



INM-KMJ-CIR 20/10-2018

OCTOBER 2018

My dear confreres,

Cordial greetings from the Provincial House!

**Art. 35 of our Constitutions says, “We promote and animate groups and movements for formation and apostolic and social action. In these, the young people grow in the awareness of their own responsibilities and learn to give their irreplaceable contribution to the transformation of the world and to the life of the Church.”** In fact, groups and movements are one of the characterizing elements of the Salesian educational process. They are also one of the best means we have for inculcating in the young the true spirit of Volunteerism, which may simply be defined as **‘coming forward to do something selfless for someone else, with no expectation of anything in return’**. In Don Bosco’s mind, the spirit of Volunteerism was something that naturally flows from one’s view of ‘life as a gift freely received and freely shared as service to all.’ In this circular, I would like to make a reflection on the theme of **Volunteerism**, considering it as one of the mature fruits of the education we impart to the young.



### Volunteerism –

#### An Essential Aspect of Salesian Education

Volunteering, doing something selfless for someone else, is an essential human characteristic. It is, in fact, at the very core of being human. Someone has described volunteers as just **ordinary people with extraordinary hearts**. They don’t necessarily have the time; they just have the heart – the heart to recognize the needs of people around them and the courage to respond to those needs. They offer the gift of their service to teach, to listen, to help, to inspire, to build... They expect no pay, yet the value of their work knows no limit. They instinctively seem to understand the truth of the saying: **What we do for ourselves dies with us; what we do for others and the world remains and becomes immortal.**

#### Need for Volunteerism

**Volunteers come to the limelight in emergency situations like drought, floods, and other natural calamities.** We saw it happen during the Chennai flood in December 2015. It was a time when hundreds of people lost their lives, thousands were left homeless and vulnerable. Death and destruction were all around. Yet, in the midst of it all, something that captured everyone’s attention was the spontaneous explosion of the spirit of volunteerism especially

among the youngsters. Hundreds of our youngsters came out volunteering to help in whatever way they could. An amazing factor was the highly disciplined and self-sacrificing way they went about organizing the relief work. Something similar was seen also during the recent floods in Kerala. Wherever there are calamities, people tend to forget their own problems and come forward to help those in difficulties, without counting the cost.



**The spirit of volunteerism, however, is not only for times of natural disasters and calamities like floods, and earthquakes.** It is to be nurtured and exercised every day. As they say, **“when you learn, teach; when you get, give; when people are in need, help”** – that’s the spirit of volunteerism! Training in volunteerism, in fact, is an essential aspect of holistic education. Don Bosco gave great

importance to it. When a cholera epidemic struck Turin in 1854, he encouraged his boys to go out without fear or hesitation and help the victims, even though people in hundreds were dying of the disease. Promoting the spirit of volunteerism

### **Organized Volunteerism**

**Volunteering is about people – people working with other people to help those in need in some way or other.** Organized voluntarism is becoming increasingly popular in today’s world. To inculcate in young people the spirit of volunteerism, schools and colleges offer various activities which are aimed at developing the spirit of altruism and volunteerism among the students. Among the many voluntary associations for youth in India, the best known perhaps are the Scouts, the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the (Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS). We are familiar with all of them, but a closer look at them can help us to make better use of them to develop the spirit of volunteerism among our young people.

**Scouting:** Scouting is a worldwide movement of young people. With over 40 million members in 223 countries around the world, the **Scouts is the largest youth movement in the world.** It was introduced in India in 1909. Scouting is a voluntary non-political educational movement for young people, open to all without distinction of gender, origin, race or creed. Scouting offers young people the opportunity to develop their full emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens, and as members of their local, national and international communities.

**The National Service Scheme (NSS),** introduced in 1969, is a voluntary association open to students in universities, colleges, technical institutions and senior secondary schools in India. Its primary objective is to develop the personality and character of the students through voluntary community service. In other words, ‘education through service’. The ideological orientation of the NSS is beautifully expressed in its motto, **“NOT ME, BUT YOU’**, inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. The NSS volunteer places the ‘community’ before ‘self’. Today, **the NSS has about 3.86 million students enrolled** across the country, making it one of the **largest non-political and voluntary university students’ organizations in the country and the world.**

**Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), launched in 1972, is the largest voluntary youth organization in India.** It currently has about 8.5 million youth enrolled through more than 300,000 youth clubs spread across the length and breadth of India. The organization's objective is to develop the personality and leadership qualities of the youth and to engage them in nation-building activities. They work on the principle of voluntarism, self-help and participation. The activities they focus on extend to literacy and education, health, sanitation and cleanliness, environmental conservation, rural development, skill development and self-employment, entrepreneurship development, civic education, disaster relief and rehabilitation, etc.

Apart from Scouts and the NCC, there are numerous clubs and associations in our educational institutions. All of them are voluntary; all of them demand the sacrifice of time and energy from the part of the students. All of them are meant to develop in them the spirit of volunteerism, altruism and self-sacrifice. A surprising truth about them is that **participation in these associations gives you back more than you put into them.** Educators and young people alike increasingly agree that Volunteerism is an essential aspect of holistic education and that it complements formal education by teaching skills that are required for life, such as **leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, planning, management, creativity, communication, negotiation and the like.**

### Requirements for Volunteering

While having skills can be beneficial in many situations, it is not a requirement at all for a fulfilling volunteer experience. The most valuable skills you can bring to any volunteer effort are **compassion, an open mind, a willingness to serve or do whatever is needed, and a positive attitude.** Martin Luther King would put it this way: **“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve.** You don't need to have a college degree to serve, you don't need to make your subject and your verb agree in order to serve, you don't need to know the second law of thermodynamics in physics in order to serve. **You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love.”**



### Benefits of Volunteerism

Volunteering is a two-way street: Public causes and people in need benefit much from volunteering. While that is so, one should remember that it can always benefit the volunteer as much as the cause he or she chooses to help. **The more you volunteer, the more benefits you'll**

**experience.** This is also a truth that we learn from the experience of the many foreign volunteers who have served and continue to serve our province. Here are some of the surprising benefits that the volunteer gets out of volunteering.

**1. Volunteering connects you to others and the community.** Volunteering is a way to stay active and engaged with the community. Volunteering to do something for the community or one's neighbourhood allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place. It is also a way for you to give back to the community and help people who need a helping hand. Even helping out with the smallest tasks can make a real difference in the lives of people and organizations.

**Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills.** Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, especially if you are new to an area. Volunteering can strengthen your ties to the community and broaden your support network, exposing you to people with common interests, neighbourhood resources, and fun and fulfilling activities.

Another happy consequence of volunteering is that it brings you into contact with a large number of people whom you would otherwise never have met. Volunteering further enhances the social connections between individuals within a community and builds bridges between different sectors and groups in the community, thus helping to build a more cohesive, safer and stronger community. **Volunteering encourages people to play a more active role in civic engagement and the concerns of citizenship.**

Volunteering helps you to make new friends. One of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships is to commit yourself to a shared activity together. While some people are naturally outgoing, others are shy and have a hard time meeting new people. Volunteering gives such people **the opportunity to practise and develop their social skills.**



**2. Volunteering is good for your mind and body.** Studies show that volunteering and helping others can bring many benefits to one's mental and physical health. **Volunteering can enhance self-esteem, foster a sense of accomplishment and can be an antidote to depression.** It can help you reduce stress and anxiety. The social contact aspect of helping and working with others can have a profound effect on one's overall psychological and emotional well-being. Above all, volunteering gives a person

a sense of purpose—something that is highly valued from the mental health perspective—and helps people achieve self-fulfillment and reach their goals (Psychology Today).

**Volunteering increases self-confidence.** When you are doing good for others it gives a natural sense of accomplishment. Your role as a volunteer can also give you a sense of pride and identity. And the better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life and future goals.

Whatever your age or life situation, volunteering can help take your mind off your own worries, keep you mentally stimulated, and add more zest to your life. Older adults, especially

those who have retired or those who have lost a spouse, can find new meaning and direction in their lives by helping others.

**Volunteering can transform our attitude to life and its problems.** When you see the problems of other people, you become wise and sympathetic. This activity changes your worldview, as well as your material and spiritual values.

**Volunteering helps you also to stay physically healthy.** Studies show that those who participate in voluntary service tend to be healthier than those who do not and enjoy life more. Older volunteers find it easier to cope with everyday tasks, and are less likely to develop high blood pressure, and have better thinking skills. Volunteering can also lessen symptoms of chronic pain and their bodies remain functional for a longer period of time. Even people with disabilities or chronic health conditions can benefit greatly from volunteering.

**3. Volunteering can advance your career.** Volunteering gives you opportunities to meet new people and broaden your network of useful connections. Volunteering helps a person to become a more diverse and innovative personality, and to acquire a range of unique skills, that enhances one's employability – recruiters give high value to a candidate's volunteering experience. **Volunteering can also help you build upon skills you already have and use them to benefit the greater community.** It gives you the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. In a volunteer position you can sharpen these skills and exercise them with greater confidence in your actual workplace.

**4. Volunteering brings a sense of fulfilment and happiness.** Helping others kindles happiness, as many studies have demonstrated. The more people volunteer, the happier they tend to become. **Volunteering evokes a feeling of well-being and satisfaction, leading to happiness.** It helps the volunteer forget about their own problems for a while because they have to concentrate on somebody else's problems. It's relaxes the mind and refreshes the soul.

Doing volunteer work in which one finds meaning can be a relaxing and energizing escape from one's day-to-day routine of work or school. Giving time to another person seems to give the volunteer a feeling of ease, a feeling of doing good, that can help restart their energy clock, increasing their sense of optimism and feeling of productivity and happiness.

**5. Volunteering can give you a spiritual boost.** Working with people in need can be a deeply spiritual experience. So often we come across volunteer stories which show how deeply touched they are by the people they serve. Many speak of the wonderful lessons they have learned and 'spiritual' gifts they have received from the people they served – be they little children, the aged, the poor, those in pain or those terminally ill.

Once, when volunteers were asked to share about their experiences of volunteering, they came up with words and phrases like, '**compassion**', '**sharing**', '**walking beside**', '**connectedness**', '**interdependence**', '**respect and reverence for people**', '**gifting and receiving from**' and the like. These expressions indicate the depth of relationship that the volunteers were able to establish with the people they served, and how they were affected by the encounter with the people. These expressions are also the significant elements of the spirituality of volunteerism.



## Volunteering and the Salesian Mission

We Salesians have a well-organized Lay Volunteer Movement in Europe. **According to the Rector Major the Lay Volunteer Movement is the best expression of Salesian youth ministry, where**

**committed young people are ready to share life in full with the Salesian community and carry out the Salesian mission with them anywhere in the world.** The Rector Major reminds the Salesians of the need to believe in this expression of the common mission and help to foster quality formation and experience before, during and after the volunteer projects.

An openness to charitable and social involvement through the volunteer movement is a mature expression of education to faith and evangelization of the young. At the root of it is what we call the “vocational view of life”, that is, considering life as a gift freely received, to be shared as service to all.

**The Salesians and the volunteers are involved in the same project of life based on Gospel values, serving people in difficulty:** they promote proclamation of the gospel, human rights, solidarity, justice and peace. The values that mission and voluntary service defend and promote are values that are part of the Salesian spirit: disinterested service; community spirit and Oratorian style; interculturality; solidarity and a clear and preferential option for the least, especially the poor and those on the fringes of society, critical and responsible involvement in society in order to build up the Kingdom. It is important that the missionary volunteer has a pedagogical and pastoral attitude in relating to those to whom he or she is sent; a commitment to education which is a characteristic feature of our Salesian charism; a sense of belonging to the Church and joyful work (Cfr. SYM Manual, Frame of Reference).

### Some Practical Considerations

My dear confreres, in recent years, we have been giving special attention to the various aspects of Youth Ministry in our Province. We have achieved much in many aspects of Youth Ministry. **Perhaps, one area we need to strengthen further is that of Volunteerism.** While the spirit of volunteerism is very much present in the Province and our young people have given indications of it on various occasions, I feel we need to promote it further. **We need to create opportunities and promote Volunteerism among our young people,** giving particular attention to the Catholic children to get involved in pastoral and apostolic projects. May Don Bosco guide us and lead us in this venture!

## News From the Province

### Welcome Back to the Province

**Fr. Ernest Rozario** who returned from America on 1<sup>st</sup> October after his doctoral studies in “Media & Production” has taken charge as Director of DBICA. **Fr. Gandhi Kallarasan** returned from Japan on 6<sup>th</sup> October and will be posted in Lourdes Shrine, Perambur, as Asst. Parish Priest. Fr. Gandhi has successfully defended his doctoral thesis: “*Lasing characteristics of GaInAsP double-heterostructure lasers on silicon platform*” and was conferred the academic degree of “**Doctor of Philosophy in Green Science and Engineering**” in the Department of Science and Technology. **Fr. John Wilson** will be returning from Italy on 25<sup>th</sup> October after completing his Licentiate will be the Regional Youth Director of Tirupattur residing in the Novitiate, Yellagiri Hills.

We wish them all the best in their ministry.

### CONGRATULATIONS

**Fr. John Rozario** and **Fr. Cassius Correya** have been awarded the UNIVERSITY MEDAL for having successfully completed with *Summa cum laude* their Doctoral studies in UPS.

### Synod of Bishops 2018 on Youth

As you are already aware, the Synod of Bishops on Youth is already underway from 3-28 October 2018 with theme “**Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**” is of special interest to us Salesians. We shall pray for its success and fruitfulness.

### WELCOME FR. BASANES

The Councillor General for Missions **Rev. Fr. Guillermo Basanes SDB** will be visiting our Province on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2018. He will visit our Don Bosco Missionary Aspirantate in Perambur. We welcome him wholeheartedly and wish him a fruitful stay with us.

### Fifth World Congress of the Association of Salesian Cooperators to be held in Rome

About 300+ World Congress participants (mainly Salesian Cooperators – Provincial Coordinators and Formation Councillors – with their SDB & FMA Delegates) will gather in the retreat house of Sacrofano (near Rome) for 4 full days on October 25-28, 2018. Fr. Edwin George SDB, the Province Delegate of the Salesian Cooperators will represent INM together with a few of the Salesian Cooperators. While we wish him them a meaningful experience, we will accompany them with our prayers.

### The Eighth Salesian Brothers’ Congress of South Asia

The Eighth Salesian Brothers’ Congress of South Asia will be celebrated from 30 December 2018 to 3 January 2019 at Don Bosco Skill Mission and DBRC, Bangalore. The Theme of the Congress is “**Salesian Be a Faithful Witness**” divided into three aspects: a) Be a faithful witness to Jesus and the Sacred Scripture, b) Be faithful to Don Bosco and the Congregation and c) Be faithful to Youth in modern time. Let us wish all the participants a meaningful Congress and pray for the success of this event.

### REST IN PEACE – Our heartfelt condolences:

**Mr. P.D. Paul** (89 years), the brother of Rev. Fr. P.D. Thomas SDB, passed away on the early morning of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Our sincere condolences to the family members and to Fr. P.D. Thomas at this loss.

**Rev. Fr. Brian Kevin Diamond SDB** went to his eternal reward on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The funeral was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018. He belonged to the Province of Delhi.

**Rev. Fr. Thekkekandom Thomas SDB** of Shillong Province passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The Funeral was held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at the Catholic Cemetery, Shillong.

**Rev. Sr. Gracy Mathai Niravathu FMA** of Bangalore Province passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2018.

**Rev. Fr. Varapilly Joseph SDB** of New Delhi Province passed away on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. The Funeral was on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018.



- Sister Lúcia of Fátima -  
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**SISTER LUCIA  
ON THE HOLY ROSARY**

**"MY IMPRESSION  
IS THAT OUR LADY  
WANTED TO GIVE ORDINARY  
PEOPLE, WHO MIGHT  
NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY,  
THIS SIMPLE METHOD  
OF GETTING CLOSER  
TO GOD."**

**CONCLUSION:**

**THE MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY**

**"I learnt to recite the Rosary on the knees of my mother,"** Don Bosco often told his boys. **He was very particular that the Rosary should be recited in all his houses.** Every year he took a group of boys to the chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary at Becchi for the feast in October. On the way they entertained the towns with their band and singing. **"Be devout to Our Lady,"**

was the advice Mamma Margaret gave her son John when he left in 1830 to stay and study at Castelnuovo. On October 25, 1835, after John received the cassock and was preparing to join the Seminary at Chieri, his mother took him aside and said, "When you came into the world, I entrusted you to the Blessed Virgin; when you commenced your studies I recommended you to practise devotion to Her; now I urge you to give yourself wholly to Her. Associate with companions who are devoted to Her and when you are a priest do your utmost to draw people to Her."

As beloved sons of our Father Don Bosco let us imitate his devotion to the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary. I am sure that personally we all try our best to be faithful to this traditional practice of piety, **I exhort all our communities to pray the rosary together every day,** especially during this month of October.

May Our Lady of the Holy Rosary continue to bless and protect each one of us and all our beneficiaries!

Happy Feast of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary!

Affectionately,

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

Date: 07.10.2018

Place: Chennai