

INM-KMJ-CIR 35/15-2020

MAKE YOURSELF LOVED

JANUARY 2020

“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.”
– Dan Millman

Dear Confreres,

Right at the outset, let me wish all of you a meaningful New Year 2020! On this feast of the Motherhood of Mary, we have every reason to thank our Blessed Mother for the marvels we experience through her intervention in our lives. She is indeed the mother who is very endearing to all of us. She guided Don Bosco at every stage of his life. Together they have accomplished marvels in the lives of so many young people. It is our belief and experience even today, for we too see so many miracles taking place in our period of history. She enables us also to turn water into wine. It is she who guided Don Bosco in his style and approach to the villainous boys. *“Not with blows but with loving kindness”*. This method made him to be loved and not feared.

In this Circular, I would like to reflect with you the importance of being loved and in becoming lovable persons, starting anew and remaining fresh in spirit and action. What better way to do this than to imitate our Father and Founder Don Bosco, whose month we will be celebrating in all our institutions in various innovative ways! I would like to share with you some of the reflections that will help us to win the hearts of people and **establish a relationship of Christ-like love with all our beneficiaries**. As we start this new year 2020, let us begin on a positive note and make the lives of everyone around us filled with that positive energy which will create a conducive atmosphere for everyone to grow, develop and express themselves positively for the betterment of this world.



“Make yourselves loved” were Don Bosco’s words to his sons, fully conscious of the winning edge in his life. He loved the boys and the boys knew that he loved them. This lived experience made them fall in love with him. Don Bosco would make any sacrifice for the boys and the boys would do anything for Don Bosco. This was a kind of magnetic bond where there is mutual love between them. If you want to win the world of tomorrow, you must win the youth of today and paradoxically, if you want to win the youth of today, you must first be won by them. This is what Don Bosco said: Make yourself loved and not feared. From this emerged his whole spirituality of the Preventive system. All of us are aware that love cannot be forced but it is a natural response to the love experience.

We have been reflecting very seriously on the theme: **“What kind of Salesians for the youth of today?”** Again, the 28th General Chapter will reflect on this theme from a world perspective. Basically, Don Bosco wanted his sons to be loved by the boys, for he knew that it is only in a love relationship, can we facilitate the growth of any youngster. Youngsters are captivated by men of God, men of Integrity, men who are Trustworthy, men of Empathy, men of Reconciliation and men with a Vision.

1. Men of God: Every Salesian is basically a disciple of Christ. As disciples, it is only natural that we be connected to the Master consistently. Our Constitutions have prescribed so many practical ways we can be in touch with our God. **We begin the day with God.** At dawn, the Morning Prayer, Meditation and the Holy Eucharist are powerful means to nourish ourselves with the Word of God, the Bread of

life. Frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament keep us in tune with the wavelength of God. At dusk, the Evening Prayer, Spiritual Reading, the Rosary helps us to examine ourselves, thank God for the many blessings and revitalize ourselves with spiritual thoughts that come from the Spiritual Reading. Besides these, the occasional other moments of prayer, recollection and retreats help us to keep ourselves on the right track. **We are basically spiritual beings**, living in this physical world but with a divine purpose. This is exactly why St. Augustine told us vividly that *our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee Oh God!* Our deepest yearnings are for God. This is why Don Bosco was particular that the boys keep their eyes fixed on God. He really wanted to prepare them to *be upright citizens for this world and the next*. He had constant recourse to the preparation of Confessions and Holy Communion. He loved to sit at the confessional for hours, for he felt that it was the best strategy to keep the boys in tune with God. Boys loved to go and make their confession to him.

Some do criticize the Salesians as people who only play and have fun. But I am more prone to think that together with the fun and games, our students need to see us as men of God. It is only when they realize this will they come to us seeking spiritual accompaniment. If they do not come to us for spiritual energy, it is good to ask ourselves why! **Spirituality is not something that we pretend to have**. If we are men of God, the boys will see through and will come to us with a deep desire for God. If there is a misnomer that Salesians are only for fun and frolic, let us radically change that attitude by coming across to the young people as spiritual men passionate about God. I simply love this practice of repeating every now and then: "Thank you Jesus, Praise you Jesus, love you Jesus". This often helps me to get connected with Him and remain in His love.

2. Men of Integrity: Young people love those who are sincere and authentic. They have a sharp sense of honesty. If anyone tries to pretend to be sincere and play games with them, they will have a natural aversion to such people. Don Bosco was sincere in his love for the boys and that is one reason why they looked up to him. Sincerity is not only with regard to money but also in our relationships. They do not like any partiality. In fact when young people used to come to Ennore for animation, I used to ask them what they liked and did not like in their elders. The oft repeated answer was that they liked those who genuinely loved them and that they did not like partiality shown by the elders.

Besides, being genuine in our relationship, we have to stand for truth in all our endeavours. It is true that we live in a society which adheres to bribes and corruption. The easy way to get things done is through a bribe. But we need to communicate that we stand for values and that we do not comply to such demands of the avaricious people. This process may take time but we stand for truth and fight even legally for our rights. One of the reasons why young people get agitated in Society is due to the insincerity they observe in the world. They are prone to sincere dealings. As religious, **we have all the more responsibility to tell the world that Truth will triumph**. In general, I have observed young people having a soft corner for the sincere religious.

3. Men who are trustworthy: Sincere religious are trusted by the young. In addition to this, it is important that the young are trusted by the elders. We see in the YAR Sector, the formation of the Children's Parliament, where they take the role of various administrative characters and discuss issues to plan and resolve problems. This is based on the belief that **young people are capable of resolving their own problems**. Capitalizing on this ability of the young people, **we need to discuss with them and seek their opinions and even decide with them on the various issues they are facing**. It is amazing to see the active participation and involvement of the young people in this process. In addition, we will also see that they begin to implement the decisions they have been part of. This is how we develop a sense of co-responsibility and they begin to rise to mature ways of life.

We all know that **the basis of any relationship is trust**. We need to trust the people around. Trust is shown by delegating works, giving freedom for people to function with enough financial resources too. It is unfortunate that there are people who have the so called paranoid tendency, wherein they

suspect everyone around. This has been one of the real causes of conflicts, misunderstanding and indifference. It is high time that we resolve this problem and trust people so that we can be found trustworthy. It is only in an atmosphere of trust, affirmation that human excellence blossoms.

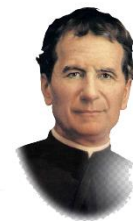
4. Men of Empathy: Men of God, men of integrity and men who are trustworthy will emerge as people who can manifest empathy to people around. They are able to perceive the needs of people around and make those needs their own and enter into the lives of people with compassion and passion. This is how passionate men and women entered into the lives of people and have brought about a radical transformation in the society. In the recent times, St. Mother Theresa, Bl. Oscar Romero, and in the last century our own father and founder St. John Bosco are shining examples of deep empathy. They felt with the people and entered into their lives with a spiritual energy and brought life to so many people. Like Jesus, they were willing to even die for the suffering lot. This definitely creates a magnetic bond and the result is that such people are loved by their beneficiaries.

5. Men of Reconciliation: We are all fallible human beings who need to forgive and ask forgiveness. Mistakes do take place. The easiest thing is to condemn such people and alienate or write off such people from our lives. Jesus always went in search of the lost sheep and was keen to bring them back to the fold. The parable of the lost coin or of the lost son is clear indication of his genuine forgiving love. When someone does something wrong particularly against us, our natural inclination is to take revenge and punish the person. Jesus told us to go in the forgiving style, not seven times but seventy-times seven. It is only in a true reconciling spirit that we regain the person back to normalcy. We need to admit the mistake done, forgive the person from the heart and take steps to reach out to the person with loving forgiveness. St. John Paul II reached out to Aga Khan who attempted to shoot him to death. Men of God can only think of forgiveness and not revenge and punishment. Such persons will endear to the young people and will win their hearts.

6. Men with a Vision: It is men with vision who will plan with the young and give them big dreams in order to enable them to bring out their potentials. People love those who can perceive the hidden potentials of people and develop them. Deep down in every soul there is the seed of sanctity. It is a special ability to make people realize this potential and make them work on this potential. Don Bosco was able to see the goodness in every person and enabled them to mature this goodness into Sainthood. Sometimes, we think that our task is to enable one to develop their intellectual abilities and make them attain a degree and a secure job and we feel happy that we have brought them up. While this is a good step, we should look for moving them to Sanctity and make them Good Citizens of this world and of the next! This would be the apex of our interventions in the lives of young people.

Don Bosco's Way of Being Loved

“You can do nothing with young people unless you have their confidence and love,” St. John Bosco was known for saying. At an early age, St. John Bosco connected with a traveling circus, and learned from them the arts of juggling and acrobatics. He'd later use those skills to attract school children to a performance, only to follow it with a preaching of the homily he had heard earlier in the day! Good Don Bosco knew that souls come to Christ through relationship. His playful, unassuming character meant that youth were drawn to him and trusted him. This formed the foundation for their relationship. Lovable, human Don Bosco exemplifies that people madly in love with God can go beyond the rest of us in expressing their love. Don Bosco not only acted as a priest, a catechist, and a teacher of subjects from music to metrics to his first slum kids, he also took many homeless or abused boys to live with him. He cooked for them, cut out and sewed their suits, barbered their hair, made their beds, and in all ways acted as both a mother and a father. Surely this was enough self-giving, but not for the saint.



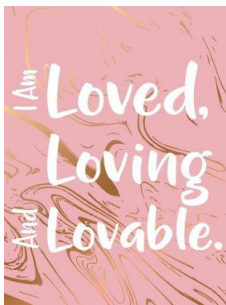
*“ It is not enough
that you love
the young; They
must know
that they
are loved ”*

~Don Bosco

Don Bosco's approach wasn't all fun and games, though. Fiercely devoted to the sacramental life, to prayer, and to the study of Scripture, he continually availed himself of the Sacraments and encouraged his boys to do the same. An afternoon of soccer in an Italian field, for example, would always be followed by Mass and Confession. St. John's love of Christ and His mother couldn't help but rub off on the boys, who desired to emulate their spiritual father in all things.

John Bosco died on January 31st, 1888. His last message for his sons was this: ***Live together as brothers, love each other and bear with each other.*** The protection of Our Lady, Help of Christians, will always be with you. At the time of Don Bosco's death, close to 800 boys were living at the Oratory that he had built. Wrote Pope Pius XI of the beloved saint, "*God gave him largeness of heart as the sand on the seashore.*" This, I think, is the heart of Don Bosco that we can emulate today in serving our youth. Whether we are in the classroom or playground, in the office or in the pulpit, may our hearts always be enlarged as good Don Bosco's was.

Some Practical Ways to Love and Be Lovable



"It is never too late to be what you might have been" said George Eliot. All of us face challenges in life when we want to make a new beginning in our relationships, mission or even in our vision. All we need is the right attitude, a controlled mind, the belief in self and faith in life. To begin with, we need to love our choice of life and be ever hopeful for a better way to live our religious life. If you've made up your mind to start a new life, then you've already taken the first step towards becoming a person who can love and be loved. Here are a few tips and more steps that will help you prepare yourself for a change of life in this new year.

- 1. Forget** - Whenever you want to start anew, you may need to take lessons from and make peace with the past. No matter how bad things were, how hurt you were, or how many failures you met – you've got to forget them. We need to learn from our mistakes, and forget about them – though remember to not repeat them!
- 2. Forgive** - To release yourself from the bondage of your mistakes, guilt, wrongdoings, and torments of others, you need to first forgive yourself and them as well! If possible, use the option of apologizing for your mistakes. This frees us from a negative bond and gives us the permission to move forward to start a new life.
- 3. Be Peaceful** - As I detailed in my last Circular, a calm and serene mind helps us to be peaceful and productive. Drop your tensions and don't worry – that will only accumulate stress. Learn mind control and consistent meditation. You'll be happier and more peaceful when you let go of things that you cannot control. You're less burdened and can concentrate on working with your own life.
- 4. Accept** - One more step to attain peace of mind and move forward is to accept the past because you cannot change it. Accept yourself, your life, your confreres and the community life and mission, while trying to make the best use of the current situation for your own growth and betterment. Acceptance of a problem gives you something concrete to work on to correct your wrongdoings and change your life. Know yourself better and try to understand other confreres and situations in the community and mission. Know your shortcomings and virtues, skills and abilities, interests and passions. Try to understand the reality and, realistically find out what would it take for you to solve your life and make a new beginning. True solutions come with profound understanding and acceptance.
- 5. Be Positive** - Some of you might have faced and lived in negativity either in the recent or distant past. Violence, anger and guilt are some negativity that you need to convert to peace, compassion, gratitude, good habits, love, and self-respect. Good and positive thoughts impact your actions. You can make a new beginning only when you feel good about yourself!

6. Change - Be ready to stop doing what you've been doing if it needs to be changed, and start with something new without any fear, even if it amounts to changing your lifestyle. Change may feel awkward and difficult in the start – it always is. But you need to push yourself to make it happen. You cannot grow, evolve, or progress without embracing change in life. Find the change you need for the new start in life.

7. Focus - Choose a path, remain positive, have priorities, create a goal, and remain focused. Don't let negative thoughts and emotions from your past disturb or deter you. Remind yourself to be strong and determined because focus will help you achieve a good start to a new life.

8. Be Aware - Life is full of surprises. Opportunity may knock at your door anytime and you need to keep your eyes, ears, and mind open all the time. When required, think of all possibilities, keep all options open, trust your instincts, and have faith in yourself. Trust that every moment has the potential to launch your life.

9. Take Risks - At every given moment you've many choices and you choose one. The choice is always in YOUR hands. Every moment you take risks. With time, learning, and practice you develop the wisdom and instincts to make the right choices. Always make the choice to cling with the right and good. Take a chance if you have a gut feeling even if the odds are against you, at the same time; learn to say no when required.

10. Make Efforts - Keep trying and keep making efforts, none of them ever go waste. Develop an attitude to learn from every event, every person, every situation, and every failure. Treat everything as a blessing in disguise. The more you try and give your best; more are your chances to make the right choice and to make a successful new beginning of being loved and being lovable.

News from the Province

Appointments

In view of recent developments in Fujairah which called for immediate attention for the progress of the institution, **Fr. Y.L. Irudayaraj SDB**, who had been here earlier, has been requested to take up once again the post of Principal of St. Mary's School. He has accepted and I thank him for his availability and generosity. With his past experience, we are sure that the Fujairah School will continue to witness wholistic progress in imparting education with the Salesian spirit. I also thank **Fr. Tony Robert SDB** who has returned from Fujairah and has accepted to be the Principal of St. Mary's A.I.H.S.S., Chennai. We wish **Fr. Gerald Miranda SDB** on his new assignment as the Provincial Delegate of the INM Don Bosco Past Pupils, in the place of Fr. Y.L. Irudayaraj who assiduously functioned in this role.

Congratulations

We are happy to congratulate **Fr. Maria Charles SDB** who has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Education and Culture Dimension, CBCI. We wish him all success in his endeavours.

We would like to appreciate and congratulate **Fr. Ernest Rosario SDB** for receiving the National Award for his documentary film "Transcender" from the National Human Rights Commission of India on the International Human Rights Day.

Priestly Ordination at Lourdes Shrine, Perambur

We are immensely grateful to Rector Fr. Deva Joe SDB and community of Lourdes Shrine, Perambur, for hosting the Province Priestly Ordinations on 27th December 2019. With grateful hearts we sincerely thank His Grace Archbishop George Antonysamy D.D. for having ordained our Deacons. We also thank Fr. Don Bosco Lourdasamy SDB, the Vice Provincial, the Liturgy Coordinators Fr. Parthiban and Fr. Antony Sebastian and all the other Salesians and lay people who helped in making this day memorable

and meaningful for our newly-ordained priests. We continue to pray for them as they begin their pastoral ministry as Ordained Ministers.

INM Annual Retreat 2 (for First Five Years of Priesthood/Brotherhood)

We are just finishing the first Retreat for Clerics and Brothers at Becchi Don Bosco, Kavarapettai. As already announced, the next Retreat for Priests and Brothers in the first 5 years will be held at DBYAC, Ennore from 11th January to 16th January 2020. Participants are requested to arrive latest by 7 p.m. on the 10th evening. Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy SDB will be the Preacher. May I also remind the participants that the contribution for hospitality during the retreat is Rs. 3000/-

Two New Provincials

Rev. Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB (INT) - Our Rector Major Fr. Angel Fernandez Arttime SDB has appointed Rev. Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB, as the Provincial of Trichy Province. The Installation of the new Provincial will be on 4th January 2010 at Don Bosco, Amsam, Trichy.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Pauria SDB (INC), the present Vice Provincial, has been appointed by the Rector Major as the next Provincial of Kolkata Province. He will assume office on 31st May 2020.

On behalf of the Chennai Province, I congratulate both of them and wish them all the best in leading their respective Provinces.

INM Province Community Day and Contribution

As you are already aware, **INM Province Community Day** will be on **17th January 2020 at Don Bosco Mission, Veeralur**. During the celebration the New Priests & Silver Jubilarians (2019-20) will be felicitated.

The program will be as follows:

10:00 a.m.	-	Cultural Program
11.15	-	Break
11.45	-	Holy Eucharist
01.00 p.m.	-	Lunch

Your generous contribution this year will go to support the Don Bosco Mission, Veeralur. Your presence will ensure that this day becomes an expression of our fraternity and brotherhood.

STRENNA 2020

Our Rector Major, Rev. Fr. Ángel Fernández Arttime SDB, as it is customary, has given the Salesian Family the following Strenna for the New Year 2020, which contains the words both of Our Lord and of our Founder Don Bosco: —Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Mt 6:10): **GOOD CHRISTIANS AND UPRIGHT CITIZENS**. The Rector Major says, “I would like the Strenna to continue to help us to have a central thread in the pastoral guidance of the New Year in every part of the world. In the context of a growing fragility, and sometimes inability, in being apostles and missionaries of the youth, and the precarious Indian situation where our identity is being questioned, the Strenna 2020 of our Rector Major has much to offer. Even as we keep discovering the richness of this Strenna, may we pay greater attention to educating our young people to a strong sense of citizenship, social justice and evangelical values.



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INM Strenna Dissemination 2020

The Strenna 2020 will be presented to the Salesian Family members in our Province on the following days:

10.01.2020	-	Pondy Region	- Don Bosco, Cuddalore
18.01.2020	-	Tirupattur Region	- Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur
25.01.2020	-	Vellore Region	- Don Bosco, Katpadi
01.02.2020	-	Chennai Region	- Citadel, Chennai
3.00 p.m.	-	Strenna Dissemination	
4.00 p.m.	-	Tea	
4.30 p.m.	-	Group Work	
5.15 p.m.	-	Group Reporting	
6.00 p.m.	-	Sharing about each of the Salesian Family Members	
7.00 p.m.	-	Holy Eucharist	

I exhort all of you my dear confreres to participate in any one of these presentations at your convenience, preferably in your respective region. You may also remind all the members of the Salesian Family in and around your community to benefit from this animation forum. Kindly inform the Rector of the particular venue regarding the total number of participants from your community.

INM Consultations 2020-2023

Thank you dear confreres for handing in the Consultation Forms for Vice Provincial, Economer, Counsellors and Rectors duly filled in. Those who have not yet done so, kindly do so immediately on or before **8th January 2020**. Let us continue to pray that the Holy Spirit may assist us in our discernment regarding the choice of leaders in our communities.

Year of Youth 2020

The Tamilnadu Bishops' Council has announced and exhorted the Catholic Church to celebrate this year 2020 as the Year of Youth. This is in view of putting into practice and to concretize the Apostolic Exhortation of our Holy Father Pope Francis on the young people "*Christus Vivit*". As youth ministers, let us celebrate this Year of Youth meaningfully in all our presences more effectively, together with the Catholic Church in Tamilnadu.

INM SDB+FMA+SMA Joint Council

The Joint Council with all the three Councils was very enriching. We discussed how we could accomplish effectively the Mission of Don Bosco, St. Maria Mazzarello and Fr. M.C. Antony. There was a unanimous agreement on the need to work for the poor youth in the Don Bosco way. The Vice Provincials and the Youth Ministry coordinators have been designated to draw up meaningful plans together with the Tamil Nadu Youth Commission for the holistic development of the youth. This year 2020 has been declared the Year of Youth in Tamil Nadu. Together we can thus synergize all our efforts and build up the Kingdom of God in Tamil Nadu.

Hearty Condolences - Rest in Peace

Mr. Amos Sebastian F/o Novice Malaimani INT passed away on 4th December 2019 in Valavanur of Purathakudi Parish (Lalgudi Taluk)

Allan Jones (18), nephew of Bro. Francis Chinnappan SDB passed away on 9th December 2019 in Sagaya Nagar, Tirupattur.

Rev. Fr. Alphonse Malngiang SDB (66) of the Province of Shillong (INS) passed away on Christmas, 25th December 2019. Our sincere condolences to the

Mr. Arulappan (82) father of Fr. Felix Arulappan Passed away on 30th December 2019 in Kovilankuppam.

As I conclude this Circular, it is my ardent desire that we love every person that God sends to us. Let each one of us become the “Now of God” to every youngster. They must feel that we love them genuinely and are interested in their growth. At times we may think that threatening them with an “iron arm” will make them to love and respect us. Every person is an opportunity for us to share God’s love with. If we neglect any person, we are missing an opportunity to do good. Every youngster in our campus and in our neighbourhood is the golden opportunity offered to us to be kind and compassionate. When we love them, we will win their hearts and when we win their hearts, transformation automatically will take place. This month when we celebrate the feast of our Father and Founder Don Bosco, let us emulate his style and method to win souls for Christ. Let us make ourselves loved and not feared!

Fr. K.M. Jose SDB
Provincial

Date: 02.01.2020

Place: Chennai – 600010.

