



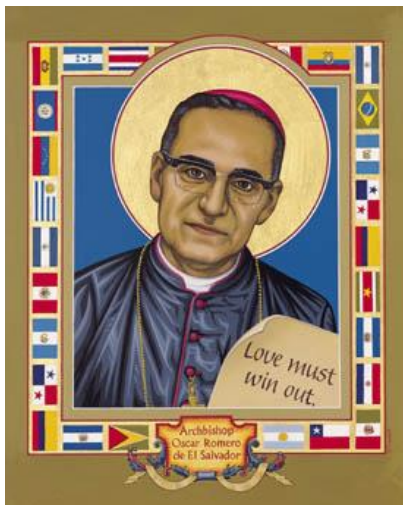
INM-KMJ-CIR 21/11-2018

NOVEMBER 2018

My dear Confreres,

Affectionate greetings from the Provincial House!

The Church celebrates the second **World Day of the Poor** on 18th of this month (33rd Sunday). Pope Francis, in his message for this Day, invites us to make a serious examination of conscience to see if we are truly capable of hearing the cry of the poor. Pope Francis tells us that “each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and come to their aid” (EG 187). The celebration of the World Day of the Poor therefore is an opportune moment for us to take a fresh look at the fourth priority that we have set for ourselves for the present six-year period 2017-2023 – namely, **Emphasis on the mission to the poorest in rural presences**.



A second powerful motivation to examine our commitment to the poorest in rural areas comes from **Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador who was canonized a saint on October 14 by Pope Francis at the Vatican**. This martyr-saint of our times made incarnate in his life the option for the poor. The example of his life strengthens our faith, fills us with hope and makes us proud to be justice-seeking Christian pilgrims. Today Romero stands tall as a truly credible model and witness, in front of the whole world, to the Church’s concern for the poorest of the poor. He identified himself with the poor, he stood in solidarity with them in their struggles, even to the point of laying down his life for them. And he did it all as a pastor, as a shepherd who

does not hesitate to risk his life for the sake of the sheep. Indeed, he has left us an admirable synthesis, a seamless synthesis of living and witnessing to faith and at the same time promoting social justice. His biographers tell us that his lifestyle was simple and austere and that he was a deeply spiritual man with a rich prayer life from which he drew his strength all odds including death.

Romero was by nature a shy, soft-spoken man. At the time of his appointment as a bishop, he was described as a conservative, unsympathetic to the new social justice thrust of the Latin American Church. He was uncomfortable with social action that challenged political leaders. But as he began to visit the homes of the exploited rural poor and as he listened to their stories, slowly the truth about what was happening in the countryside dawned on him – the truth about the blatant violation of human rights, the systematic exploitation of the landless by the wealthy landowners, the disappearance of community leaders who dared to question the ruling class.... In his pastoral visits, if he initially intended to evangelize the people, the fact is that he came away evangelized by them. So much so, from his cathedral pulpit he became the voice of the voiceless. He took on the wealthy landowners for their exploitation

of seasonal workers; he took on the military for their torture, killings and terrorisation of the rural population. He denounced the killings and demanded justice and recompense for the atrocities committed by the army and police and set up legal aid projects and pastoral programmes to support the victims of the violence.

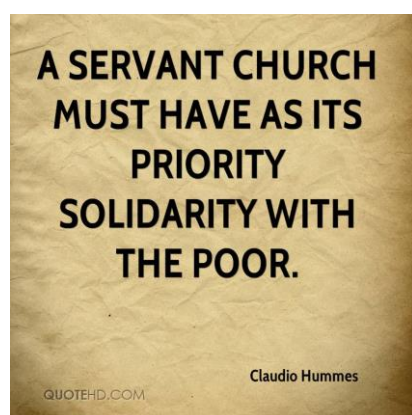
As Pope Francis reminds us in his message on the World Day of the Poor, “the poor will evangelize us and help us to discover the beauty of the Gospel”. Let us not squander this grace-filled opportunity. Pope Francis wants all of us to feel that we are in debt to the poor. His call to the peripheries is fully in line with our Salesian mission to the poorest in the rural presences.

Salesian charism and the call to the periphery

Don Bosco may rightly be called a “saint of the periphery”. He was born in a family that was on the periphery. The dream at the age of nine already indicated to him his future field of work – the periphery occupied by the poor and the abandoned. Soon after his priestly ordination when he walked out into the streets, his eyes were on the peripheries of the city, where conglomerated hordes of homeless, jobless and aimless youngsters.

Indications from our Constitutions

Let us take a look at how our Constitutions define this periphery, this mission to the poorest. Art. 7 tells us that by our pastoral activity we want “to bring about a more just world and one of greater brotherhood in Christ.” Art. 31 says, “our mission is a sharing in that of the Church... which is closely tied in with the development of the temporal order.” Art. 33 states, “Don Bosco saw clearly the social implications of his work. We labour in economically depressed areas and for poor youth ... **we contribute to the development of both people and the environment**... We share in a way appropriate to religious in the witness and commitment of the Church to justice and peace... **we reject** everything that encourages deprivation, injustice, and violence. **We cooperate** with all who are trying to build a society worthier of man’s dignity”. Art. 77 continues: “Every community is sensitive to the conditions of its neighbourhood... **our choice of works and of their location** is made in response to the needs of those in want”. Art. 79 says, “The spirit of poverty leads us to be **one with the poor and to love them in Christ** ... we make every effort to **stay close to them, to alleviate their needs, making our own their lawful aspirations for a more human society**”.



In the manuscript of the Constitutions of 1864, Don Bosco spoke of the “lowest classes” who were in greatest need of help. The mind of Don Bosco concerning the poor can further be understood from his expression: “Our Lord is present in the lowliest and most destitute beggar” (BM XIII, 84). His advice to his sons in his spiritual testament also highlights this point: “The world will always welcome us as long as all our concern is for the underdeveloped people, for poor children, for those members of society most in danger” (BM XVII, 272).

The 19th General Chapter, immediately after Vatican II, reminded us: “Today more than ever before, Don Bosco and the Church send us by preference to the poor, ... to establish practical solidarity with them; only thus can we love them better, serve Christ better in them, and lead them more easily to the Saviour’s riches.”

Our option for the poor & our move to the peripheries

Our Constitutions say, “*the spirit of poverty leads us to be one with the poor*” and “we make every effort to stay close to them” (C79). We need to ask, what does it mean to be one with the poor and to stay close to them? These phrases imply a practical solidarity with the poor, pitching our tent in their midst. It is not only a question of being close to them in thought and feeling, but also of a material closeness through the service we give them. A distinctive feature of this closeness to the poor is that it is from the Salesian’s love of the poor Christ that he acquires his love for the poor in whom Christ lives. That’s what makes our option for the poor radical. A religious who is not deeply committed to Christ will never be able to commit himself to the poor; if he is really committed to Christ, he cannot but be committed to the poor.

The phrase “*alleviate their needs*” in art. 79 is inspired by *Lumen gentium* which says, “The Church encompasses with her love all those who are afflicted by human misery and she recognizes in those who are poor and who suffer, the image of her poor and suffering Founder. She does all in her power to relieve their need and in them she strives to serve Christ” (LG 8). The love of one who has followed the poor Christ makes him quick to see the needs of the poor; it lets him become involved in their difficulties, it makes him weep with them in their suffering, and share more easily in the ups and downs of their lives.

The phrase “*making our own their lawful aspirations for a more human society*” is a question of sharing by feeling and action in the great task of the liberation of the poor. Fr. Luigi Ricceri, 6th successor of Don Bosco, writing in this connection said that participation in the commitment to development “belongs to the essence of the Congregation” (ASC 261 – 1970). The Constitutions highlight this social implication of our work and witness.



Education and Social Commitment

DB wanted all his work to be a process of social reformation through the education of **the young, whom he considered the key for the improvement of the whole of society**. From this stem some practical implications.

1. Our social commitment is **linked to our task as educators**. The education we give is not individualistic; it is not merely for personal promotion of the individual; its purpose is to set in motion a movement for change: “we educate to a sense of moral, professional and social responsibility” (C33). What does it mean? **It means taking sides in a peaceful and courageous struggle for justice, for the creation of a real spirit of brotherhood, to draw attention to those in greatest need, and to raise the level of public morality**. There is a need to look into the general perspective of the education we provide, and to revise the particular section of social formation so much recommended by the Church’s magisterium.
2. The second aspect is connected with our status as religious. **We are called to bear radical witness to justice and peace**. We read in the Acts of the Special General Chapter: “Our educative work for justice in the world becomes credible to the extent that the individual Salesian and the community at all levels are authentic witnesses to justice” (SGC 70). The particular emphasis is to be noted: our witness is a sharing in the mission of the church herself in favour of justice and peace.

To our pastoral educational task and the witness, we have to give is added the action expressed in two verbs in art. C33 of the Constitutions: we “**reject**” everything that

encourages deprivation, injustice and violence and we “**cooperate**” with all who are trying to build a society worthier of man’s dignity. Our mission for young people, and above all for the poorest of them, requires that we translate these two verbs into action in our Salesian way.

We also need to keep in mind that **by working for justice in the world we do not distance ourselves from our religious mission**. From the latter come the spirit and intentions which go into our efforts. It is required therefore that our words and interventions shall have as their living source the love of Christ the Saviour, and as their motivation, the will to come to the aid of Christ himself in those who suffer injustice. Our text speaks of the “spirit of the Gospel”: this is an indication which must make us very demanding in our love for justice and for the poor, and at the same time rules out any attitude not inspired by Christ’s teaching. We keep in mind the words of St Paul: “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1Cor 13:3).

3. A third criterion indicated in the Rule is our independence from party politics and current ideologies. By Canon law clerics and religious “are not to play an active role in political parties or in directing trade unions...” (CIC 287). The indication of art. 33 goes beyond the minimum laid down by the Code and calls on us Salesians to be aware that the values of the Kingdom contain and express in efficacious form the energy and strength required for the building of a society much more than does any political structure, and therefore to be faithful to our profession as witnesses to the love and power of Christ.



Our history of closeness to the poor and our current situation

The sons of Don Bosco have always been socially conscious, following the example of their Father and Founder, who wanted to educate not only good Christians but also honest citizens! The first Salesians who landed in Thanjavur in 1906 were seen on

the streets of that city within a few months, organizing a public demonstration and awareness programme for the education of the oppressed and the lower caste people. Following the footsteps of such pioneers, Salesian social ministry in our province has taken myriad forms in the last hundred years. Without any hesitation we can say that the history of our province has been one of closeness to the poor.

In the initial years, orphanages and boarding houses were important ways of showing our concern for the poorest. Job-oriented technical training, both formal and non-formal, was another way of expressing our desire to help poor young people to find useful employment. Starting from the early 1980s, we have developed in a significant way our mission for the young at risk through our Anbu Illams. Reaching out to the neighbourhood, contacting the youngsters and responding to their needs in various ways was another strategy we have adopted for quite some years now. Many recent foundations have been in the rural and most neglected areas. While all these initiatives are praiseworthy, there is a sense of dissatisfaction and disturbance among many confreres that we have not been doing enough to really reach out to the neediest ones, particularly those in the rural areas. And it is time that we address this issue boldly.

OUR WAY FORWARD

An initial study being made on the situation of our rural presences in preparation of an updated Directory for the Social Commission showed areas of concern. This will be reflected upon together in our communities in the coming month. **The Social Commission presents before us the following points for our personal reflection which have been drawn up also for strengthening and making sustainable the rural ministry.** I now present them here for

1. In her teaching the Church constantly returns to this relationship between charity and justice: "When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice". The Council Fathers strongly recommended that this duty be fulfilled correctly, remembering that "**what is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity**".

2. "For greater effectiveness in our mission, **we need to evaluate our paradigms and perspectives, make meaningful shifts in our mentality and methods and move forward** from merely fostering the upward mobility of individuals to rights-based community development through empowerment of people".

3. We, as Chennai Province, with a new vision and commitment to work for the poorest of the poor recognise **the demand to move from charity-based models to rights-based empowerment models.** Our social work is not a charity work; instead it is to ensure the denied rights of the child or the person with whom we work. We see their rights as entitlement, to be received with dignity. We will ensure and facilitate the same with fraternity.

4. **Our social action involves in creating social awareness to empower people.** It is a process of education and realisation by people themselves about their poor living conditions, political slavery to caste and party politics and understanding the realities behind the current economic development.

5. **Ensure people's participation in decision making processes.** Our social action involves in creating or facilitating people's movements which will enhance their capacities for a sustained political struggle and social justice.

6. **Chennai Province will reform and include systematic pedagogy and curriculum** to form young liberated minds who will eventually move away from an institutional-mode of working and innovate strategies and techniques for a sustainable human and ecological development.

7. **We will reorient our educational system to form the young people as change agents** who will bring about the desired human and social transformation in their living and working environments.

8. **We will create and implement policies to ensure social upliftment of the poorest of the poor,** young at risk, Dalits and tribals in all our institutions and social action.

9. **We commit ourselves to identify such options in all our existing missions and institutions to facilitate a sustainable social transformation.** Our internal institutional responsibilities will be to ensure child protection policy in every house and institution, provide infrastructure for differently abled in our institutions, ensure gender equality within the institution, ensure eco-protection campus, ensure policy for the orphans, ensure human rights-based education and form rights clubs and volunteers. Our external institutional responsibilities will be to adopt a Government school or a village, initiate community-based organisations, provide social awareness programs, create child friendly neighbourhood communities, work with like-

mindful groups and networks and setup knowledge sharing forum/center (evening and night schools).

10. Our non-institutional responsibility is to start and continue evening study centers, form youth groups and animation centers in parishes and villages, creating desk for de-addiction and rehabilitation, desk for Dalit and Tribal empowerment, and desk for Migrant workers.

Let us seriously try to make ourselves more pro-poor not just in thought and word but also in deed! Only then can we consider ourselves “Blessed” and be a source of Blessing for all those who come in contact with us.

News From the Province

PROVINCIAL DELEGATES OF THE INM PC 2019

I am happy to announce to you the names of the 15 Confreres elected by the Province for the Provincial Chapter 2019. They are given below in the order of the votes obtained.



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|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Fr. Bosco Francis | 9. Fr. Joseph Andrews |
| 2. Fr. Ernest Rosario | 10. Fr. Jose Mannath |
| 3. Fr. Peter Praveen | 11. Fr. Maria Antonyraj |
| 4. Fr. Sebastian Francis | 12. Fr. Sitrarasu Kanickaraj |
| 5. Fr. Arul Valan | 13. Fr. Yeddanapalli Irudayaraj |
| 6. Fr. Mani Lazar | 14. Fr. Meril Rodrigo |
| 7. Bro. Joseph Das | 15. Fr. Siluvai Muthu |
| 8. Fr. Vincent Durairaj | |

Since Fr. Jose Mannath is unable to attend the Provincial Chapter hence in his place Fr. David Maria Selvam has been included being the next one on the voting list.

I earnestly invite these 15 Confreres to really and truly respect the trust and confidence the Confreres have placed in them in electing them to the Provincial Chapter. I hope they will carry out their responsibility with great enthusiasm for the good of the Province. Besides the delegates of the Province, the Provincial Council has invited the following members as observers in the Chapter.

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Fr. Mariapragasam Vincent | 4. Fr. Alphonse Arulanandam |
| 2. Fr. Philip Alphonse | 5. Fr. Maria Charles |
| 3. Fr. John Rosario Lourdusamy | |

The Provincial Council has also appointed the following confreres as Secretaries and Scrutineers for the Chapter:

Secretaries:

Fr. Dominic Matthews
Fr. Parthibanraj Soosai
Fr. Gandhi Kallarasan

Scrutineers:

Fr. Franklin Joseph
Fr. John Wilson
Fr. John Christopher
Fr. Anbu Francis

Please take note of the following details about the dynamics of the dissemination for the elected members.

Chennai and Pondy Regions:

Date: 26.11.2018

Time: 09.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m.

Venue: The Citadel, Chennai

Vellore and Tirupattur Regions:

Date: 27.11.2018

Time: 09.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m.

Venue: Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur

I sincerely thank the Moderator Rev. Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy for the continued efforts taken in getting the Province Delegates list ready. My thanks also to all the confreres who spent time and to responded to the electoral process.

ASSIGNMENTS FOR DEACONS

The Provincial Council today admitted the following INM Deacons for the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Given below are also their places of apostolic ministry:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Arulanandam Neethimanickam | Basin Bridge |
| 2. | Grace Charles | Polur |
| 3. | Irudayam Joe Anand | Perambur |
| 4. | Malayappan Arun | Thennangudi |
| 5. | Messiah Immanuel | Vyasarpadi |
| 6. | Victor Sundaram | S.M. Nagar |
| 7. | Xavier Sagayaraj | Maranodai |
| 8. | Xavier Suresh | Veeralur |

We congratulate these young men who have offered themselves generously and who will be ordained priests on **27th December 2018 at Lourdes Shrine, Perambur**. We accompany them with our prayers and blessings.

TRANSFERS

Rev. Fr. Thomas Amalraj has been transferred to Don Bosco, Thalavadi, as Spiritual Director, Confessor and Counsellor. **Fr. Arulappan Jagadeesh** has been appointed as the Youth Center Director at Pavunjur. We wish them God's blessings and loving accompaniment.

WELCOME FR. BASANES

The Councillor General for Missions **Rev. Fr. Guillermo Basanes SDB** will be visiting our Province on the 10th and 11th 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.

COMMUNIO INDIA SUNDAY

During the 29th Plenary Assembly held in Bhopal from 31 January to 8 February 2017, The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India had declared the first Sunday of Advent or a Sunday closest to the feast of St. Francis Xavier as "Communio India Sunday". The primary objective of *Communio India* is to help our Mission Dioceses and Religious Congregations as well as to build a culture of sharing among people to express solidarity with our needy brothers and sisters in our Country. His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias who is the Archbishop of Bombay and President of Conference of Catholic Bishops of India has invited us to send our

contribution to: Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, Communio India. Kindly be generous and do the needful to express our solidarity especially during this month as we commemorate the World Day of the Poor.

SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON YOUNG PEOPLE



The 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops focused on the theme, **‘Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.’** The Synod was held from 3rd to 28th October 2018. At the opening of the Synod, His Holiness Pope Francis said that young people have a great strength to emanate positivity and enthusiasm, capable of filling and gladdening the whole Church and the whole world. Explaining the

purpose of the Synod, he notes that **‘taking care of young people is not an optional task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission.** Just as our Lord Jesus Christ walked alongside the disciples of Emmaus, the Church is also urged to accompany all young people, without exception, towards the joy of love (*Instrumentum Laboris, 1*). **It is inspiring to note the final exhortation of the Pope:** ‘Let us take from this Synod not merely a document – that generally is read by a few and criticized by many – but above all concrete pastoral proposals capable of fulfilling the Synod’s purpose. In other words, to plant dreams in the young, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another, create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts and inspire in young people – all young people, with no one excluded – a vision of the future filled with the joy of the Gospel.’

NATIONAL LEVEL DBYA COUNCIL AND BOARD MEET AT TIRUCHY The DBYA council and board meet will be held from 4 to 8 November 2018 at Tiruchy, on the theme ‘Missionaries to the Young: Discussions in the light of the Synod and 15th General Chapter.’ From all the Provinces of the South Asia Region, the Youth Ministry Delegate along with the core team members will participate in this meeting which is approved by the SPCSA. Our Vice Provincial together with the Youth Coordinators will be participating in this Meeting. We wish them a fruitful experience.

ADHYAYAN TEAM VISIT

As part of the Don Bosco Self Review and Evaluation (DBSSRE) Programme of all Don Bosco Schools in India undertaken by All India Don Bosco Education Society (AIDBES), we now have the Collaborative Review of Don Bosco Schools in our Province by Adhyayan team. The Vice Provincial will inform you of the details. Kindly collaborate and ensure that the visit is successful.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

Fr. Thomas Mariaraj has successfully completed Leader Trainer Course held at National Training Centre, Pachmarhi (M.P) which is the Highest Course for a Scout Trainer. Leader Trainer is the pride of the Scouting Movement. He is the First Salesian to complete this course from our Province!

REST IN PEACE

Mr. Varky (85) younger brother of Fr. Vikrant passed away on October 9th, 2018. Our prayerful condolences to Fr. Vikrant.

Mr. P. Thomas (86), father of Fr. Edwin Vasanthan passed away on October 24th, 2018. Our heartfelt condolences and prayerful sympathies to the family members and to Fr. Edwin Vasanthan.

Conclusion: ALL SOULS DAY

Tomorrow the Church remembers all its holy souls! The theological basis for the feast is the doctrine that the souls which, on departing from the body, are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins, or have not fully atoned for past transgressions, are debarred from the Beatific Vision, and that the faithful on earth can help them by prayers, alms deeds and especially by the sacrifice of the Mass. **In keeping with the Salesian tradition, let us remember all our deceased parents of Salesians on 25th November 2018.** Together with this Circular you will find the newly-printed **INM RIP List**. While we pray for all our near and dear ones, let us also remember to pray for all our dear departed Salesians, especially all those who worked in our Province. May they enjoy eternal bliss and happiness!

Yours truly in Don Bosco,

Fr. K.M. Jose SDB

01.11.2018

Citadel – 600010.

