

INM-KMJ-CIR 33/13-2019 **DYING YOU DESTROYED OUR DEATH** **NOVEMBER 2019**

Dear Confreres,

Today 2nd November 2019, is ALL SOULS DAY and during this month we remember all the deceased in our circle of knowledge and love praying also for many unknown people for whom there is no one to pray for. This November is very painful to us as we are still recovering from the death of our beloved Fr. Martin Savariappan. I firmly believe that the Lord Jesus is with us to grieve over this loss, heal from the hurts we have all experienced in some way or the other and the way to move forward in life. Let us earnestly pray to Our Blessed Mother who withstood the pain at the loss of her Son at the age of thirty-three.

The death of Fr. Martin raised up life-and-death questions, an urge to examine human relationships and religious motivations. We are perplexed but not in despair. I believe that we were caught in a kind of cloud of not knowing what to think or say. Our hope finds expression in this prayer: *“On each of our dyings, shed your light and your love.”*

From the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, He revealed God’s compassion for human suffering. Just the sight of the grieving widow at Naim was enough to call forth a life-giving response. Jesus took the dead man by the hand and *“gave him back to his mother”* (Lk 7:11-17). No one had asked Jesus to do anything. It was as though the mother’s suffering compelled him to act.



UNDERSTANDING DEATH

Most people have an instinctive fear of death, but many also have a conviction that something lies beyond, that death does not have the last word. **The Catholic Faith is rooted in the belief that God made us to enjoy eternal life with him.** Hence, there is a natural longing in the human heart for peace, friendship, love and happiness – for a life that is purposeful and worthwhile. And there is an even deeper longing, sometimes quiet or hidden. This longing is to discover the ultimate meaning of life, to know the love of God, and to share in a destiny beyond the horizon of death. As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote: *“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”*

The Christian understanding of death is inseparable from the Christian understanding of life. It’s worth summarising some of these key Christian beliefs:

The Reality of Death

In God's plan, human beings were created for holiness and eternal life with him. But through the original sin of our first parents, our nature has been wounded, and we experience suffering and death. This was not part of God's original plan, but it is part of the reality of our lives now. On the one hand, in purely natural terms, death is a frightening mystery. We are stripped of all our attachments to this world; our body lies corrupt; and our immortal soul goes to meet the Lord. We will see the whole truth of our lives, and we will face God's judgment.



The Hope of Eternal Life

On the other hand, Christians who have faith can approach death with peace and trust. There is a longing to be 'at home' with the Lord. They have the hope of eternal life and the knowledge that Christ has already conquered death by dying on the Cross. And rising from the dead and opening the gates of heaven for those who believe in him.

The Gift of Salvation

Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No-one can come to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6). When we die, those who believe in Christ, those who freely choose to accept the mercy and salvation he offers, will enter heaven. However, some of these ("the Faithful Departed") will first need to pass through the purification of Purgatory, helped by the prayers of the Church. People in Purgatory are already with God, yet they need our prayers to help them to be purified of all the effects of sin and ready to see God face-to-face.

Choosing Salvation

Those who reject Christ, who freely choose to turn away from the mercy and salvation he offers, will be condemned by their own actions and choices. They have irrevocably turned away from the possibility of life with God. This is the tragedy of hell. But this does not mean that those who have not known Christ in this life are simply excluded from the Salvation he brings. The Bible says that God "desires all people to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ or his Church, have the hope of attaining salvation, if they sincerely seek God and strive to do His will as far as they know it. This Salvation will still be through the redeeming love of Jesus Christ, but in ways perhaps unknown to us.

Sharing in the Resurrection

At the end of time, when Christ comes again, our bodies will share in the Resurrection. God will reveal the hidden purposes of his creation, and reconcile all things in Christ. **Those justified by Christ will live in the presence of God for all eternity.** The hope of heaven gives us joy even in the sufferings of this life, and gives us reason to keep close to Christ through lives of faith and love. The final goal of our lives is to see God face to face in heaven, to be wrapped up in his joy and love and happiness forever in the company of all the angels and saints. The angels and saints in heaven are involved in God's work. We ask them to pray for us and help us, because **death is not a barrier but a bridge for those who love one another in Christ.** And we in turn pray for the holy souls in Purgatory. It is such a consolation to know that we are spiritually united, even now, with those who have died, and that we have the hope of seeing them again in heaven when we die ourselves.

DON BOSCO AND DEATH

St. John Bosco often reminded his boys about the eventuality of death and always insisted that we live our life well and thus be prepared to also die well. Given below are some sayings of Don Bosco on death and dying:

*Regardless of condition or dignity, we are all subject to death. **Death spares no one.***

Three enemies of man are: Death, which overtakes him by surprise; Time, which keeps slipping by; the devil, who seeks to ensnare him.

*Many people in this world do not want to think of death. My sons, keep in mind that whether we think of it or not, **death is unavoidable.***

Money can buy anything, but it cannot bribe death.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEATH

The hope of every Christian is to die in a state of grace, reconciled with God and at peace with others. **The end can come at any time and in any way.** Death does not necessarily sound all that inviting to most people. So, how should we look at death? First of all, death, literally speaking, is a passing from this world to the next. When our time comes in accord with the will of God, we should welcome it and anticipate our full immersion into the life of God. **So much of life is uncertain as we journey through this vale of tears.** But there is one thing on which we can all depend: **there will come a time when our earthly life will end and then we will find**



ourselves face to face with our God who will confirm for us our final decision for or against God and Heaven. That decision will last an eternity for human death, the temporary separation of soul and body, is nothing more than a passage from life on earth to the life to come. The parting of a loved one from this life always seems to be a time of great sorrow for those who are left behind. Missed opportunities to express our love, maybe a neglected reconciliation among family or friends, or the regret at not having spent the time we should have with the loved one while they were alive and present to us, seem to be all too common occurrences. But even for those without regrets, the sorrow at “losing” someone can hurt to the depths of our hearts.

DEATH IS NOT THE END

When we experience intense pain and sorrow, we can be sure that our Lord knows what we experience first-hand. But He knows something much greater than that and He wants us to know it too. **Jesus Christ is the Life!** As with the Woman at the Well where He revealed Himself to be the Living Water and with the healing of the Man Born Blind where He revealed Himself to be the Light of the World, the Lord also reveals His Divinity and Himself to be the Resurrection and the Life. The Jews of His day were divided on the question of the after-life and the Resurrection of the body—Jesus answers this question, as will His body rise after being in the grave three days and as does the body of Lazarus rise after four days in the tomb, so too will the bodies of all the departed one day rise to be reunited with their souls. This is a sign of that Resurrection. And this is to remind us that **death is not the end, nor need it be sorrowful for the faithful departed.** Yes, those of us left behind are hurt—sometimes for a long time—but that hurt is not final, for Jesus Christ has established life over death; the Son of God has defeated death and sin and shown that it has not power over Him, nor need it have power over us who believe. **Jesus does not promise to protect you from the sorrow of this life nor does He deny its very real existence.** He was perturbed, He was deeply troubled and He wept—as so many of us have hurt and cried. But He does reassure us: everything will be okay if we surrender to Him and trust in Him just as Martha surrendered everything to Him: *“Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”*

COPING WITH DEATH

There are **five** manners of **death** (natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined). A loved one's unexpected demise can trigger intense emotions. For example: **Shock**. Disbelief and emotional numbness might set in. You might think that this couldn't possibly be real. **Anger**. You might be angry with the person for abandoning you or leaving you with a legacy of grief — or angry with yourself or others for unintentionally neglecting the person. **Guilt**. You might replay "what if" and "if only" scenarios in your mind, blaming yourself for your loved one's natural or unusual death. **Despair**. You might be gripped by sadness, loneliness or helplessness. You might have a physical collapse or even think that it is the end of your life as well! **Confusion**. Many people try to make some sense out of the death, or try to understand why this sudden vacuum. But you'll likely always have some unanswered questions. For all these emotional feelings that one can certainly experience at the death of a loved one, **the best way is to TAKE IT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER.**



PRAYING FOR THE DEAD – The Most Sensible Gift on the Feast of All Souls

Catholic Faith is unambiguous in its belief that those who die without mortal sin but with many of life's imperfections still unhealed will experience a time of perfect healing from sin and brokenness and a time for whatever expiation from sin the merciful God requires of a soul before that soul may enter Heaven. Further, **the Church has been clarifying for centuries that prayers, sacrifices and most particularly, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, are of assistance to those souls who are in Purgatory.** Ancient Christians believed in the practice of praying for the dead. Many locations in the ancient catacombs reveal passages marked into the walls reminding the living to pray for the dead. St. Monica begged her son, St. Augustine, to pray for her after her own death. In 1439, the Second Council of Florence acknowledged that some souls must still expiate for past sins after their death and they do so in Purgatory. The 16th-century **Council of Trent**, legislated "*that Purgatory exists, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar*".

For many Catholics, belief in the ability of the living to help the dead through prayer and sacrifices often falls prey to cultural suspicion about the Church's belief in Purgatory. The Catholic Bible contains a section which teaches that there is great value in praying for the dead. The text reads, "*He then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the Resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus, he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin*" (**2 Mac 12:43-6**). This text from Maccabees, which Protestant Bibles do not contain, conveys the Scriptural basis for the Church's belief that some of those who have died who will be saved have not yet achieved heaven (i.e. they are in Purgatory), and that **the living can provide help for those souls by performing prayers and sacrifices.**

Catholic Faith holds that we can indeed continue to care, help and express generosity toward people even after they have died through prayer. It must be acknowledged that the Church has a very limited understanding of the specifics related to Purgatory, yet Church teaching on the existence of Purgatory is made clear in the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Articles **1030-32**, which begins with "*All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal*

salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven” (1030). The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned (1031).

Several extracts from the Mass (especially the Eucharistic Prayers) reveal the Church as she understands her ability to be of help to the dead. Each of these liturgical prayers officially acknowledges that some of the dead who will be saved are not yet in Heaven and that the Church's prayers are helpful to them. **The greatest favour anyone can make to a deceased person is to have the Mass offered for them; nothing surpasses this in efficacy.** As we approach All Souls Day (The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed) on November 2, it is especially important to recall the Church's teaching that there is indeed a Purgatory in which the souls of the saved but imperfect are awaiting the fulfilment of their purification and healing, and that these souls can be greatly helped by the prayers, sacrifices and Masses offered by the living. This is an aspect of the Catholic patrimony that must not be forgotten or de-emphasized. **Justice demands that our brothers and sisters in the faith who have died find in us faithful friends who acknowledge that it is indeed a good and pious thing to pray for the dead.**

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE

INM MEETINGS IN NOVEMBER

Date	Day	Program
11	Mon	Silver Jubilee of Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Emeritus A.M. Chinnappa SDB
12	Tue	Provincial Council
17	Sun	MONTH'S MIND - FR. MARTIN SOWRIAPPAN SDB in CITADEL at 11.30 a.m.
18	Mon	SPCSA COUNCIL MEETING
25	Mon	SALESIAN PARENTS DAY
29	Fri	End of INM Extraordinary Visitation - Provincial Council Meeting with Regional @ 9 a.m. in Citadel
30	Sat	Conclusion of INM Extraordinary Visitation with Rectors @ 9 a.m. in Citadel

INM HOSTELS/BOARDINGS/ORPHANS

During the Provincial Council Meeting held in Citadel on 4th October 2019, the Council discussed the pros and cons of the Hostel Act. It was proposed that **Fr. Edwin Vasanthan** would be in charge of the boardings and hostels while **Fr. James Samynathan** would take care of the Orphans in all our institutions. We thank them for their availability and readiness to offer their service for the systematization, organization and upliftment of our INM Hostels, Boardings and Orphans.

In view of regulating the implementation of the JJ-ACT OR the Hostel ACT in our boardings and hostels. We are getting the help of YAR - team to train three youngsters who will visit our houses to get started. This work is done only in those houses where the Boardings OR Hostels are running for the young who are below the age group of 18. The team will establish ChildMiss Software in all our houses which has all the necessary components to register and to follow up the activities regularly with proper documentation. The programme is as follows:

Phase 1: Two days training programme for the three youngsters at Citadel

Phase 2: Establishing the registers, forms and documents related to each service in each house

Phase 3: Data entry and report generation

Phase 4: Training the local person and setting up monitoring mechanism

Phase 5: Follow up

We hope to complete the task by the end of December 2019. May I request you to kindly be ready with the necessary documents. You may contact Fr. Edwin Vasanthan for more details.

INM ADMISSION OF DEACONS

On the 13th of October 2019, the Provincial Council took up the applications of our Deacons (in DBTC) for admission to the Sacrament of Holy Orders. We gratefully praise and thank the Lord for these young men who have generously come forward to consecrate themselves as Salesian Priests. We heartily congratulate each of them as they prepare themselves intensely for this BIG day which will be on **December 27th 2019 in Lourdes Shrine, Perambur**. The Deacons will be exercising their pastoral ministry in the following places as given below:

Dn. Chinnappan Sekar – Veeralur

Dn. Ferk Simolin – Thennangudi / Andamans from 24th January 2020

Dn. Gnana Xavier – Sagayathottam

Dn. Anthony Kishore – Maranodai

Dn. Philominsamy Jerome – Thalavadi

Dn. Antonyraj Albert – Pavunjur

Dn. Santhana Arul Nicholas – Polur Parish

SALESIAN PARENTS FAMILY DAY

On the **25th of November**, we keep the death anniversary of Mamma Margaret, Don Bosco's beloved mother. Every community can invite the parents and siblings of all the Salesians for a meal and familial sharing together to fortify the Salesian bond among us. I exhort the Rector/Leader of the community to make this day a prominent one for all our family members.



THIRD WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

On the 17th of November, we will be celebrating the THIRD WORLD DAY OF THE POOR. I exhort every community to make this day **meaningful and memorable for the poor** in the neighbourhood or with our beneficiaries according to the directions of the house council. The Message of Pope Francis is attached with this Circular for your personal and community reflection.

Social Experience Dimension – Coordinators' Annual Meet: Affective Transformation through Groups & Movements on 24-25 October 2019 at Odxel, Goa

The Annual meet of the Coordinators of the Social Experience Dimension of DBYA was organised on 24th & 25th October 2019 as scheduled in the SPCSA annual plan in the Province of Panjim, in the Provincial House at Odxel. There were 10 participants from 8 provinces and the National Coordinator for the Dimension from the DBYA Team. Frs. John Wilson and John Christopher represented INM. The novelty of this meeting was the forthcoming **Youth Expo 2020**. It was decided that only the youth will conduct all the programmes and they will be duly prepared by the Salesians in the preceding months. In all probability the host will be Chennai Province (pending approval from the INM Provincial Council) and the dates will be that which is most convenient to all the youth from across of the country. A Coordinating Team will be formed to organise the programme, with one youth from each Province and a few Salesians. The Youth Expo 2020 should be a moment of celebration of life and of Salesian Spirituality. It should be a memorable experience for every participant who takes part in it. The other decisions arrived at were: a) In the beginning of the next academic year the Youth Services in-Charge

in the local presences will be trained in their roles and responsibilities in the province level. b) Every presence should start a youth groups as per the norms of SYM. c) In view of the forthcoming YouthExpo2020, a Resource Material book for animation of the young will be prepared. d) A DVD with Action Songs will be prepared and released at the event.



Rest in Peace dear FR. MARTIN SOWRIAPPAN SDB

It was and still is a very heart-breaking shock for all of us when we got the news of the sudden and unforeseen demise of Fr. Martin Sowriappan. As soon as we got the information on the morning of October 18th, the Vice Provincial, Economer and myself rushed to S.M. Nagar. Fr. Martin's family members were informed and after having completed the required formalities, the mortal remains of Fr. Martin was taken to Dominic Savio Chapel at Refuge, Broadway. Vehicles were arranged for the Parishioners to attend the Funeral Mass and burial at 5 p.m. the same day, presided over by Rev. Fr. Maria Arokiam Kanaga SDB with around many Salesian priests, Brothers, clerics and Salesian Family Members. Fr. Clement SDB gave the Introduction and I preached the homily. Rev. Rt. Dr. A.M. Chinnappa, Archbishop Emeritus, concelebrated and said a few words of condolences at the end of the Eucharist. Fr. Robert Vincent, companion of Fr. Martin, gave the funeral oration. The faithful from Basin Bridge and S.M. Nagar came in big numbers to pay their last respects to Fr. Martin. After the Mass the mortal remains was taken to St. Roque's Cemetery and buried there.

Fr. Martin was a person who was ever obliging to everyone. He was simple and unassuming. He would never ever give trouble to anyone and always had a BIG smile. He was interested in the problems of others, especially the youth, and spent time to help them. He loved being with the poor and to do social ministry and thus be of help and consolation to poor people. While in S.M. Nagar, he was very helpful in the pastoral ministry by way of celebrating Holy Mass daily and through his visits to Anbiamms. He would also help in giving communion to the sick on First Fridays. He was given the responsibility to take care of the youth group in the parish and did well to the best of his ability. He was close to the youngsters and poor people. He never made any fuss about any inconveniences that he underwent. He took everything in a very sportive manner. He was an intelligent, simple, obedient, hardworking, committed and an enthusiastic Salesian. Joy and smiles were the hallmark of Fr. Martin. May God now give him eternal joy and rest.



Rest in Peace MOST. REV. DOMINIC JALA SDB, ARCHBISHOP – SHILLONG

It was a great shock to all of us, to receive the shocking news of the tragic demise of Most Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, Archbishop of Shillong. The Archbishop died in a tragic accident on 10 October 2019, in California, in the United States. Archbishop Jala was born on 12 July, 1951 and ordained priest on 19 November 1977. At the age of 48 he was appointed as the Archbishop of Shillong. In 2016 he was appointed as the Apostolic Administrator of Nongstoin Diocese, Meghalaya. He was a Salesian for 50 years, a Priest for 42 years, and an Archbishop for 19 years. He was also the Provincial of the Salesian Province of Guwahati. He was 68 years, when he died. Certainly, the Church and the Salesian Congregation have lost a spirit-filled and passionate soul, in the person of Archbishop Dominic Jala. May His Soul Rest in Peace.

Rest in Peace MOST.REV.ANTONY DEVOTTA, BISHOP EMERITUS

Most Rev. Antony Devotta, Bishop Emeritus of Trichy Diocese, Tamil Nadu, passed away due to a massive heart attack on 15 October 2019 at St Augustine Minor Seminary, Trichy. Bishop Devotta was born on 30 June 1943. He was ordained a priest on 27 August, 1971. He was appointed Bishop of Trichy Diocese, on 12 December 2000. He was the Vicar General of Madras-Mylapore Archdiocese before becoming the Bishop of Trichy. He was earlier, a Professor of Systematic Theology and Pastoral Theology at Sacred Heart Seminary, Poonamallee, Chennai and the Chairman of the Commission for Social Communication of the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Council. He also served the National Church as the Chairman of the CCBI Commission for Catechetics from 2015 to 2017. He was a priest for 48 years and Bishop for 18 years. He resigned from the pastoral governance of the Diocese of Trichy on 14 July, 2018 at the age of 75. He died at the age of 76. He has become a great source of inspiration and example to all of us, even in his death, by generously donating his eyes to St. Joseph's Eye Hospital, Tiruchy and his body for Medical Research Education to St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bangalore. May his soul rest in peace.

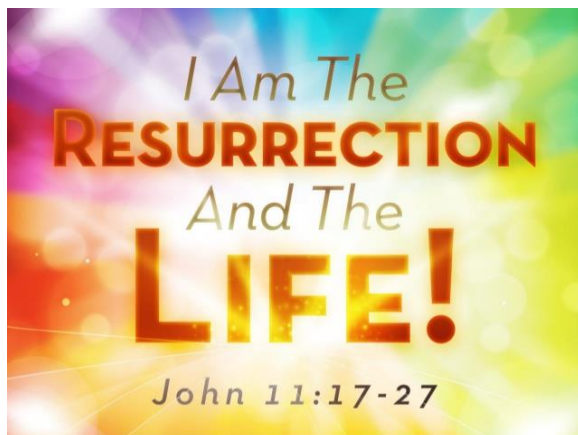
REST IN PEACE

Sr. Rayappan Antonia (51) of INM FMA died on 8th October 2019 at Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi.

Mr. M. Pancras (89), father of Fr. Nallayan passed away on 17th October in Lalgudi.

Mrs. Savariyammal (57), eldest sister of Fr. John Christopher died on 17th October in Villupuram.

Mr. Francis (58), father of Bro. Christopher Raj Francis passed away on 26th October.



Conclusion – DYING HE DESTROYED OUR DEATH

St. Paul would say in his Epistle, “Where O Death, is your Sting?” He would write, “I carry in me the Death of the Lord.” St. Paul knew full well that in his flesh the death of Christ was lived, and through that death life abounded. A death well-lived is a proclamation of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. **A death not sought, but accepted, is a breaking forth of glory for all eternity.** There is in each of us a natural desire for life, a natural desire to live eternally. There is an attraction for that

which is true, good and beautiful. In other words, there is the pull toward the Divine. **Death, which has entered the world through our freedom to choose it, has been reformed by the salvific action of Jesus.** Death, which is the result of an evil choice made by a man at the beginning of human history, has been transformed into the gateway through which we walk and through which we see face-to-face the God who has made us, and who originally intended for us to see him as he is from our conception. St. Francis of Assisi called death, “*Brother Death.*” He embraced it as fully as he embraced life and light and joy and mirth. As we have prayed so often, *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen!*

Fr. K.M. Jose SDB
Provincial

Date: 02.11.2019

Place: Chennai – 600010.