



# DECISIONS

## DECISION-MAKING

My dear confreres,

As we are already in the third month of the new academic year, I thought that it would be good to reflect with this month on the process of 'Decision Making'. Decision-making is an integral part of every organization. This is equally true even for us who live in religious communities. All of us make many decisions every day. And those of us in authority have the responsibility of making decisions that can affect the life and mission of those who live and work around us.

In the concluding paragraphs of his letter to the Congregation found in the recent ACTS No. 427, the Rector Major says that **"we are being called to give priority and centrality, in practice, in our decisions to the Salesian Mission for the poorest and most needy..., for those who because they do not have a voice, need our voice and our options on their behalf"**. Therefore, in this Circular, I would like to reflect with you how we can, as a community, make collaborative decisions which will in the long run bear much fruit, both for ourselves as well as for our mission with and for the young.

### What is Decision-Making?

#### **Decision Making**



A decision can be defined as a course of action purposely chosen from a set of alternatives to achieve organizational or managerial objectives or goals. A decision is an act of selection or choice of one action from several alternatives. Decision making process is a continuous and indispensable component of managing any organization or business activities. Decisions are made to sustain the activities of all business activities and organizational functioning. Decision-making can be defined as the process of selecting a right and effective course of action from two or more alternatives for the purpose of achieving a desired result. Decision-making is the essence of any management.

### Decision-Making in Society Today

I am sure we are quite familiar with these generally four major types of decision-making style that a leader adopts to get the group goals accomplished. They are:

**1. Collective Decision Making:** Under this leadership style, all the group members take the decision collectively, and the responsibility of such decision rests with the entire group.

**2. Democratic or Participative Decision Making:** Here, the leader collects all the ideas and opinions from the group members and then takes the final decision. Once the leader has taken the decision, he communicates the same to his subordinates and tries to resolve the objections if any.

**3. Autocratic Participative Decision Making:** Under this leadership style, the authority of final decision making rests with the leader alone, who makes decisions on the basis of the solutions obtained through the discussions with all or some of the group members.

**4. Consensus Decision Making:** Under this style, the leader consults everyone and seeks the opinion of everyone. All are made to look into the pros and cons of every suggestion and finally the decision is made by the entire group on a consensus basis. Generally, the group members are involved in setting goals, problem-solving, and team building. But the authority of final decision-making rests with the leader himself.

### Decision-Making in the History of the Church

At the Council of Jerusalem in the first century, when a decision was necessary regarding the requirements for admission of Gentiles to the church, the Acts of the Apostles reports that the whole assembly of believers was summoned. Amid "**much debate**," the leaders presented their position and **agreement was reached "with the consent of the whole church."** The early second-century document, the *Didache*, calls on the full community "to elect for yourselves bishops and deacons." This direct selection of leaders would become a staple of church practice for many centuries.

In the third century, Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, followed **the practice of consulting** priests and deacons on all decisions and involving the whole community in selecting new priests and deacons. He said the procedure was a matter of "divine authority" and an essential of tradition "from the beginning." In the fourth century following the Council of Nicea, a great dispute arose, with the majority of bishops holding that Jesus was not God and the majority of laity maintaining he was divine. The dispute was settled after about 60 years, with the laity position becoming the accepted doctrine. John Henry Newman in the 19th century used the phrases "consensus of the faithful" and "sense of the faithful," insisting that the post-Nicene experience indicates the Holy Spirit dwells in the full body of the church, not just in the leaders.

By the fifth century, bishops were making decisions more unilaterally, like monarchs. Still, the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon tried to preserve the older, participative system. It declared that if any bishop should presume to ordain a priest who had not been chosen by a community, the ordination would be both illegal and invalid.

**As centuries passed, decision-making became more centralized in the hierarchy, but the laity still participated in many areas.** A respected historian of the Middle Ages, Brian Tierney, observed, "Christian texts are filled with a sense of community meetings, community sharing, community participation in decisions." This reflects, he said, a strong belief that the consensus of the Christian people indicates the guidance of the Holy Spirit. **Laity attended many ecumenical councils and even participated in some.**

In the 20th century, the Second Vatican Council said a lot about the laity: that "they too share in the priestly, prophetic and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God ... that laypersons, by reason of ... knowledge, competence or outstanding

ability ... [are] permitted to and sometimes even obliged to express opinions on things which concern the good of the Church."

### **Decision-Making in the History of the Salesian Congregation**

In the first chapter of his life of St. John Bosco, F.A. Forbes writes of the making of an apostle, and pays **great tribute to the mother of our Saint**, who "was a notable woman, one of the heroic company of Catholic wives and mothers who carry the great ideals of their faith into the smallest things of life." In his following chapter the author speaks of the moments of doubt and hesitation that occurred in the career of Don Bosco as they do in most vocations to the priesthood. The candidate is struck with a sense of his own unworthiness and passes through a period which the tempter often uses "to suggest that such a high calling is beyond the strength of mortal man, that human nature is weak, and that a good life in the world is safer and more wholesome." Such a period came to John as to others. He feared his own weakness, and had a deep sense of his own unworthiness. **He consulted his confessor**, but he was told: "In the matter of vocation everyone must follow his own inclinations." John was drawn toward the Franciscans and the Dominicans and felt that his eternal salvation would be safer in a religious Order than in the secular priesthood.

When **he consulted his mother**, always his wise advisor, she demurred and said, "The only thing I want of you is the salvation of your soul. Follow God's will." **After praying over the matter** John resolved to enter the Franciscans. At this point **he was advised to consult Don Cafasso**, a saintly young priest who had the gift of guiding souls. His advisor did not hesitate: John should enter the secular priesthood. "Go on studying," he said, "then to the seminary, and there hold yourself in readiness to follow the guidance of God's grace." **John made his final decision in response to this advice of a holy man** who was to have a great part in the career of the young seminarian. Donning his cassock, he at once took up his studies. His biographer says that he was the most popular boy in the college, first in his class, athlete, musician, everybody's friend, always ready to do a good turn to anyone, a potent influence for good.

In 1857, **Don Bosco had a meeting with Interior Minister Ratazzi**, anti-clerical government minister, but admirer of Don Bosco's work. **He suggested to Don Bosco that he should be thinking of founding a society to carry on his work!** This had been in Don Bosco's mind for a while, and after a few false starts, he realised his best chance was to train his older pupils who loved him and would be prepared to work for him. On January 26th 1854, the project for a religious order took its first proper steps. Don Bosco gathered four young men, including Michael Rua and John Cagliero, and bound them by promise to live good lives and practice charity to all. Formal vows might come later. Don Bosco called them "Salesians" after St Francis De Sales whom he admired greatly. Over the next five years, there were regular meetings. Some of the young men donned the clerical habit and took vows.

On December 13th 1859 the Salesian Congregation was finally born. Eighteen young men signed the first official document and act of the Salesian Society. A Superior Chapter was elected and began the function of governing and expanding the new Society.

During this period of expansion, it crossed Don Bosco's mind a number of times that a congregation of women was needed to do the same kind of work with girls. Fr. Dominic Pestarino, pastor of the village of Mornese, had in his parish a pious union of women known as the "Daughters of Mary Immaculate", who wanted to live a more dedicated life and help to care for young girls. In 1862 Fr. Pestarino visited the Oratory and was impressed by Don Bosco. In 1864 Don Bosco came to Mornese and Mary Mazzarello met him for the first time.

Another three years passed before, in 1867, Don Bosco met the Daughters of Mary Immaculate as a group and **shared his vision with them**. In 1871, **after consulting his General Council**, Don Bosco decided to found a congregation of women to work for girls. On August 5th 1872 Mary Mazzarello and her group pronounced their vows as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, with Mary as the Superior.

### **The Biblical Model of Decision Making**

First pray about the decision. Ask God for His will to be accomplished in your life. Ask Him for wisdom to make the right decision. Praise Him for guidance to make the right decision. Ask others to pray with you. Study the Scriptures and as you study claim the promises for direction given in the written Word of God. Listen to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit as He speaks God's will into your heart. Acknowledge supernatural revelation, should God choose to send it. These might include dreams, visions, angels, an audible voice from God, or other special forms of guidance in harmony with God's Word. When you are about to make any important decision and you do not have peace in your spirit, continue to seek the Lord day and night in personal prayer. Do not make a final decision until you have the peace of God confirming your choice. Above all **never be in a hurry**.

*Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

**(Psalms 27:14)**

*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. (Psalms 62:5)*

*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him . . . (Psalms 37:7)*

*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)*

Saul was in a hurry and made a decision which cost him the kingdom (**1 Samuel 13**). Nehemiah waited for direction from God and the right timing, and he became part of the rebuilding of a kingdom.

From 1 Chronicles 12:32, we find two key prerequisites for good decision making: **awareness and decisiveness**. Good decisions require adequate information and careful analysis of all of the pertinent facts. Although there is a place for spontaneity, important decisions generally should not be rushed, since they require sufficient time for gestation. But, once made, such decisions should be decisively communicated and implemented. At the end of the day, we all have to make choices, and once those choices are made, we have to live with them. This was Hamlet's difficulty – determining a course of action – as evidenced through his lines from the famous **"To be or not to be"** speech.

**Decision makers must understand complicated matters**, but they also need God's perspective in deciding how to act. A leader must develop a disciplined and prudent character so that he or she will do what is right and just and fair. The rub comes when the leader doesn't know what is just and right and fair – or when any conceivable decision appears unjust, wrong and unfair. That's why Solomon cautioned that the unsophisticated need prudence. The young need knowledge and discretion. In fact, **everyone needs to foster learning and seek guidance on a daily basis**. The Author Bill Hybels writes: *Human judgment is always limited and sometimes wrong. Sometimes our best notions about what ought to be said or done are ill-advised, dangerous, even destructive. When it comes to the key decisions in our lives, we almost always need deeper insights and a broader perspective than mere human wisdom can offer us.* A helpful spiritual rule of thumb might be **"When in doubt, always, always, always trust the wisdom of God."**

**No decision is wise if it's made independently of God**. In **Joshua 9**, the people of Israel made a terrible decision because they left God out of their plans, and had to live with the consequences of a decision which God did not approve. The Apostle James spoke of this very same issue when he wrote, "You ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (**James 4:15**). You and I are never

free from God. We must make our decisions in submission to His sovereign will. Ronald Reagan is credited with saying, *"America was founded by people who believed that God was their rock of safety. He is ours. I recognize we must be cautious in claiming that God is on our side, but I think it's all right to keep asking if we're on His side."* If we unthinkingly assume that God is always on our side, we will fall headlong into foolishness. We should search ourselves regularly to make sure our thinking is in line with his will. We should strive to develop the character and conviction to make decisions that are products of our relationship with God.

## **NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE**

### **THANK YOU**

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank the St. Francis Xavier's Broadway Community for organizing the Ordination on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2018 and the Refuge Community (together with the FMAs in FX, Broadway) for helping in the meals. The DBYAC Ennore Community was also very generous in arranging the Spiritual Direction Seminar for Rectors/Leaders. Sincere thanks to the Economer & his office staff for successfully organizing the Meeting of INM Administrators & Accountants in Citadel on July 20th. My thanks also to the Regional Youth Directors and the Director of Deepagam, under the guidance of the Youth Ministry Delegate for the meticulous preparation towards the Pre-Synod which was postponed to August 19<sup>th</sup> 2018, due to unavoidable circumstances. The exact details will be intimated to you later.

### **ORDINATIONS**

I congratulate Fr. Ashwanth Amalraj and Fr. Martin Raj Arokiasamy who were ordained on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2018. They will both return to Italy to complete their studies. We accompany them with our prayers.

A reminder also for you to be present for the other two ordinations due this month:

04.08.2018	Deacon Gnana Pragash	Our Lady of Fatima Church, Vridhachalam.
10.08.2018	Deacon Manuel Amalan Thirukudumbam	St. Joseph's Church, Kootapuly

### **GC 2019 Dissemination**

I wish to thank you my dear confreres for your wholehearted response in participating actively at the regional level disseminations. Special thanks to the Moderator and the team of presenters (Frs. Jeffrey Gladstone, Edwin George, John Christy, John Rosario & Kirubakaran) who helped us to reflect well on the GC Theme. Those confreres who were unable to attend can still avail of the opportunity to participate actively in the GC 2019 Dissemination which will be conducted for the students of theology in DBTC Kavrapettai.

I would also like to remind you that the Moderator will dispatch the first PC 2019 document for discussion to your communities by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2018. Kindly plan ahead and allot sufficient time for 100% participation in order to obtain the individual, community and Province level views.

### **Headmasters / Principals Meet**

An urgent meeting of all our INM Headmasters & Principals of all our Schools will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2018 at 10.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m. at Citadel. This meeting is to discuss on urgent issues from the Government and to participate effectively in the National Boscoree and National Educational Seminar. I expect all our School Principals and Headmasters to be present for this very important meeting.

### **INM Mini-Boscoree 2018**

At the Province level, a mini Boscoree will be conducted from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> August at Don Bosco Redhills. In order to upgrade our Unit from Districthood to Statehood, we need to update and consolidate our statistical data of all our Scouts. Therefore, you are requested to send all the relevant data and to speed up your registration both for the INM Mini-Boscoree and for the National Boscoree as well.

## **NECDBES**

This year, INM is organizing the seminar at the National level. Hence all our Headmasters and Principals are exhorted to extend your full cooperation in this regard. We will be availing the services of Salesians who are also involved in these Schools.

## **Youth Day and Youth Focus**

The Youth Commission of the Conference of Catholic Bishops' of India (CCBI – Latin Rite) has decided to celebrate the first Sunday of August (**05.08.2018**) as a day dedicated by the Bishops to the young people especially in India. Father Chetan Machado, CCBI Youth Commission secretary remarked that **“The day is to be marked by youth in their parishes, zones, dioceses or institutions. Youth must gather on the day or any other day as per local convenience and celebrate youthfulness and Christian faith by organizing some community programmes, recreation, outreach, games, competitions, and fetes.”** The nationwide celebration is also on the plan by gathering all young people around in the parishes and institutions and celebrating the Holy Mass (youth Mass), he added. As a special emphasis this year, all our communities are highly exhorted to give priority to ‘Youth Focus’ especially between the ages of 16 and 29. The Province Youth Director and Regional Directors under the guidance of the Youth Ministry Delegate will follow the strategies undertaken by your respective community in this regard.

## **INM PROVINCIAL VISITATIONS 2018-19**

After having visited all the communities in the Province, together with the Vice Provincial & the Economer, for the planning of the SCP, SEPP & Budget, I will now be commencing the 2018-19 INM Annual Visitation of the communities. The Provincial Secretary has already sent you the necessary details. Kindly plan ahead to complete all the statistical forms needed and in a particular way, to give emphasis, this year, on the formation of EPCC in our mission. As already instructed, kindly keep the entire Visitation time table simple and functional, without too many cultural programs or felicitations, allowing instead for adequate time for meeting confreres individually as well as for interaction with all our beneficiaries in all sectors of the Mission. Kindly feel free to contact me directly in case you have need of any further clarification.

## **Welcome Back!**

We congratulate and welcome back to the Province -

Rev. **Fr. Cassius Correya** and Rev. **Fr. Franklin Joseph** have returned after the successful completion of their doctoral studies. Enthused with their knowledge and fervour, Fr. Cassius Correya will offer his valuable service in our DBTC, Kavaraipettai while Fr. Franklin Joseph will serve as the Province Youth Director. We wish them both all success in their ministry with and for the young!

## **Consecration of the Province to the Sacred Heart:**

As you are aware, this year we are celebrating 75 years of the Consecration of the Province to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1943-2018). The solemn consecration took place in Tirupattur in the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1943 by Rev. Fr. Carreno sdb. On the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee Celebration of the Sacred Heart Church, Tirupattur, on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018, we can relive that moment by participating in the Holy Eucharistic Celebration which will be presided over by Archbishop (Emeritus) Most Rev. Dr. A.M. Chinnappa along with Right Rev. Dr. Soundararaju sdb, Bishop of Vellore and Right Rev. Dr. Lawrence Pius, Bishop of Dharmapuri.

### **Programme**

5.00 p.m. Holy Eucharistic Celebration

7.00 p.m. Car Procession

7.45 p.m. Renewal of the Consecration of the Province of Chennai to the Sacred Heart

8.00 p.m. Fellowship Meal

I exhort all of you, especially those in and around Tirupattur Region to be present and solemnize this occasion.

### **Bon Voyage & Fruitful Mission Experiences to our confreres:**

Rev. Fr. Sathiaseelan Kulandaisamy will be leaving for Canada on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2018. We wish him a very meaningful missionary pastoral experience as he offers his service as Co-Pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Edmonton.

Bro. Sathish Paul will be leaving at the end of this month to commence his theological studies in Jerusalem.

Fr. C.M. Varghese and Fr. Jefferson Suresh have already left as Missionaries for Sri Lanka.

Bro. Prakash is in Sri Lanka for his Practical Training.

Three of our Novices (Kiran Solomon, Sathish Kumar & Arun Joseph) are beginning their Novitiate in Sri Lanka while the three who went last year (David Peter, Christopher Raj & Vinod Raj) will continue their philosophical studies in LKC.

Fr. K.V. Sebastian is Parish Priest in St. Joseph's Church, KGF and Fr. Pitchai Muthu is now in St. Antony's Church, Palakkad, both in Bangalore Province. Fr. Augustine Arokiasamy is offering his services as Pastor for the Tamil speaking people in St. Dominic Savio Church, Mumbai Province.

We wish all our missionary confreres working or studying outside our Province a grace-filled experience in their mission places.

### **Visit of Fr. Guillermo Basanes SDB:**

The General Councillor for the Missions, Rev. Fr. Guillermo Basanes SDB, will be visiting our Province on the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 to commemorate the 143<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the First Salesian Missionary Expedition. Details will be sent to you later.

### **Seminar & Book Release:**

The All India Don Bosco Education Society (AIDBES) is organizing a Seminar on the Youth in DBICA on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2018 at 9.30 a.m. The theme of the Seminar based on the book "**Prophets With Wings**" – Accompanying the Young in Today's India. You are all invited. For more details you can email [aidbesindia@gmail.com](mailto:aidbesindia@gmail.com).

### **REST IN PEACE**

We express our sincere condolences to the Provincial and the confreres of Mumbai Province at the sad demise of Rev. **Fr. Jude D'Mello** SDB (51) on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018. May the good Lord grant him eternal rest.

On 23 July, 2018, Sri Lanka lost a veteran Salesian in the demise of **Fr. Emmanuel Janze** SDB at the age of 75. Fr. Janze had also worked in INM. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the Provincial, Fr. Joe Almeida and the confreres of Sri Lanka as we pray for the repose of the soul of the departed confrere.

### **Conclusion**

In union with the whole Church, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, we celebrate the Assumption of Our Lady, body and soul, into the glory of heaven. Mary's Assumption shows us our own destiny as God's adoptive children and members of the body of Christ. Like Mary our Mother, we are called to share fully in the Lord's victory over sin and death, and to reign with him in his eternal Kingdom. This is our vocation.

Pope Pius XII defined and promulgated the Dogma of Assumption of Mary on the occasion of the year of the Great Jubilee (1950) through the Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus* (The Most Bountiful God) in the following words: "**We pronounce, declare and define it to be a divine dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her**

**earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.”** The same doctrine was officially once again confirmed by the Second Vatican Council in its dogmatic constitution, *Lumen Gentium* (The Light of the peoples), No 59.

**Reflecting on decision-making**, as we celebrate our country’s Independence Day, we may think of freedom as the ability to decide the what, when, who, and why of our lives. However, for us, freedom does not equal individual autonomy or individual liberty, or the power to choose. So what does true freedom mean? God freely created human beings. And because we were created in the image and likeness of God, we have a share in God’s freedom. Therefore, **freedom is both a gift and a virtue.** The New Testament writers understood freedom as not being free to do whatever one chooses but to be free from sin and death (see Gal 5:1). **It is the community in which we live and work that provides the environment and support in which we can be free from sin and selfishness. Freedom is the power to choose to do what is good. In other words, freedom is hard work – it requires ongoing conversion, a life of discipleship.** No matter our circumstances, gifts, talents, and skills, each and every one of us can use our freedom in God’s service and participate in God’s ongoing work of creation and redemption, right where we are!

My dear confreres, **a true spirit of freedom is the antidote to the spirit of despair** that seems to grow like a cancer in individuals who are outwardly comfortable, yet often experience inner sadness and emptiness. Upon how many of our young has this despair taken its toll! May they, the young who surround us in these days with their joy and confidence, never be robbed of their hope!

It is gratifying to note that Mary stands as ‘an image of the Church as well as a sign of sure hope and comfort to the people of God in pilgrimage.’ LG 68. **Let us turn to Our Lady and implore the grace to rejoice in the freedom of the children of God**, to use that freedom wisely in the service of our brothers and sisters, and to live and work as signs of the hope which will find its fulfillment in that eternal Kingdom where to reign is to serve. On this auspicious occasion, **let us pledge to love our country, work unitedly for its progress and ensure violence free living.** Like Mary, who was a woman for others, let us practise works of mercy and joyously serve our less fortunate brethren.

I wish you a very happy feast of the Assumption and a Happy Independence Day!

Yours truly in Don Bosco,

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



Date: 01.08.2018  
Place: Chennai 600010

