



# PROVINCIAL Circular

Salesian Province of Chennai (INM)



**INM-KMJ-CIR 39/05-2020**

**MAY 2020**

## **To Become a True Loving Disciple and to be a Passionate Apostle of the Poor Young People**

Dear Confreres,

Greetings from Valdocco! The traumatizing experience of COVID-19 pandemic is something that we are still struggling to cope with. **None of us has ever experienced anything like this in living memory, nor were we prepared for it.** It just came upon us like a bolt from the blue. We can only pray and wait patiently for the crisis to pass and normalcy to return. **We need to pray earnestly to our Blessed Mother for her motherly intervention.** The nature of the corona virus is such that anyone could be living with it without being aware of it for a while. Therefore, the social distancing and the other measures imposed by the government are to be strictly followed. Any carelessness in this matter can endanger not only ourselves, but others too. **The lockdown is to be seen more as a necessary safeguard, and not as an unnecessary inconvenience or nuisance.** For some of us who are constantly on the move, this may be a tough time to remain homebound.



**Being homebound, can also be a blessing.**

It offers us more time for prayer and personal work. We are able to meet each other, share news, views and experiences with others at a deeper level and enter into meaningful relationships. It is also a good time to read, reflect and write; putting our

thoughts, reflections and insights into writing, in fact, can be an enriching spiritual experience and an exercise that could touch, inspire and transform the lives of people. With such thoughts prevailing in our minds and hearts, we can only think of thinking well of all, speaking well of all and doing good to all. Above all, **this is a moment to focus on being disciples first and then being apostles.**

### **1. Moment to deepen our Discipleship**

**Consecrated life is impossible without Christ.** He is “our Living Rule” (C 196). Art. 12 of the Constitutions reminds us of the fact that He is the vine and we are the branches and that apart from Him we can do nothing. (Cf. John 15:5) The fundamental attitude of every Christian and particularly a consecrated person is the *sequela Christi* and the imitation of Christ.

The *sequela* underlines the subjective dimension: the personal relationship with Jesus, discipleship, docility. Imitation, instead, highlights the objective aspect: the need of configuration, of the complete transformation of the person into the likeness of Christ.

Vocation is not given only in view of a mission to be accomplished or a task to be carried out. It is principally a call to intimacy and communion of life with Jesus, who called his apostles individually “to be with him and to be sent forth” (Mark 3:14) to preach the Gospel. Both the dynamics are important, *discipleship* as well as *configuration* to Christ. **Intimacy with Christ leads to transfiguration into his likeness, so that we become like him the face of the Father, revelations of his love.**

## 2. Prayer: the beautiful gift

**Prayer is a gift of the Lord, a dialogue between creature and creator, communion with God who is Communion and Love.** (CCC 2559-2565). The religious who gives God first place in his life, takes special care of this gift of prayer. Salesian life is lived “in dialogue with the Lord” (C 85-95). Prolonged personal prayer is in keeping with the Salesian tradition. **The quality of our prayer is a sign of our being “seekers of God”.** Called by the Word of God to continual conversion, the confreres in the community value daily meditation, celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation, the daily meaningful celebration of the Eucharist. In this way, we become “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Rom 12:1).

## 3. Caring for the Soul

In an age when people hardly ever use the word ‘soul’, American psychotherapist Thomas Moore, who was once a Servite seminarian, came out in 1992 with a book titled, “Care of the Soul - A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life”, which immediately became a best-seller and remained so on the New York Times best-seller list for nearly a year. According to Moore, the great problem of our age is ‘loss of soul’. **When soul is neglected, it doesn’t just go away; it appears symptomatically in obsessions, addictions, violence and loss of meaning.** By caring for the soul, we can find relief from our distress and discover deep satisfaction and pleasure.

According to Moore, soul cannot be defined. It is not a thing. Soul according to him has to do with genuineness and depth. Soul is revealed in attachment, love, inner communing, intimacy and community.



Fulfilling work, rewarding relationships and deep intimacy with the Lord are all gifts of the soul. Such experiences will ward off emptiness, meaninglessness, vague depression, disillusionment etc. Moore’s basic idea is that our soul is complex and if we care for it, we’ll respect its mysterious complexity. Most things we hate, scream about and struggle against are part of our soul. Therefore, instead of trying to get rid of them all, we need to look at them tenderly and see what they have to tell us.

**Love of the soul asks for some appreciation for its complexity.** Often care of the soul means not taking sides when there is a conflict at a deep level. It may be necessary to stretch the heart wide enough to embrace contradiction and paradox. Care of the soul asks us to open

our hearts wider, softening the judging and moralism that may have characterized our attitudes and behaviour for years. **One who cares for the soul becomes someone at ease with idiosyncrasies and the unexpected.**

**Soul needs love.** There is no way toward divine love except through the discovery of human intimacy and community. One feeds the other. Love implies not merely an individual but a community - a group of people held together by a sense of belonging. You need to find them by loving and by belonging.

**The Covid-19 experiences can transform the soul.** We begin to experience genuineness and depth in our relationships with the Lord Jesus and with our community members. **Let every confrere experience the goodness of the Lord and of every person in our Province.** We see the image of God in every person. This will lead us to a greater appreciation of each person, respect them, accept them, encourage them and, if necessary, forgive them so that we live as brothers concerned about the growth of every person.

It is this realization of the true discipleship that will make me attached to Jesus and to every member in our community. We can enter into a spirit of collaboration, cooperation and commitment. We avoid all forms of comparison, competition and conflict.

#### **4. Seeking the Will of God**

A true loving disciple of Jesus is all enthusiastic about the mission of the Lord. **Mission cannot be equated to work or activity.** Mission implies various elements:

- a) Someone who sends
- b) Someone who is sent
- c) Those to whom he is sent
- d) The service he is sent to carry out
- e) The way this is to be done'
- f) The means to do it.

All these are condensed in article 2 of our Constitutions. Mission comes to us in and through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus' mission was to reveal the Father to the world and to gather into one the scattered children of God (Jn 1:18). It is the Holy Spirit who equips and empowers us to carry out this mission through the charismatic gifts that he distributes to each (Acts 1:8).

**In these days, when I was praying for the discernment of God's will with regard to the various needs of the Province, I felt that the Lord was guiding me very personally.** Most confreres I contacted, happily and generously surrendered to God's plan. When we are open to God's will, we have an open mind and all our hidden agendas vanish and the comfort zones we enclose ourselves in disappear. These are the truly liberated people who have no other motive than to serve the Lord, wherever it is required. These days my prayer for such people has been intensified. I am very hopeful that the Lord will touch them and make them happily accept the mission assigned to them.

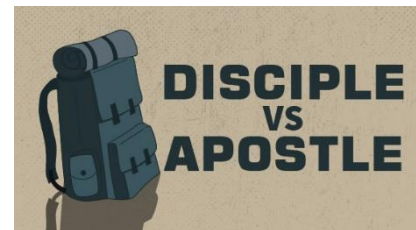
**Don Bosco was wise in saying that we Salesians must make ourselves loved by people.** All of us have a responsibility to make ourselves loved by the community by the way we live our lives. People do appreciate genuine prayerful persons, people who show a spirit of sacrifice

and are ever ready for work, and collaborative work at that. True, loving disciples will be welcomed by everyone.

**At the same time, let us not forget that we humans are fallible.** Everyone around us will have some foibles and shortcomings. There may be some whose behaviour we may not approve or may sometimes appear to us as blatantly wrong. Let us not look at even such persons as people to be avoided or alienated from our lives. We need to show them understanding, acceptance and welcome them happily into the community. As they are brothers entrusted to us by God, let us take maximum care of them and show them that we love them. In this way, we will enable the process of transformation. Here and there, we come across people who are labelled negatively and because of which they suffer often in silence. It is here that we need to be sensitive and remove all labels and prejudices from our minds and give them a sincere welcome sign. All of us are responsible for our brothers. We must see it as our privilege to accompany them in their life's struggles. Let all our communities be welcoming communities for everyone. This is our true family spirit.

## 5. Being Apostles of the young, particularly the poor and marginalized

Article 3 of our Constitutions tells clearly that it is the mission that sets the tenor of our whole life. Don Bosco was clearly aware of having been sent by God to work for the salvation of the young. The centrality of the mission led him to seek collaborators, lay people first and then the religious congregation. We are called to become the face of the Father to the young people. The essential content of our mission is to be revelations of God, signs and bearers of His love (C.2). It is a love that is liberating and, in every sense, an integral human promotion (C.33). We should be happy that we have various initiatives on behalf of the poor in our Province. **We are called to be apostles.**



**Let every assignment be seen as an opportunity to serve the Lord gladly.** As Salesians, we should feel extremely grateful to God for giving us the beautiful loving method of the Preventive system of Don Bosco. **As I walk around in Valdocco campus, I am simply reminded of the way Don Bosco went around this campus accompanying the poor young people, guiding and helping them on their journey to holiness, to sanctity.** This is the task of an apostle. So, let us go to any place of our mission with this sincere desire to radiate holiness and become a blessing to people.

These days of the lockdown, we are all prevented from direct intervention in the lives of people. Some have turned to the digital media to accompany young people and to lead them, above all, to experience God in the midst of calamities. Let us keep up this enthusiasm and keep alive our own faith in these trying times. As the saying goes: *"Tough times do not last, but tough people do"*. It is in the Lord that we can experience that toughness to withstand any type of tribulation. In this month of May, when we honour Mary our Mother in a special way, let us be inspired by her faithfulness to God. She was indeed a true loving disciple who sought the will of God at all stages of her life and surrendered herself to His will, thus becoming the most exemplary apostle of the Lord.

### My heartfelt Sympathies...

It is always painful for me to hear about the demise of confreres or their dear ones. More so, in these days of quarantine when I am not even able to be in the Province. Being in Turin, close to the Basilica, I simply surrender them to the Lord in prayer, and ask the Lord to give them eternal bliss in heaven. **Faith tells me that we are meant to be with the Lord forever.** Although my faith helps me to accept with courage these painful departures, the human part of me sometimes rebels within me and even raises many questions. I find calm and peace when I offer them back to the Lord.

The first shocking news was that of the unexpected death of our beloved **Bishop Soundararaju** of Vellore Diocese. He has been very good to us and always benevolent in his approach to us. In the several meetings that I had with him, he was always passionate about educating the poor young people and he would tell me that the Salesians should continue to be on the vanguard of educating the poor. He was a pastor who was truly committed to the service of the poor and he took his responsibility very seriously and led the people of God to deep faith, and knowledge of the teachings of the Church. I really miss his presence physically. But I know that the legacy he has left behind will live on. May he enjoy the company of the saints in heaven and continue to give glory to God.

The second death that shook me was that of **Mr. Alex** who worked at the Citadel (Provincial Office) with such dedication and calmness. He was ever ready for any work at any time. I am sure that he is in heaven, in the company of Dominic Savio and the other youngsters of the oratory. I pray that his family find consolation and accept this reality in a spirit of faith and resignation to God's will.

The passing away of **Sr. Philo Solomon FMA** was also a great shock for me. She was such a good soul who would be there to prepare the body of any Salesian who passed away. She did this ministry with so much love and care. She was also the warden in Amalagam hostel, in Tirupattur. She did her ministry with much love everywhere. May she too enjoy the company of the saints in heaven. I offer my condolences to Rev. Sr. Nirmala Lazar FMA, the Provincial, and all the sisters of the FMA Province of Chennai.

I was also deeply saddened to hear of the demise of the dear **mother of Fr. Bosco Augustine** and the dear **father of Fr. Dominic Matthews**. I thank the Lord for the gift of their children to our province. The parents are a big blessing to us. It is painful to lose our parents. I really want to tell both Fr. Bosco Augustine and Fr. Dominic Matthews that I am really close to them and their families at this moment of grief. I feel sad that I could not be present at the funeral. We can be sure that Don Bosco welcomes the parents of Salesians with much affection and gratitude into the Salesian garden in the heavenly kingdom!

### INM Transfers & Appointments 2020

**These days we have been working out the INM Transfers & Appointments for the coming year by personally contacting those who needed to be contacted. I thank everyone for their understanding and acceptance. Let us surrender to God's will. The transfers will come into effect only after the lockdown period is over.**

## Financial Challenges

The whole world is facing a financial crisis due to this pandemic. Most of the productions and the business have been paralysed. The daily wagers are left with no work and no earning. The migrant workers are also stuck. People are faced with lots of expenses without any income. We too are faced with expenses without an income. All our staff, both teaching and non-teaching have to be paid, which we must do. Our daily routine needs have to be met. In this scenario, we need to sit as a community and plan ways of minimising the community and personal expenses. This calls for a highly disciplined life and drastic steps to regulate our expenses. For example, **in these days of transfer, let us be content with the rooms that we have and not go for any furnishing at this time. Keeping in mind, the struggles of people, let each community make a stringent budget for themselves and present it to the Economer.**

There is also going to be a drastic cut from the agencies and from benefactors, as they themselves are struggling. In this situation, we have to manage our expenses collectively. The Provincial Council will look for ways and means to balance the situation collectively and to network all our resources for the common good of our beneficiaries and our collaborators.

## Religious Professions 2020

**We are all in the lockdown period and so the Provincial Council that met on the 24<sup>th</sup> April through Google Meet, decided to have all the professions at the house level.** The Rectors of communities will receive the vows, including the Perpetual profession. Fr. Dominic Matthews, the Province Secretary, will guide you in this process. Hope everyone will understand the situation and accept this happily.

## **NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE**

### First Profession

I would like to inform the Province that we are blessed with **seven novices** this year who have offered themselves to the Lord for the Salesian way of life and mission. These novices along with **six INT** novices will make their First Profession on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at Idaya Deepam Novitiate, Yellagiri Hills. Fr. Pathiaraj Rayappan SDB, the Novice Master will receive the vows. I congratulate and welcome these young 'soon to be Salesians' to the Salesian Congregation.

#### For INM

1. Abiraja **G.**
2. Akash **Selvanayagam**
3. Andrews **S.**
4. Mariaprithivirajan **Mariyadass**
5. Ruban Raj **Amlorpavaraj**
6. Stephen Raj **M.**
7. Thomas Thamilkudimahan **Christopher**

#### For INT

1. Arul William **A.**
2. Eruthayavalan **Arockiaraj**
3. Joesh Megrath **D.**
4. John William **S.**
5. Malaimani **A.**
6. Ubahara Mano **S.**

At this point, I do appreciate and thank Fr. Pathiaraj Rayappan, the Director of Novices and the Salesian community for preparing them with commitment and dedication.



## **Perpetual Profession and Renewal of Vows**

In the recent ONLINE Provincial Council, which was held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the following clerics were admitted and they will make their Perpetual Profession on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Bro Satish Paul studying in Jerusalem will make his Perpetual Profession there.

| <b>No</b> | <b>Name of the Cleric</b>             | <b>Community</b>             |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 01        | <b>Arokia Doss Antony</b>             | DBAI, Park Town              |
| 02        | <b>Edwinraj Martin</b>                | Jawadhi Hills                |
| 03        | <b>Francis Aruldoss</b>               | Dharmapuri                   |
| 04        | <b>Jerome Hendry Savior</b>           | Our Lady of Refuge, Broadway |
| 05        | <b>Joseph Raj Arokiyaraj</b>          | DB, Tirupattur               |
| 06        | <b>Lourdu Joseph Arulanandam</b>      | SAGAI, Bagalur               |
| 07        | <b>Melvinroy Rayappan</b>             | Agro Tech, Polur             |
| 08        | <b>Thomas William Deepak Jesudoss</b> | DB, Yellagiri Hills          |
| 09        | <b>Thomonic Christy Chinnapparaj</b>  | SAGAI, Bagalur               |
| 10        | <b>Vikesh Joseph Infanto Sekar</b>    | Rinaldi Juniorate, SIGA      |
| 11        | <b>Elenchezian Thomas</b>             | DS, Tirupattur               |
| 12        | <b>Majhi Elias (INN)</b>              | Basin Bridge                 |

The following clerics are admitted to renew their vows on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

| <b>No</b> | <b>Name of the Clerics</b>    | <b>Community</b>        | <b>Years</b> |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 01        | Isaiyas Susai                 | Rinaldi Juniorate, SIGA | 1            |
| 02        | Sasikumar Mathew Paramanathan | DB, Perambur            | 1            |
| 03        | Servin Joseph                 | DBAI, Kavarpattai       | 1            |
| 04        | Irudayaraj Soosairaj          | SHC, Polur              | 1            |
| 05        | Arockia Piriyan Kupusavary    | Wisdom Town, Redhills   | 1            |
| 06        | Arokia Berdouil Raj           | DB, Yelagiri Hills      | 1            |
| 07        | Chinnadurai Lazar             | SHC, Tirupattur         | 1            |
| 08        | Leo Manoharan Selvaraj        | SHC, Tirupattur         | 1            |
| 09        | Yesuraj Christudass           | St. Joseph's, Vellore   | 1            |
| 10        | Arockia Rogan Xavier          | Sagayathottam           | 1            |
| 11        | Arockia Dass Lourdusamy       | DS, Tirupattur          | 2            |
| 12        | Muthu Sagayam                 | Vyasarjadi              | 1            |
| 13        | Anthonyamy Soosai Arputharaj  | Basin Bridge            | 2            |
| 14        | Govindaraj Samson Rajkumar    | Gedilam                 | 1            |
| 15        | Leo Gunasekaran               | DB, Perambur            | 2            |
| 16        | Maria Louis Selvaraj Stalin   | St. Bede's, Santhome    | 3            |
| 17        | Ronald Edwin Royappan         | DB, Pannur              | 1            |
| 18        | Xavier Britto Leo             | Gandhi Nagar, Vellore   | 3            |
| 19        | David Hamlin Britto           | Sagayathottam           | 1            |
| 20        | Susai Amalraj (IND)           | O.L.Refuge, Broadway    | 1            |
| 21        | Adahrii Robin Kapani (IND)    | O.L.Refuge, Broadway    | 2            |
| 22        | Sanjaj Bilung (INC)           | Basin Bridge            | 1            |
| 23        | Praveen Tirkey (INC)          | Basin Bridge            | 3            |
| 24        | Robin Ekka (INC)              | Basin Bridge            | 3            |
| 25        | Uttam Murmu (INC)             | Basin Bridge            | 3            |
| 26        | Bijoy Mandal (INC)            | SHC, Tirupattur         | 1            |
| 27        | David Vallamalla (INH)        | SHC, Tirupattur         | 1            |

|    |                                |         |   |
|----|--------------------------------|---------|---|
| 28 | Abraham Arul Jayam (in INT)    | Yercaud | 1 |
| 29 | Giragori Gnana Selvan (in INT) | Yercaud | 1 |
| 30 | Joseph Jagadish (in INT)       | Yercaud | 1 |
| 31 | Mani Prasanth (in INT)         | Yercaud | 1 |
| 32 | Peter Alexander (in INT)       | Yercaud | 1 |
| 33 | Raphael John Avinash (in INT)  | Yercaud | 1 |
| 34 | Deepak Roshan D (in INT)       | Yercaud | 1 |
| 35 | Francis Xavier A (in INT)      | Yercaud | 1 |
| 36 | Robinson P (in INT)            | Yercaud | 1 |

As I had mentioned above, the current scenario in Tamilnadu, demands us to avoid all public gatherings, functions and religious activities in large gatherings. Hence, **it has been decided this year to have all our Perpetual Professions and Renewal of vows in our own communities where the clerics reside. Hence, the Rectors of the respective communities will be authorized to prepare the clerics and receive the vows.** Let us continue to support our young Salesians with our fraternal love and prayers.

### **INM Vocation Camp 2020**

The Provincial Council in its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020, decided that, due to the global Pandemic crisis, **this year we will not be organizing the Annual Vocation Camp.** Instead, **the interested candidates (only X and XII) with the prior knowledge of the Vocation Promoter, will need to obtain a recommendation and conduct certificate from their respective parish priests in order to obtain admission in the Aspirantate.** Kindly note that we will not be admitting any students from stds. VIII or IX this year.

### **INM Annual Retreats 2020**

This year, because of the nationwide lockdown, we were unable to move out for the Province level retreats. But then we have made it very meaningfully in our own communities during the Holy Week (5-11 April 2020). I sincerely thank the Rectors and Leaders for making all the efforts to prepare and animate the community and made it wonderful time for our confreres to pray, reflect and rejuvenate themselves spiritually. **This year, our Province we will have a Monthly Recollection for the month of May 2020 which will also be held in our own communities on any suitable date before the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, preferably on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, when we celebrate the feast of St. Dominic Savio, offering special devotions for the complete eradication of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

### **Upcoming Feasts/Events**

- 06 May - St. Dominic Savio
- 13 May - St. Mary Mazzarello
- 18 May - St. Leonardo Murialdo
- 24 May - Mary, Help of Christians**
- 29 May - Bl. Joseph Kowaski

### **Rest in Peace**

- **Fr. Yeddanapalli Anthony Selvaraj SDB, (INH)** aged 87, passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020, at Don Bosco, Mothinagar, Hyderabad. Heartfelt condolences to INH Provincial and confreres.



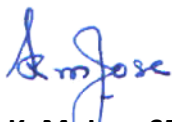
- **Bro. Micahel Condilac SDB, (INB)** aged 78, passed away on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2020 at Borivali, Mumbai. Sincere condolences to INB Provincial and confreres.
- **Mrs. Mary Francina**, aged 80, mother of Fr. Bosco Augustine passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in Krishnagiri. Prayerful condolences to Fr. Bosco and family
- **Sr. Philomena Solomon FMA**, aged 79, died on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020, at Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai. Sincere condolences to INM FMA Provincial and sisters
- **Mr. Francis Mathews**, aged 82, father of Fr. Dominic Matthews passed away on 01<sup>st</sup> May 2020 in Madhavaram, Chennai. Heartfelt condolences to you Fr. Dominic and family.

### **Conclusion – Feast of Mary Help of Christians**

The first Christians in Greece, Egypt, Antioch, Ephesus, Alexandria and Athens called the Blessed Virgin Mary with the name of "**Help of Christians**". Mary Help of Christians interceded in the battles of Lepanto and Vienna. In 1814 Napoleon signed his abdication and in 1815, when the Church recovered its position and its spiritual power, Pope Pius VII established on May 24 the feast of Mary Help of Christians to perpetuate the memory of his return to Rome following his imprisonment. **The spread of devotion to Mary Help of Christians is to be attributed to St. John Bosco, who chose her as the main Patroness of the Salesian Family and its works.** During his apostolic journey to Turin in 2015, Pope Francis said that he was educated in a Salesian school and that he learned to love Mary Help of Christians during his childhood.

During this Marian Month of May, I request you all to pray for all the people affected by the COVID-19, and in a special way for the confreres in Italy. You all know that Italy has been hit hard by Covid-19. During this month of May, dedicated to Our Lady, and in a special way to Mary Help of Christians, let us pray that through her powerful intercession, we who have seen wonders in the past, will continue to see more miracles in the present through our Blessed Mother. She is protecting us all in a very powerful way. **Keep trusting in the Lord and constantly pray to our Blessed Mother and we will experience miracles in our life.** Wishing you all a very happy feast of Mary Help of Christians!

Yours in Don Bosco,



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



Be devoted to  
Mary Help of Christians  
and you will see  
what miracles are!

- Don Bosco

