



INM-KMJ-CIR 15/05-2018

MAY 2018

My dear confreres,

We have completed five retreats and I thank the Lord for the graces he has showered upon us. I could feel the depth of interiority that many confreres manifested at these retreats. Quite a few told me of the strong desire to sanctify themselves which is actually the calling for each of us. Religious life is actually a call to holiness. This is our primary aim. Let us always keep this aim high in our mind wherever we are called to serve the Lord.

After due consultation and dialogue, the new assignments for the coming year have been accepted by the confreres concerned and I thank them for their readiness to do the Will of God. It may not have been very easy, but I must say that confreres have accepted this in a spirit of obedience. Now that we have accepted and are moving towards our new field of ministry, may I appeal to everyone to go with enthusiasm to accept the other members of the community as my brothers whom God has given to us. **If all of us begin to accept each other and encourage one another then all of us can grow happily.** God has blessed each one with unique gifts that can enrich the entire community and the mission. Mutual acceptance and support can create a happy family atmosphere which our loving father Don Bosco wished. **May I appeal to everyone to imbibe the spirit of Don Bosco and accept each and every confrere with love and trust.** May we build up happy communities. Give of your share and welcome everyone with an understanding heart. All this is possible only when we are open to the will of God!

The month of May is indeed a time that highlights our supernatural vision of life as well as our understanding and acceptance of God's will in our life. Therefore, I thought it opportune to make use of this Circular to offer a brief reflection on the **Will of God and the meaning of our life of obedience.**

## **Doing God's Will – Our Way to Wholeness and Holiness**



### **The Priority of God's Will**

There is only one thing that really matters in the life of a Christian: it is to know and to do the will of God. Because God created us and redeemed us, God doubly owns us. We therefore have an obligation to fulfill His will, to work for the accomplishment of His will here on earth. Like Jesus, our spiritual food (John 4:34) should be to do the will of Him who has called us. We not only have an obligation to God but also to ourselves to discern and fulfill His will in our lives. It is only by giving it top priority in our life can we find the joy and satisfaction of an ultimately meaningful existence on this earth. God loves us and desires what is

best for us and knows what is best for us. Since His will for us is "good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2), it is in our own best interest to affirm His desires even when they are contrary to our own.

One of the most common questions people ask is, "How can I know God's will in my life?" How can I know what God wants me to do? How can we routinely know God's will? Spiritual masters recommend the following three steps to know and do God's will: First of all, start by praying for it. **Pray that you may always do the will of God.** In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We must pray daily not only that His will be done on earth, but in our own lives too.

**Secondly, there must be an intense desire to know God's will.** This is well indicated in David's prayer, "Teach me to do your will" (Ps 143:10). It was because he longed to know and to do God's will that he cried out, 'Teach me to do your will.' So if we want to know God's will for us, then we have to want God's will above everything else, whatever that will might be, whatever it might involve. It will often involve the mortification of our own agenda, our own will, our own desires, our own longings, our own hopes, dreams, plans, and ambitions.

**Thirdly, there must be a willingness to do His will, whatever sacrifice it involves.** When David prayed, 'Teach me to do your will', he was prepared to do the will of God, whether it was easy or hard, pleasing or painful, and whether it was harmonious with what he wanted or otherwise.



### Doing God's Will From The Heart

In Ephesians 6:6, St Paul uses the expression, "Doing the will of God from the heart" – which means doing God's will not reluctantly, not just externally, but from the heart. If one does not have a from-the-heart commitment to the will of God, he will not experience

the joy of doing the will of God. Instead, if one is more concerned with his own will, his own way, his own plans, such a person will really have little or no hope of fulfilling the will of God.

In Psalm 86 David prays: **Teach me your way O Lord, that I may walk in your truth and guide my heart that I may fear your name (Ps 86: 11).** To walk in truth, in this context, means to live each day fully, in uprightness and simplicity. Further, the expression, "guide my heart" assumes that our hearts are confused, vexed and wayward, lacking unity and direction. This psalm therefore implies that we need God to teach us to bring our inner selves into wholeness. Then we will be able to live according to God's truth, according to his will, each day, glorifying him in all we do.

In Ephesians 1:9, we read the phrase, "**He made known to us the mystery of His will ... in Christ.**" How do we understand the mystery of His will in our life? The mystery of His will can only be understood in Christ, by looking at Christ who declared, "I have come to do the will of Him who sent me." So what is God's will for you? The answer would be: that you be saved, Spirit-filled, sanctified, submissive, living righteously, and that you be willing to suffer because you will not compromise the truth. That's God's will for you. It also means, no bitterness, no complaining, no ingratitude, no disappointment. Accept every single thing that comes into your life as that which God has brought for your good and His glory and have a thankful heart.

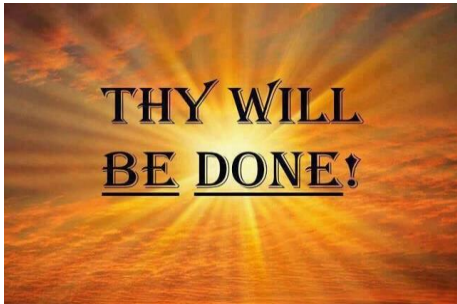
## Learning to Do God's Will



**God will teach us to do His will when we have a teachable attitude.** It speaks of a childlike spirit. It means acknowledging our need to be taught, just like David in the Old Testament. God listened to the ardent cry of the psalmist for grace to know and to do God's will. The truth is that God is always far more willing to guide us than we are

to be guided, for He wants the very best for us, not the second-best. "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer 29:11).

God teaches us His will mainly in three ways: 1) **through His Word**: constant and attentive listening to the Word of God transforms our will and brings it in line with His will; 2) **by the promptings of His Spirit**: Often He speaks to us in a subtle voice, and we may be unable to hear Him when there are too many distractions in our lives. The clamouring voices of selfish desires, lack of submission, pride, and the unforgiving spirit prevent us from being receptive to the quiet voice of God; and 3) **through the circumstances of our life**: He guides us through what we call the circumstances of life. He opens and closes doors. He sometimes blocks our way so that we cannot do the thing that we planned to do. He causes our thoughts to change to be in harmony with His own thoughts.

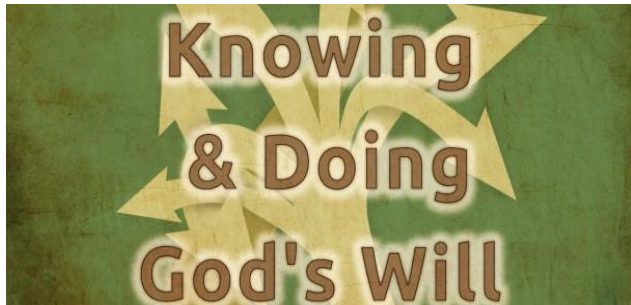


## The Will of God in the Life of St. John Bosco

**Don Bosco attached great importance to God's will.** Obedience, he would say, "is the hinge on which our whole Society turns. Without obedience there would be chaos. If, instead, obedience reigns, we shall form but one body and soul to love and serve the Lord." (BM IX 267-69). In Don Bosco's mind, the Salesian's obedience is directed to the fulfilment of the mission, and is therefore the obedience of

an apostle who finds his fulfilment in the unconditional donation he makes of himself for the service of those to whom the Lord sends him. This testimony of consecration takes on special meaning in religious life because of the community dimension which marks it. The fraternal life is the privileged place in which to discern and accept God's will, and to walk together with one mind and heart. Obedience, enlivened by charity, unites us in the same witness and the same mission, while respecting the diversity of gifts and individual personalities.

**He wanted his sons to "see in the will of the superior the will of God," (BM IX 269);** "let us ever bear in mind that the superior is God's representative, and that in obeying him we obey God himself" (BM IX 270). He wanted his Salesians to be "like a handkerchief" in the hands of the superior (BM IX 269), i.e., he wanted them to be completely available and ready to do anything when necessary. In community life which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, everyone engages in a fruitful dialogue with the others in order to discover the Father's will. At the same time, together we recognize in the one who presides (the Rector/Leader) an expression of the fatherhood of God and the exercise of authority received from God, at the service of discernment and communion, despite the human limitations of those who represent him.



### Three Qualities of Salesian Obedience

1) A *sincere* obedience – without any reservation, generous and unconditional availability, and at the same time the sincerity and depth of the Salesian’s response to God who calls him through the mediation of the superior.

2) A *ready* obedience: it requires no stretch of imagination to see that readily implies not only the material promptness of the response but also the spirit of collaboration full of initiative which is expressed so well by Fr. Caviglia in one of his conferences on the Salesian spirit: “We have a spirit that can be summed up in the Salesian motto: “I’ll do it”.

3) A *cheerful* obedience: the expression with cheerfulness does not necessarily mean that one must obey on every occasion with a broad smile; it is equivalent to “willingly”, and it recalls the quotation from St. Paul used by DB in his introduction to the Constitutions: “Obey promptly, willingly... true obedience consists in doing cheerfully whatever is commanded ... for as St Paul says, “God loves a cheerful giver.”

If we ask ourselves today, what is it that makes us do God’s will, it will help us to see how much God matters to us, and whether or not we truly love God. **The Salesian pledges himself to build up the community in which he lives. He loves it, despite its imperfections. He knows that in the community he can find Christ in each of his confreres (Const. 52).** Scrupulous fulfilment of God’s will is of no value if it is motivated only by fear or force. Respect for God and for his law comes from the heart and not from fear. If we feel obliged to do the will of God without really loving him, our efforts are in vain and our acceptance is false. Obedience, no matter how exact and thorough it may be, is of no value if it is not the fruit of love and acceptance.

**As Salesians, a loving acceptance of all the confreres in our community is a very tangible sign of acceptance of God’s will in our lives.** Through this acceptance, which some people make their rule of life, the happiness promised by Jesus to “those who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11:28) is experienced and proclaimed for the good of all. Moreover, those who accept God’s will have the guarantee of truly taking part in the community mission, of following the Lord and not pursuing their own desires or wishes. In this way we can know that we are guided by the Spirit of the Lord, and sustained, even in the midst of great hardships, by his steadfast hand (cf. Acts 20:22-23).

### Seeking The Will of God Together



In art. 66 of the Constitutions we read: “In listening to the Word of God and celebrating the Eucharist, we express and renew our common dedication to the divine will.” It points out that our method of seeking together the way to fulfil the Father’s plan differs from the logical process in use in human assemblies and has its roots in listening to the Word of God and participation at the Lord’s table.



Listening together in faith to God's Word means that we want to be "informed" by it so as to put ourselves at its service: "For us the Word is ... **light to see God's will**... and strength to live out our vocation faithfully" (C 87). It could be said from this point of view that the community is called to imitate Mary's obedience, prolonging it in its own life and activity. "Be it done unto me according to thy Word."

**But the most dynamic proclamation of our common dedication to the divine will, is the celebration of the Eucharist.** "There the community celebrates the paschal mystery" (C 88): in a spirit of priestly offering it unites itself with Christ's perfect obedience "even to the death on the cross". This is our vital support in reliving our obedience in our daily concrete situations and accepting the daily and sometimes crucifying demands they make on us.

**Our Constitutions tell us very clearly that for us Salesians, to live and work together (in a community) is a fundamental option (C 49).** We accept each and every confrere in our community as God's will because as our Constitutions tells us that it is God who gives us brothers to love (C 50)! Community Life therefore is **A WAY TO SEE CHRIST IN OTHERS, A SOURCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND GUIDANCE, A PLACE TO PRAY AND WORSHIP, A PLACE TO SERVE, NOT TO BE SERVED and A WITNESS TO THE WORLD.**

**"In matters of importance we seek the will of the Lord together in patient brotherly dialogue, with a deep awareness of shared responsibility" (C 66).** This article describes the stages in the communal process of seeking the Father's will together and fulfilling it responsibly. The opening phrase: "in matters of importance" is significant. It presupposes that in the daily life of the community, the members, each at his appointed task, carry out their work competently and with love, in the knowledge that what they are doing corresponds to the Father's will. But when decisions have to be made regarding important matters, the entire community gets involved in the process.

**Jesus puts before us the will of God as the norm for the whole of our lives so that we may love God while we obey him.** This makes our obedience become easy. Jesus also proposes that we love our neighbour as ourselves, so that we may meet ourselves in loving him. This makes our obedience remain easy. Sometimes, because of human limitations, we may find it difficult to accept certain confreres in our community. But it is in such situations that we need to receive each confrere with an open heart (C 52). None of us is perfect. All of us are striving towards perfection, towards holiness. Unacceptance of our own confreres would not be a very benevolent means in our quest for sanctity!

**+**  
**KEEP**  
**CALM**  
**AND**  
**DO**  
**GOD'S WILL**

Ordinarily, seeking God's will together, can be attained through three stages or phases which are closely linked with each other.

The first stage is that of **SEARCHING**. It is an important phase in which the members try to discover together the signs of the will of God who is speaking to the community. The particular instrument for such a search is community **DIALOGUE** in which all the members, moved by a constructive spirit and in a fraternal atmosphere, give frankly and patiently their competent contribution for the benefit of the community and its members. It is important that each one should be really and disinterestedly seeking the will of God, and not seeking to impose his own ideas. In this phase, animation is the specific responsibility of the superior. The Constitutions

say: “he listens to the confreres, encouraging all to make their contribution and promoting a union of wills in faith and charity.”

The second stage is that of **DECISION-MAKING**. This “will normally emerge from a convergence of the views expressed”, says art. 66 of the Constitutions. Note the word “normally” -- in fact, if all the elements of brotherly communion are effectively present (the same spirit, the same concern for the common good, the same pastoral zeal for attaining apostolic efficacy), the normal result will be that any divergence of views present at the beginning will be slowly resolved. In this movement towards unity, as we have said, “the superior has his part to play: he must guide his confreres, prompt an outlook of faith among them, and try to reconcile opposing views, in which case his final word will set a natural seal on the convergence of ideas (cfr. SGC 635). Nevertheless, he will intervene when necessary in virtue of his authority and make decisions for the good of the community and its mission, taking into account as far as possible the opinions of everyone, but without being obliged to follow the majority. In this context *Perfectae Caritatis* says: **“Superiors therefore ought to listen to their subjects willingly and ought to promote cooperation between them for the good of the institute and of the Church, retaining however their own authority to decide and to prescribe what is to be done”** (PC 14).

Finally, the third stage, is that of **EXECUTION**: Here in a special way comes in the concept of shared responsibility in obedience. In the Acts of the SGC we read: “It is at the moment of execution that obedience is translated into action and brings to light the riches of personal initiative and the generosity of sacrifice. The whole community or the individual concerned, will unite freely, responsibly and actively with the Father by deeds, that is by carrying out what has been decided. This should be done always as an act of faith, but especially in cases where the decision does not accord with their own opinion.



## CONCLUSION

**For us Salesians the will of the Father is made manifest through the Gospel, the Constitutions, the Superiors and the Community.** The Gospel and the Constitutions are objectively certain instruments which ensure fidelity to the Congregation’s Spirit and Mission. To set them in a specific historical context and apply them to concrete realities, the Superiors and the Community have a specific

role to play as the “day-by-day interpreters of God’s will.”

**Obedience to God through a man who represents God is a participation in the radical obedience of Christ**, who submitted himself to men in his incarnation and redeeming mission. By guiding us towards holiness, obedience leads us to the most complete realization of our personality and to a true and enduring happiness – in other words, a way to wholeness and holiness. Finally, we should consider everything as coming from the hands of God. Everything we do should be directed to this one end: **to do the will of God and to do it solely for the reason that God wills it.** To walk more securely on this road, we must depend on the guidance of our Superiors in external matters and on our Spiritual Director and Confessor in internal matters, to learn from them God's will in our life. **Let us will always and ever do only what God wills; for so doing, He will keep us close to His heart.**

## **NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE**

### **PROFESSIONS**

This year **16 Novices (INT & INM)** will be making their First Profession in **Don Bosco Idaya Deepam Novitiate, Yellagiri Hills, at 7 a.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.** We are grateful to the Novice Master and the Novitiate Community as well as to all the formators in the Aspirantates and Prenovitiate for the dedicated effort put into forming these young minds. Our sincere thanks and prayerful also to the parents and family members of the First Professed. **Rev. Fr. Antony Joseph SDB, Provincial of INT,** will represent the Rector Major and receive the First Commitment of the following Novices:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Alexander PETER (INM)       | 2. Anil Kumar ANTONYRAJ (INM)                |
| 3. Arul Jayam ABRAHAM (INM)    | 4. Beny Martin AMALRAJ (INT)                 |
| 5. Dinesh JOSEPH (INT)         | 6. Edwinraja MUDIAPPAN (INT)                 |
| 7. Gnana Selvan GIRAGORI (INM) | 8. Hamlin Britto DAVID (INM)                 |
| 9. Jagadish JOSEPH (INM)       | 10. James Yogesh Corera NEWTON (INT)         |
| 11. John Avinash RAPHAEL (INM) | 12. Neethi Manickam CHINNAPPANARUL (INM)     |
| 13. Prasanth MANI (INM)        | 14. Sahaya Flowrence Prasanth THATHEUS (INT) |
| 15. Shaji ALFRED (INT)         | 16. Sinto MARIATHASON (INT)                  |

We also have THREE novices, Christopher Raj, Peter David and Vinod Raj in Sri Lanka who will be submitting their applications for admissions to the First Profession. Let us accompany them with our prayers. The first profession will be in June 2018 at Kotadeniyawa, Sri Lanka. We thank Fr. Emmanuel Vattakunnel the Novice Master and the Salesian Novitiate community for preparing and guiding our Novices during this year of Novitiate.

We are also blest to have 13 young Salesians who will be making their **Perpetual Profession on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 5.30 p.m. in Sacred Heart Church, Polur.** We are grateful to their parents, all the Formators and numerous Salesians and lay people who have inspired and moulded these young Salesians during their formative years. We accompany them with our prayers and hope that they will be strengthened in their Salesian vocation as they continue their formative experience in the coming years.

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Bro. Antonyraj Lourdu         | 2. Bro. Charles Lio                 |
| 3. Bro. Devadass Oswalt          | 4. Bro. Peter Balasingam            |
| 5. Bro. Antonysamy Albert Nelson | 6. Bro. Christopher Arockia Vincent |
| 7. Bro. Francis Amalavanan       | 8. Bro. Gali Jaya Simmon            |
| 9. Bro. Periyamayagam Kolas      | 10. Bro. Pushparaj Michaelraj       |
| 11. Bro. Savarimuthu Anthoniraj  | 12. Bro. Vinoth Thangasamy          |
| 13. Bro. Yesubalan Suresh        |                                     |

## **RENEWALS**

**The Renewals of Vows will take place at 7 a.m. in Don Bosco SIHARAM, Tiruvannamalai, on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.** All those who are renewing will have to reach SIHARAM on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May by 12.30 p.m. There will be a recollection at 5 p.m. in the evening which will end with supper. Kindly be present and spend time in prayerful and reflective moments as you renew your commitment to the Lord in the Salesian Congregation.

## **MEETING FOR PRACTICAL TRAINEES & COLLEGE STUDENTS**

From the **25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2018**, all those who are going for their Practical Training & College Studies (2018-19) will be having a meeting in Citadel. The details will be sent to you later. Kindly make sure you reach on time and enrich your Salesian life and mission.

## **PROVINCE RETREATS**

The last two Retreats of our Province will be held in **MOUNT DON BOSCO, KOTAGIRI** from **May 7-12 and May 17-22**. Kindly ensure that those of you who have not yet made your Annual Retreat, enrol for either of these Retreats so that you don't miss this very important opportunity of our Salesian spiritual renewal.

## **MEETING on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018**

All INM Province Youth Ministry Delegates/ Dimensions Directors/ Department Directors and Directors of Animation Centres will have a meeting at Citadel from **9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018**.

## **INM VOCATION CAMP**

**INM Vocation Camp 2018 is scheduled from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 at Don Bosco, Tirupattur.** Rev. Fr. Don Bosco, Vice Provincial will deliver the inaugural address on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 and the Provincial will preside over the Thanksgiving Eucharist and conclusion of the Camp on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 in the presence of the parents of the candidates. The candidates will depart after lunch on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018. May I request all the confreres to pray that these candidates may discern well their Salesian calling, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I would like to thank in advance Fr. Desam Chinnapparaj, the Vocation Promoter, the community of Don Bosco, Tirupattur, and for all the others assisting in this Vocation Camp.

## **INM SUMMER CAMPS**

**This year we have summer camps being organized in 32 of our communities.** Young Salesians have been assigned in these places to help out in the camps which will witness a lively presence of youth from the neighbourhood coming together as one family and participating in the various activities that have been meticulously planned for the occasion.

## **INM FORMATORS MEETING**

**On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2018, the Formation Staff of the Novitiate and Theologate communities will meet together in Citadel** with the Provincial Council Members to plan and discuss various rudiments on making the formative experience for the young Salesian more personal, more



accountable and more apostolic so as to give a robust foundation for the individual as well as for the future of the Congregation and its Mission.

### **NEW PROVINCIALS**

Congratulations to the new Provincial Fr. Januarius Sangma of Guwahati and Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot of Shillong Province who will be assuming their new responsibility as Provincials on 23 and 24 May 2018 respectively. We assure them of our prayerful wishes as they take up this significant responsibility of leading and guiding their respective Province.

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

V. Rev. Sr. Yvonne Reungoat FMA, Mother General has been elected as the President of the Union of the Major Superiors in Italy (USMI) on 5th April 2018.

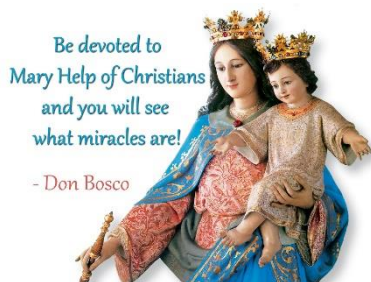
Rev. Sr. Elizabeth George the Provincial of Guwahati is appointed the 12th Provincial of the Province of Immaculate Heart of Mary Shillong (INS).

Ms. D. Priya of Basin Bridge (thanks to Mr. John Angel) who has been selected for the Olympic Camp (Boxing) and Mr. Amalraj who won the Gold Medal (Table Tennis) in the Common Wealth Games.

### **HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES**

Archbishop **Abraham Viruthakulangara** of Nagpur died of a massive heart attack in the early hours of April 19, 2018 in New Delhi.

Rev. Fr. **Naikampambil Jose**, SDB (71) of Delhi Province (INN) died on 01.05.2018 at 8.30 pm. He had a massive heart attack.



### **FEAST OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS**

The month of May is especially dear to all of us as we celebrate these important feasts: May 1 - **St. Joseph, the Worker**, May 6 - **St. Dominic Savio**, May 13 - **St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello**, May 21 - **Mary, Mother of the Church** and May 24 - **Mary Help of Christians**. As we celebrate these significant feasts, we pray to these heavenly intercessors to be at our side as we journey along the path of holiness in the Salesian way. We entrust ourselves specially to our Blessed Mother, Help of Christians, Don Bosco's Madonna, that she assists us to be effective agents of God's love to the young, making our faith convictions deeper, our lives and ministry more credible and our apostolate more fruitful!

Yours Affectionately in Don Bosco,

**Fr. K.M. Jose SDB**  
Provincial

Date: 02.05.2018  
Place: Chennai - 600010