus Caravario](#) on 25 Feb 2026. They were killed in China while defending the lives of young Christians. Propose Salesian holiness to young people in our mission, whenever we celebrate Salesian saints, by making them know the lives of saints and their courage, steadfastness in faith, pastoral charity, spirituality and sacrifice. A meaningful celebration will help us also to embrace holiness courageously. We also remember Blessed Pius IX on 07th and Blessed Eusebia Palomino Yenes on 09th of this month.

Memory of Rev. Fr. Mathew Orathel SDB

Rev. Fr. Mathew Orathel was one of the legends in the history of Salesian India. It was difficult to part-away from the senior most confrere of our province on 14 January 2026. He was very active during the Platinum Jubilee of The Retreat, Yercaud. He was there at the entrance of the house to welcome me and Rev. Fr. Silvio Rogia, sdb, the General Councilor for Formation on 09 January 2026. He was sharing with me his dream of sending many missionaries from our province to different parts of the world. He was actively engaged in conversations with many guests and participated actively in all the programme of the

Jubilee. However, the Lord has His own way of calling His own when He wants. We have no say in His decision. We have to surrender to His will at this moment of departure from this world. May the beloved soul of Fr. O. K. Mathew rest in peace with God.



Fr. Arul Maran, sdb, Rector of The Retreat Yercaud, who lived with Fr. Mathew Orathel for the past four years, shared a few highlights about him:

Fr. O. K. Mathew's passing was gentle and serene, without disturbance to anyone—just as he had often expressed his desire to die. God, in His mercy, granted him that wish. We now feel the emptiness of his absence, yet we cherish the peace of his departure.

Reflecting on his life, we see in Fr. O.K. Mathew **a man of profound spirituality**. He was devoted to prayer, faithful to the Rosary and deeply committed to community moments of prayer. His love for the Blessed Sacrament and his devotion to Mary Help of Christians were the pillars of his spiritual life. Truly, he was a spiritual father to all of us.

He was also **a man of joy**. His smile was constant, his words were always kind, and his presence was uplifting. Never did we see him angry or harsh; instead, he radiated happiness in the chapel, the refectory and every corner of our community, spreading joy wherever he went.

Above all, Fr. O.K. Mathew was a pastor with **a heart for the poor and the needy**. He took care of the poor people wherever he served. For more than thirty years, he served as a Parish Priest in Tamil Nadu, baptizing and guiding countless souls to Christ. He dedicated himself to the education of children, especially girls, nurturing their faith and personal growth.

A great confessor: He served tirelessly in the nearby convents of Yercaud, offering them the sacrament of reconciliation. He was ever ready to hear confessions of the religious. He will even sacrifice his rest in the afternoon to make himself available to hear confessions. Many religious used to come to make their confessions. They were happy with his advice and guidance.

His presence in The Retreat, Post-Novitiate Formation House, was a great help to the brothers. Since 2010, he had been in Yercaud, forming young brothers in philosophy, counselling them and guiding them in their vocations. He was a great example for all of them, staff and students. He was a model religious. He was **a man of prayer**. Prayer was not simply a duty that he strictly kept, but an atmosphere in which he lived. We used to call him the '**Prayer Tower**'. He spent his time praying for all of us, the house, especially the brothers who had passed through The Retreat during his time. He had the group photos of all the batches and used to pray for them that they may all persevere in their vocation. His prayers sustained The Retreat house and protected all of us from all forms of evil and danger.

His **life was marked by simplicity** — simple in his needs, simple in his lifestyle, simple in his approach to others. He did not seek comfort or recognition. Every time he received any money for Mass or hearing confessions, the first thing he did was to hand it over the money to the Rector. He was completely detached. Even when the community wanted to stitch new cassock or buy new clothes for him, he would gently refuse saying that he is happy with what he has.

As a pastor, he walked with his people. He always spoke about his pioneering work in Chengalpattu and Oragadam; baptizing many people. He had **built up several missions** both in Chennai (INM) and Trichy (INT) Provinces. He was a builder, but never boasted about it. He maintained contact with people of the parishes where he worked. Many of his parishners came to see him and get his blessings.

His **passion for Evangelization** was great. He used to strike conversations with visitors who visited the Retreat Viewpoint and if they were Catholics he used to always enquire about their spiritual life. If they were persons belonging to other religion he used to talk about Christ boldly. He was passionate about saving souls.

Life In the Salesian Congregation

From	To	House	Responsibility
1951	1956	Tirupattur	Aspirant
1956	1957	Yercaud	Novice
1957	1959	Yercaud	Student of Philosophy
1959	1960	Don Bosco Oratory, Broadway	Practical Training I
1960	1962	Sagayathottam	Practical Training II & III

1962	1966	Sacred Heart, Shillong	Student of Theology
1966	1970	St. Joseph Parish, Chengalpet	Assistant Parish Priest
1970	1971	Sacred Heart Parish, Oragadam	Parish Priest
1971	1977	Sagayathottom	Rector
1975	1977	Parish of Uriurkuppam	Parish Priest
1977	1980	Peravallur, Chennai	Parish Priest
1980	1987	Francis Xavier Parish, Broadway	Parish Priest
1987	1989	Aynavaram, Chennai	Parish Priest
1989	1996	Polur, Thiruvanamalai	Parish Priest
1996	2006	Madhakottai, Thanjavur	Rector, Parish Priest
2006	2009	Amsam, Tiruchy	Rector, Parish Priest
2009	2010	Manikandam	Administrator
2010	2026	Yercaud	Confessor

Let us continue to pray for the repose of his soul, trusting that one day he will be in heaven to intercede for us.

Forthcoming Leaders Meet and Provincial Community Day

The Leaders Meet, will be held at [The Retreat, Yercaud on 06 February 2026](#), followed by a simple provincial community day on [07 February 2026](#). I say simple because, the new provincial installation day had a large gathering of Salesian Family. Hence, we don't expect a big gathering again for the Provincial Community Day on 07th Feb. We shall celebrate the day with the Leaders of Communities, the young Salesians of The Retreat and a few representatives of Salesian Family from the nearby places. We will be taking up the 'Road-map' that has been proposed by our Rector Major Rev. Fr. Fabio Attard and his council, for the coming 6 years. Later the leaders of communities will take it up for discussion in their respective communities and Salesian Family.

Consultation – Thank You for Your Participation

I sincerely thank you dear confreres, for your involvement and interest in the consultation process in proposing possible candidates for leadership animation in the province. I will take your suggestions seriously for the process of discernment. Continue to assist me, the provincial council and the general council with your prayers for the completion of this process.

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.

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 [Salem zone on 21 February 2026 at Moolakadu, Salem](#). The second is for the [Thoothukudi zone on 01 March 2026 at Sayalkudi](#). 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.

ADMA General Body Meeting

The Association of Mary Help of Christians (ADMA), an association that spans across five Continents, is increasingly growing and expanding. It is a global Catholic lay group founded by Don Bosco in 1869 in Turin, Italy. It is a part of the Salesian Family. The purpose of this association is to promote devotion to Mary Help of Christians and the Eucharist. It strengthens Catholic faith and aids in the educational, apostolic work of the Salesian Congregation. In our province we have been encouraging this group very much. On [22 February 2026](#), we are organizing one day animation for all the Members of the ADMA at DBPH, Tiruchy. Kindly encourage the members to participate in a larger scale.

First Death Anniversary of Bro. George Joseph

Though a year has passed since Bro. George left us from this world to the Salesian Garden in heaven, the void he left remains in the hearts of all the confreres of our province. His inspiration continues to bloom in the lives of the many young people he mentored. We remember his dedicated life, his deep devotion to Mary Help of Christians, and his unwavering loyalty to Don Bosco and the congregation. May he enjoy the beatific vision of God.

The first death anniversary mass for Bro. George Joseph will be held on [28 February 2026 at Mary Help of Christians Shrine, AMSAM](#). There will be a blessing at the cemetery at 11.00am followed by the Holy Eucharist at 11.30am. I invite the confreres from our communities, especially from the houses where he worked, to participate in this memorial mass and pray for the repose of his soul.

PROGRAMME OF THE MONTH

06	Fri	Leaders Meeting @ The Retreat, Yercaud
07	Sat	Provincial Community Day @ The Retreat, Yercaud
15	Sun	30 th Day Mass for Fr. O.K. Mathew sdb @ DBITI, AMSAM
17	Tue	Administrators Meeting @ DBPH, Tiruchy
18	Wed	Ash Wednesday

21	Sat	Zonal Meeting for Young Salesians @ Moolakadu, Salem
22	Sun	ADMA General Body Meeting @ DBPH, Tiruchy
24	Tue	Provincial Council Meeting @ DBPH, Tiruchy
28	Sat	First Death Anniversary Mass for Bro. George Joseph @ AMSAM

Tri Monthly Recollection

Quarterly Assessment of the Temporary Professed

RECALLING EVENTS

Dissemination of Strenna 2026

On Saturday, January 17, 2026, a meeting was organized at the Don Bosco Provincial House, Kallukuzhy, to disseminate the Strenna 2026 to our Salesian community leaders. Fr. Thomas Louis delivered an expert presentation, enriching the session with insightful and practical examples. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to Fr. Thomas Louis for taking time to prepare the animation material and for the impactful manner in which he disseminated the Strenna 2026.

The Retreat, Yercaud – Platinum Jubilee

The Platinum Jubilee of The Retreat, Yercaud, was celebrated on January 10, 2026. The occasion was graced by Rev. Fr. Silvio Roggia, SDB, General Councillor for Formation, who presided over the Holy Eucharist. During his visit, he held an engaging interactive session with the philosophy students, as well as the candidates from our Pre-novitiate, PHS, and Aspirantate. We extend our sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Silvio Roggia for his valuable presence and animation sessions. Furthermore, we thank the Rector and the community of The Retreat for their meticulous planning and dedication in spearheading this celebration.

Clerics Zonal Meeting

A zonal-level meeting was organized for the clerics who are in Tiruchy zone on 24 January 2026 at Don Bosco, Manikandam. The clerics were animated on the topic 'Salesian Service' by Fr. Xavier Michael, the vice provincial. They had a discussion session on Strenna 2026. In the afternoon, they went on a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Lourdes at Poondi.

Sports Academy – Football Tournament

The Don Bosco Ever Rolling Football Tournament 2026 was held on January 11 at Don Bosco ITI, Madurai. It was organized by INT Don Bosco Sports Academy and Ilamai for under-20 youth from the houses of our province. There were totally 7 teams. Don Bosco Thanjavur won first place (Rs. 10,000/- & trophy), Jawaharpuram won the second (Rs. 7,500/-), and Surya Nagar the third (Rs. 5,000/-)—fostering unity, discipline and Salesian joy ahead of Don Bosco's feast. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Fr. K. P. Vincent, Director of INT Sports Academy, Fr. Charles Joseph, Youth Ministry Delegate of INT, and the members of Sports academy for their excellent coordination. Gratitude also to Fr. Robert Simon and the community for their generous support.

INT Youth Fest 2026

Our Province Youth Fest 2026 took place on two joyful days, 25 and 26 January 2026, at Don Bosco College, Keela Eral. It gathered 168 young people (117 boys and 51 girls) and 14 Salesians from 15 of our houses. The fest highlighted 'caring for our environment', honouring 10 years of 'Laudato Si', and taking part in politics as elections draw near. It beautifully blended fun with faith. Fun activities like games, cultural shows, a campfire, and a beach trip to Tuticorin let the youth feel God's joy, share openly and build strong friendships. Meaningful talks, confession, and prayer time helped them grow closer to Jesus and renew their spirits. With a grateful heart, I thank Fr. Charles Joseph, our Province Youth Ministry Delegates and all the zonal coordinators for successfully organizing and coordinating this gathering. We also thank Fr. Rajadevan, the Rector, and the Keela Eral Salesian Community for their generous support.

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.

27.02.2025 – [Bro. George Joseph](#) died at Tiruchy at the age of 87.

CONDOLENCES...

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

- To [Fr. Kuzhandai Easu Franklin](#) at the demise of his father [Mr. Dhivyanadhan](#) (72) on 08 January 2026.
- To [Fr. Arockya Anthoniraju](#) at the demise of his father [Mr. Gurusamy](#) (91) on 09 January 2026.
- To the [Provincial and confreres of INB Province](#) at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Anthony Goyal](#) (59) on 10 January 2026.
- To [Fr. Vimalan Santhiyagu](#) at the demise of his elder brother [Mr. Sekaran](#) (58) on 12 January 2026.
- To [Fr. Francis Camillus Fernando](#) at the demise of his elder brother [Mr. Antony Raphael](#) (82) on 15 January 2026.
- To the [Provincial and confreres of INM Province](#) at the demise of [Rev. Fr. Rajanna Kondaveeti](#) (75) on 23 January 2026.

May their souls rest in peace!

COMMUNITY REFLECTION

In these days I'm making my first visit to our communities after taking my responsibility as provincial. I really wonder at the energy with which most our confreres work for the mission entrusted to them in their respective communities. I thank God for such vibrancy and enthusiasm in reaching out to the poor youngsters.

However, I feel we should improve in one area of our Salesian life, namely **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION**. Today we use a better expression as Spiritual Accompaniment. God is THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR par excellence, who accompanies all of us, all through our life journey, whether we realize or not. He does not force us in anything; because 'freedom' is the greatest gift that He has given to us. He allows us to make our own choices and decisions. Of course, He gives us the Holy Spirit, His helper, to discern what is good and what is evil.

What happens in Spiritual Accompaniment? Spiritual Director helps us to listen to God and get direction from Him. Spiritual director only accompanies; does not direct us. Direction comes from God through the Holy Spirit. Since the evil is very active in the created world, we need the help of God, through a Spiritual Director, who can help us to discern God's direction for us. This process of discernment is not so easy, because the evil spirit is very active in the world, plotting to destroy the good spirit. Hence, all of us, without exception, need the help of a spiritual guide. Our father and founder Don Bosco had spiritual direction all through his life. He never neglected this help. Always felt the need of spiritual direction till his death.

In the context of Spiritual Direction, we have a practice in Salesian tradition, known as **RENDICONTO** or talk with the superior. *Rendiconto* is not spiritual direction, but it can lead a confrere to seek spiritual direction. It is a dialogue between the Superior and the members in a religious community. We are speaking so much about communion in these days. One thing that is very important for communion is communication. Communication is not a one-way procedure, but has two ways – listening and speaking. During personal talk with the superior, both these take place. Superior listens and dialogues. Similarly, a confrere also listens and dialogues.

According to the mind of Don Bosco, this practice should take place at least once a month, without any interruption, all throughout our life. When '*Rendiconto*' takes place in this way regularly, there will be calmness and peace in individuals and communities. Most of the problems will be solved easily.

My advice to the leaders is to ensure this practice by their availability and assurance of confidentiality. Take this part of the constitutions (Writings of Don Bosco – To the Salesian Confreres – The "*Rendiconto*" and its Importance) for Spiritual Reading after evening prayer / for Lectio Divina part by part / for conference. Help the confreres to be regular for this communication. If this communication takes place in a familiar way, regularly, with perfect openness and humility, confreres will find a great relief of soul and a powerful aid to progress in virtue; the whole congregation will greatly profit by it and we will reach greater height in our communion.

Let me give you the same words of St Francis de Sales on this subject: (cf: Constitutions)

“Every month let each one, in a brief and concise manner, open his heart to his superior and in all simplicity and faithful confidence lay before him all his secrets, with the same simplicity and candor that a child has, when it shows its mother the scratches, bruises, wasp stings it may have received. In this way each one shall give an account, not so much of his acquisitions and progress, as of his losses and failings in the exercise of prayer, virtue and the spiritual life, indicating also his temptations and interior troubles not only for his consolation, but for his humiliation too. Happy are those who sincerely and devoutly practice this rule, which contains a portion of that holy infancy, which is so much recommended by our Lord from which proceeds and by which is preserved all true tranquility of mind”.

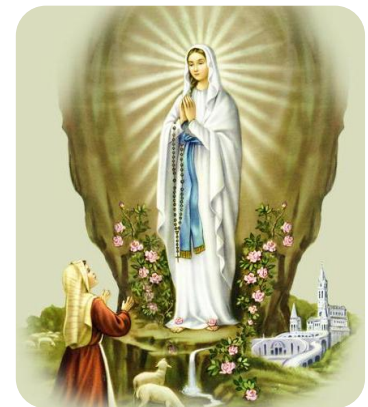
Prayerful best wishes to all of you,

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco



Fr. Doss Kennedy SDB

Provincial – Salesian Province of Tiruchy, INT.



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