



# PROVINCIAL Circular

Salesian Province of Chennai (INM)



**INM-KMJ-CIR 56/10-2021**

**THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE**

**OCTOBER 2021**

My dear confreres,

We are in the month of October, traditionally, in our Salesian circles, a month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, the feast which we celebrate on the 7<sup>th</sup>. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, we also celebrate Gandhi Jayanthi, the Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation. In this Circular, I thought of reflecting with you on TRUTH and the need for us religious to know Truth, to love Truth and to be truthful in our life and mission.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ask anyone today, "What is truth?" and you're sure to start an interesting conversation! Try it even



in your own community or in the classroom and you're likely to receive a diversity of odd answers. The concept of truth has clearly fallen on hard times, and the consequences of rejecting it are ravaging human society. So, let's go back to the starting point and answer the question: What is truth? For something to be known, it really has to be true. You can't know - correctly - that the Earth is flat or that the Sun revolves around the earth, although for centuries people thought they

knew those fallacies to be accurate. They didn't know; they just believed!

One of the most profound and eternally significant questions in the Bible was posed by an unbeliever. Pontius Pilate—the man who handed Jesus over to be crucified—turned to Jesus in His final hour, and asked, "What is truth?" (**John 18:38**) It was a rhetorical question, a cynical response to what Jesus had just revealed: "*I have come into the world, to testify to the Truth.*" (**John 18:37**) Jesus Christ said, "*Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free*" (**John 8:32**). That's a wonderful promise that can be taken seriously. But just what is truth and what does it mean to know the truth? Two thousand years later, the whole world breathes Pilate's cynicism! Some say truth is a power play, a metanarrative constructed by the elite for the purpose of controlling the ignorant masses. To some, truth is subjective, the individual world of preference and opinion. Others believe truth is a collective judgment, the product of cultural consensus, and still others flatly deny the concept of truth altogether. So, once again, what is truth?

## **BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF TRUTH**

Here's a simple definition drawn from what the Bible teaches: **Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God.** Even more to the point: **Truth is the self-expression of God.** This is the Biblical meaning of truth. Because the definition of truth flows from God, truth is theological. Truth is also ontological—which is a fancy way of saying **it is the way things really are.** **Reality is what it is because God declared it so and made it so.** Therefore, **God is the author, source, determiner, governor, arbiter, ultimate standard, and final judge of all truth.**

The Old Testament refers to the Almighty as the “God of Truth” (**Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16**). When Jesus said of Himself, “**I am...the Truth...**” (**John 14:6**, emphasis added), He was

*I am the Way  
the Truth  
and the Life*  
John 14:6

thereby making a profound claim about His own deity. He was also making it clear that all truth must ultimately be defined in terms of God and His eternal glory. After all, Jesus is “the brightness of [God’s] glory and the express image of His person” (**Hebrews 1:3**). He is truth incarnate—the perfect expression of God and therefore the absolute embodiment of all that is true. Of course, there cannot be any discord or difference of opinion

between the written Word of God (Scripture) and the incarnate Word of God (Jesus). In the first place, **truth by definition cannot contradict itself**. Second, Scripture is called “**the Word of Christ**” (**Colossians 3:16**). It is His message, His self-expression. In other words, **the truth of Christ and the truth of the Bible are of the very same character**. They are in perfect agreement in every respect. Both are equally true. God has revealed Himself to humanity through Scripture and through His Son. Both perfectly embody the essence of what truth is.

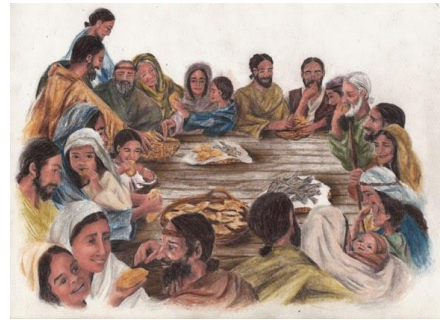
Remember, Scripture also says God reveals basic truth about Himself in nature. The heavens declare His glory (**Psalm 19:1**). His other invisible attributes (such as His wisdom, power, and beauty) are on constant display in what He has created (**Romans 1:20**). Knowledge of Him is inborn in the human heart (**Romans 1:19**), and a sense of the moral character and loftiness of His law is implicit in every human conscience (**Romans 2:15**). Still, the only infallible interpreter of what we see in nature or know innately in our own consciences is the explicit revelation of Scripture. Since Scripture is also the one place where we are given the way of salvation, entrance into the kingdom of God, and an infallible account of Christ, **the Bible is the touchstone to which all truth claims should be brought and by which all other truth must finally be measured**.

An obvious consequence of what I am saying is that truth means nothing apart from God. **Truth cannot be adequately explained, recognized, understood, or defined without God as the source**. Since He alone is eternal and self-existent and He alone is the Creator of all else, He is the fountain of all truth. If you don’t believe that, try defining truth without reference to God, and see how quickly all such definitions fail. The moment you begin to ponder the essence of truth, you are brought face to face with the requirement of a universal absolute—the eternal reality of God. Conversely, the whole concept of truth instantly becomes nonsense (and every imagination of the human heart therefore turns to sheer foolishness) as soon as people attempt to remove the thought of God from their minds.

There are serious moral implications too, whenever someone tries to dissociate truth from the knowledge of God. Paul went on to write, “Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting” (**Romans 1:28**). Abandon a Biblical definition of truth, and unrighteousness is the inescapable result. We see it happening before our eyes in every corner of contemporary society. **What we see in our society today is a verbatim fulfillment of what always happens when a society denies and suppresses the essential connection between God and Truth**. In fact, it is impossible to make sense of Truth without acknowledging God as the necessary starting point. Truth is not subjective, it is not a consensual cultural construct, and it is not an invalid, outdated, irrelevant concept. Truth is the self-expression of God. Truth is thus theological; it is the reality God has created and defined, and over which He rules. Truth is therefore a moral issue for every human being. How each person responds to the truth God has revealed is an issue of eternal significance. To reject and rebel against the truth of God results in darkness, folly, sin, judgment, and the never-ending wrath of God. To accept and submit to the truth of God is to see clearly, to know with certainty, and to find life everlasting.

## Good Christians and HONEST citizens

Knowing now what is truth and its origin, **we are called to live in a manner worthy of our calling: to be truthful, to be honest, to live and work with integrity.** We read in **Acts 4: 32-27** how the Believers share their possessions: All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the Apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the Apostles' feet.



We also read in **Acts 5: 1-11** about Ananias and Sapphira's DISHONESTY: Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before



it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

Honesty is how you gain credit for others to believe in you. The reason why honesty really is the best policy has everything to do with intentions. You can show how much someone means to you by being honest with them. By lying, this is also evidence that their value in your life is worth less than the truth. Both the above episodes from the Acts of the Apostles clearly indicate the consequences of living by the Truth in our day-to-day lives. **If we know the Truth, then the Truth will set us free.** To be set free means to be able to live a life that is edifying and enlightening. Our actions certainly do speak louder than our words and so our beneficiaries look up to us as models of integrity and veracity. They should be able to say of each one of us: "**Behold, here indeed is a Salesian, in whom there is no guile!**" (cf. John 1:47) **To be without guile is to be free of deceit, cunning, hypocrisy, and dishonesty in thought or action. A person without guile is a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives, whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his daily actions to principles of integrity.**



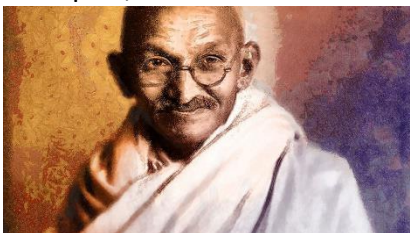
In the Strenna 2020, “Good Christians and HONEST citizens”, the Rector Major emphasized that as Salesians we must be attentive to the great human challenges of our world: **such as honesty of ourselves, of the people whom we work for and with.** When the Salesian Congregation was founded in 1859, the world was in fix and fits not knowing what to do and it was the time new philosophies began to emerge to capture the minds and hearts of a youth in despair. The Industrial Revolution and the subsequent miseries made all the young people look towards something that gave hope. It was during this time that Don Bosco launched a Youth Movement to bring change in the world and the Church.



**The Youth Movement of Don Bosco was to change the world and to make it a humane habitat for all human beings irrespective of their colour and creed.** For the nation and the Church, he wanted to create “good Christians and upright citizens” and definitely he succeeded through the various activities the Salesians engaged worldwide. The youth seen in Don Bosco and in the Salesians who were with him, men who were without any guile. Today when more than 15,000 Salesians and four lakh lay collaborators work in 124 countries mainly through education and other youth activities, nobody can say changes are not effected for the whole world. Whether it is the Preventive System of Education or the Evangelization, Salesians do build up good Christians and upright citizens. **Don Bosco believed that education and evangelization will definitely lead to the fullness of Christian life provided we Salesians are men of prayer and integrity.** Just think of the hundreds of thousands of students who go through the portals of Salesian educational institutions around the world and the changes we can effect around them if they are able to witness first-hand our sincere and transparent lives as Don Bosco himself always desired. This improvement of life was the change he wanted to bring about in the world and he knew this enhancement will bring the abundance of life Jesus promised when he said: the Truth will set you free!

### Mahatma Gandhiji’s “My Experiment with Truth”

Of all the moral principles, Gandhi placed truth as the first and foremost. He called it “the Sovereign Principle”, which included numerous other principles. It did not merely imply truthfulness in speech,



but in thought also “and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the absolute truth, the eternal principle, that is God”. He equated God with truth, as he says, *“I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. Often in my progress, I have had faint glimpses of the*

*Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that the above is real and all else is unreal.”*

“*Truth is God*” said Mahatma Gandhi. Today, **the power of Gandhi's words still inspires us to change the world by changing ourselves.** The basic conviction of Gandhi is that there is one reality-that is God, which is nothing else but Truth. His religious ideas are derived from that conviction. If Truth is God, then the sincere pursuit of Truth is religion. Gandhi said that truth and non-violence are the two sides of the same coin and considers ahimsa as the means; and truth as an end. He was a great supporter of peace and believed that the truth and non-violence are the only means through which peace can be gained and problems solved. Religion is ordinarily defined as devotion to some higher power or principle. For the quest of Truth involves tapas self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and is thus redirected to

the right path. **Gandhiji felt that a man of truth must also be a man of care. Carelessness is detrimental to one's personal growth. Gandhi believed in honesty. Trying to conceal a lie may require a person to lie even more and this becomes a vicious circle. Therefore, a person should be honest in the first instant, no matter how harsh the truth is.** Under the term *Satyagraha*, the 'force born of truth', Gandhi thus developed 'integrity' as a method of spiritual, social and political activism. Non-violence, *Ahimsa*, was its key feature, because violence and the threat of violence instil fear, and **fear prevents us from seeking, revealing and facing truth.**

### **PRACTICAL HINTS**

Reflecting on Truth and realizing its utmost importance, let us now come to some very practical ways by which we can also become Men of Truth:

1. **We are professed religious who are available to the mission totally. Therefore, we need to be sincere with our time. We should be able to tell the community about our whereabouts. The Rector of the community should be aware of the movements of all the confreres in the community and the Vice Rector will be informed when the Rector is away.**
2. **For each one of us, our priority is always for the mission entrusted to us by the community. Therefore, we can accept programmes outside the community only with the permission of the Rector and the Rector in turn will inform the Provincial if he is out of the community (for more than 3 days) for any reason other than the community's mission.**
3. **Our availability for the ministry to the neediest is a sign of our willingness to give our best to the poor. Therefore, at all times, we need to have the primacy of our mission in focus.**
4. **Accountability and Transparency in all matters will make us live our religious life in all sincerity.**
5. **A truthful person will also have complete accountability with regard to all money transactions. We must always keep in mind the words of Don Bosco: What we have belongs to the poor; woe to us if we do not use it responsibly for the mission.**
6. **We need to consciously make the right choices of what we see and hear in our day-to-day use of the media and social networks.**
7. **We are committed to Jesus and His mission. Therefore, we should be transparent with regard to our relationships.**
8. **As truthful persons, let us be charitable in our words by thinking well before we speak anything uncharitable about our confreres or our beneficiaries.**
9. **Regular introspection is required to remain true to our calling. We should never be afraid to face ourselves realistically.**
10. **Truth and love are beautiful guiding principles for our life. Let us be motivated by truth which will keep us on the right track. Whatever we do, we must do with love and passion for our confreres as well as for those entrusted to us in the mission. This will also make us give our best to the poor and thus be truthful to our religious calling.**

## **NEWS FROM THE PROVINCE**

### **Provincials Meeting in Rome**

Our beloved Rector Major has called for a meeting with all the English-speaking (end-of-term) Provincials at the Salesian Generalate, Rome. The actual meeting will be from 18<sup>th</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Before the meeting, as per the SOP the Italian Government, we have to be quarantined for a week. Hence, I will be leaving to Rome on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, early morning. On my way back, I will go to Fujairah and have the Provincial Visitation there. I will be back to the province on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. Kindly do pray for all of us. For all matters of ordinary governance of the Province, kindly contact Fr. Don Bosco Lourdusamy, the Vice Provincial.

### **First Professions 2021**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, 17 novices (9 of INM and 8 of INT) made their First Profession at Idaya Deepam Novitiate, Yellagiri Hills. Rev. Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam, the Provincial of Trichy Province received their vows. Our Vice Provincial, Fr. Don Bosco and I were also present for this event. All the newly professed have reached Yercaud for their philosophical studies.

On behalf of the Province, I thank the community of the Novitiate for preparing them for this important step with so much love and dedication, in a special way, I extend my gratitude to Fr. Pathiaraj Rayappan, for guiding the novices very meticulously for the past 7 years. Fr. Pathiaraj will be part of the Citadel community and from here he will carry out his responsibility as the Moderator of the INM Provincial Chapter 2022. We wish him all the best in this responsible task.

### **Provincial Chapter 2022 Preparation Plan for October**

Fr. Pathiaraj Rayappan, the Moderator, has planned for various group meetings in view of the Provincial Chapter. They are mainly for dissemination & collection of responses from all confreres of the Province. The different dates for various groups are given below. Kindly take an active part in these meetings and contribute your viewpoints and suggestions for the betterment of life and mission of the Province.

06	Wed	PC22: <b>Quinquennists</b> (in Citadel)
07	Thu	PC22: <b>Students of Philosophy</b> (Yercaud)
09	Sat	PC22: <b>Practical Trainees &amp; College students</b> (in Don Bosco, Tirupattur)
10	Sun	PC22: <b>Novices</b> (Yellagiri)
20	Wed	PC22: <b>Headmasters</b> meeting (in Citadel)
21	Thu	PC22: <b>Chennai-Pondy</b> Regional Meeting (in Citadel)
22	Fri	PC22: <b>Vellore-Tirupattur</b> Regional meeting (in Don Bosco, Gandhi Nagar)
25	Mon	PC22: Mailing Economic Directory to Communities
27	Wed	PC22: <b>Students of Theology</b> , Kavarapettai (Afternoon)
28	Thu	PC22: <b>Students of Theology</b> , Kavarapettai (Morning)

***Kindly note that the Moderator will not be sending any separate communication regarding the Chapter meetings.***

### **Meeting for the Quinquennists & Youth Service Coordinators**

Our Province Youth Ministry Delegate, Fr. John Christy has planned to organize half-day **Animation Program** for all the **Youth Services Coordinators** on the **4<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, Monday (afternoon)**,

at the Provincial House, Citadel. May this animation program rejuvenate and move ahead in our services to young people in our mission places

**From the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, evening, to the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, evening, there will be meeting for the Quinquennium Priests at Provincial House, Citadel.** I request all the Quinquennists to attend this meeting without fail. The details of the meeting have been sent to you from Vice Provincial office. I thank Fr. Don Bosco, Vice Provincial and formation delegate, for animating and guiding all the young Salesians (PTs, College Students, Pre-Perpetuals, Perpetuals and Quinquennists) very methodically and consistently.

### **The Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco**

Don Bosco inspired the start of a vast movement of persons who in different ways work for the salvation of the young (Const. 5). Of the 32 members of the Salesian Family, ‘The Association of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco’ as officially named by the Statutes of Indian National Federation (2017), plays a vital role in becoming the long arms of Don Bosco and his Charism in the concrete situations of the world today.

As they live the motto given by our Father and Founder, Don Bosco: “KNOW, LOVE, HELP ONE ANOTHER AND KEEP UNITED,” they also try their best to preserve, develop and live the values of Don Bosco’s Educational System; to spread the spirit of Don Bosco and to involve themselves in Don Bosco’s mission to the youth of today; to uphold and promote the value and the rights of the human person and the family; and to work towards building up a social and political order based on justice, peace and harmony.

In all these endeavours, the Salesian community is to be the ‘animating nucleus,’ adhering to the principle of ‘Autonomy in Communion.’ The Past Pupils of Don Bosco, recognize the Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation, as the Father and centre of unity of the Salesian Family, and, as Successor of Don Bosco and as the primary reference.

After much discussion during the Rectors Meeting, the Provincial Council decided that we will adhere to the Statutes of Indian National Federation. It is the Provincial and the Rector who are the charismatic Heads of the Association. The Provincial or Rector takes the place of Don Bosco, as a spiritual animator and one responsible for promoting the Past Pupils in the Province and in a local setting in line with the Statutes of Past Pupils of Don Bosco Indian National Federation. If considered suitable, the Rector may appoint another Salesian as the Delegate of the Past Pupils Unit (Statutes Art.12, 35). Wherever the Rector is not the Delegate of the Past Pupils Unit, the appointed Delegate acts as his representative. The Delegate is directly responsible for the on-going formation of the Past Pupils. He carries out his work of animation through his interventions during the meetings and gatherings, through his communications, personal contacts, visits, etc. If he is not himself the Rector, he takes care to brief the Rector and his Council regularly regarding the plans and activities of the Unit.

### **Rest in Peace**

**Mr. Ángel Fernández Fernández**, aged 89, father of our Rector Major, Fr Ángel Fernández Arttime, breathed his last after a long illness on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, in Asturias, Spain.

**Fr. R.K. Guangdiat Nicholas SDB (IND)**, aged 49, passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2021. He was suffering from High Blood Sugar for a long time. He was also on dialysis and tested positive twice for Covid-19. Our heartfelt condolence to Fr. Jose Kuruvachira, the Provincial and the confreres of Dimapur Province.

**Mr. Anthonypitchai**, aged 63, father of Br. Aldon Jibose SDB (INT) - 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Student of Theology at Kavarapettai, passed away on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 due to massive heart attack at Inayamputhanthurai.

**Mr. V. Stanislaus Bosco**, aged 79, father of Fr. Sagaya Francis Pinto SDB (INT), passed away on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 in Adambakkam, Chennai.

We offer our condolences to our dear confreres who have lost their dear ones in their family. We shall continue to pray for the deceased souls and for their family members.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, formerly known as Our Lady of Victory, is a feast day of the Roman Catholic Church, celebrated on 7 October, the anniversary of the decisive victory of the combined fleet of the Holy League of 1571 over the Ottoman navy at the Battle of Lepanto. It was instituted to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary in gratitude for the protection that she gives the Church



in answer to the praying of the Rosary by the faithful. The Catholic faith states, as a Dogma, that Mary was assumed into heaven and is with Jesus Christ, her divine son. Mary should be called Queen, not only because of her Divine Motherhood of Jesus Christ, but also because God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of eternal salvation. Throughout Church history, many popes and saints have highly recommended that we pray the rosary. St. Louis de Montfort said, 'When the Holy Rosary is said well, it gives Jesus and Mary more glory and is more meritorious than any other prayer. The rosary is more than a prayer. It symbolizes our destiny in and with God according to Mary's example. To live up to this destiny, we need faith in God's marvellous deeds for us, perseverance in his ways (hope) and a practical attitude toward living our faith, that is charity.

We should always keep in mind that the goal of the Rosary is Christ. When we pray the Rosary, we approach Christ through Mary, His Mother and our Mother, because of her special connection with Him and with us. The Rosary provides that time and focus. The 20 mysteries of the Rosary walk the faithful through the major events of Jesus's life. The simple and repeated prayers of the Rosary allow us to really focus on what Jesus did and said. The Rosary provides us with a time and place to connect with Our Lord and Saviour. As Salesians, and faithful sons of our Blessed Mother, let us resolve to pray the Holy Rosary daily and devoutly.

Yours truly in Don Bosco,

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



Date: 02.10.2021

Place: Chennai - 600010