



# Provincial Circular

## Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

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01.02.2019

Dearest Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

We will continue to delve deep into the theme of Holiness. Our very vocation as Christians and more especially as religious is a call to Holiness. Pope Francis in his apostolic letter *Gaudete et Exsultate* reminds us: “Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God’s grace. For in the words of León Bloy, when all is said and done, **“the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint”** (GE 34). We do not want our life to end up as a tragedy. Among other sources, our constitutions give us a clear road map tracing out for us the path of holiness, a holiness we are called to achieve not individually but as a community and with the young people.

### *Holiness...a Journey Together*



By our consecration we are driven to a life-long gift to God and His Church and to live more in communion with Christ and His mission. Walking on the pilgrim journey to holiness is not just an opportunity offered to us by the Church and the Institute but more especially a responsibility to lead others particularly the young people on this same trail. The Path of Holiness is a journey; a life-long commitment to becoming holy and live more and more for Christ. Article 5 and Regulations 39 of our Constitutions clearly specify this indispensable element of leading the young people to God; to strengthen the bonds of fraternal love with them and together to renew the commitment to holiness.

To be holy and to remain holy requires of us to lean on one another, to form community of faith, hope and love. Pope Francis said: *“Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others”*. Our Constitutions remind us in Article 49 that to walk the path of holiness in the community we need to live and work together in the name of the Lord, in the true spirit of family with passion, zeal and optimism, seeking to form *one heart one soul* in fulfilling the commandment of Love. This will make of our communities, places to bring to accomplishment the rich experience of God and will create ample space for one another that favors the spiritual growth and progress towards holiness.

Let us therefore make the commitment today to continue travelling together along this incredible journey of Love and Holiness in our personal lives and mission. Let us contribute our own share to

construct daily simple holy steps to sanctity with our authentic presence and generous giving towards the growth of one another and the community.

### *Presentation of our Lord (2 February)*

The Feast of the presentation of our Lord in the Temple is a reminder for us that Jesus, the Word made flesh and presented in the temple makes of his life and his humanity, a sacrifice pleasing to God. In celebrating this feast, we thank God for the gift of consecrated life, a fruit of Christ's offering which calls to mind the total giving of Christ, the root from which the consecrated life of women and men who follow Christ blossoms and grows, loving him with an undivided and liberated heart in chastity, poverty and obedience.



Jesus offered himself fully to the Father so that the Father could fulfill in him the salvation of the world. In the same way, we are being called by God to extend His redemptive work with our generous self gift, total availability for His Kingdom and enthusiasm to renew constantly our consecration.

### *Our Lady of Lourdes (11 February)*

February 11 marks the first apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1858 to St. Bernadette Soubirous. The message of Our Blessed Mother in Lourdes calls to mind of the need to personal conversion and walk along the path of Christian Holiness. It calls us to:

- **Contemplate** the grace that overwhelmed our Blessed Mother and the divinity of Christ in her. This Feast reminds us of our call to conversion and spiritual wholeness- a call to cooperate fully and generously in the mystery of redemption.
- **Constant perseverance** in Prayer which is the key that opens the heart to the Spirit of God and ultimately leads us to walk steadfastly and holily in His ways and conforms our wills to His Holy will.
- **Collaboration and openness** to God's grace and his Spirit that flow through the daily simple circumstances of life just as the little Bernadette was full of grace with her pure and open heart to God.

Mary's appearance and Bernadette's response present a picture of what it means to love God with our whole heart, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is a visible expression of purity of heart that calls us to respond to God's invitation like Mary "Be it done unto me completely and fully according to your word. Accomplish in my life fully what you want to accomplish."

### *World day of the sick*

In celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, we also celebrate the World Day of the Sick which was established by Saint Pope John Paul II this very day in 1993. Over the years, the celebration of this day has had a significant impact in the Church and in the world in the perspective that there is

more concern, more care and better recognition of the weak and vulnerable section of the Church and the world.

Pope Francis in his message for this 27th World Day of the Sick, urges believers to promote a culture of generosity, noting that the joy of generous giving is a barometer of the health of a Christian.

This year, the city of Kolkata has been chosen as the place to celebrate the Word Day of the Sick. In this regard, Pope Francis has highlighted the figure of Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata as a model of charity who made God's love for the poor and sick visible. To quote his words: *"She was a generous dispenser of divine mercy, making herself available for everyone through her welcome and defense of human life, of those unborn and those abandoned and discarded...seeing in them their God-given dignity"*.



Being very close to the hosting venue, we are invited all the more to be active participants in the event, following the living example of St. Mother Teresa to be good Samaritans with our generous gestures to the weak, sick, poor and those susceptible to physical and moral dangers as well; that we may become the credible witnesses and evangelizers of God's mercy.

### *World youth day*



The World Youth Day held at Panama from the 22- 27 January 2019, was an occasion that rejuvenated and renewed the faith of many young people in the Church. Among the many beautiful resonances of the mega celebration, I would like to quote the beautiful message of our Holy Father at the inaugural ceremony.

The Pope said that World Youth Day is a celebration of joy and hope for the whole Church and, for the world, a witness of faith. He reminded the young people that a disciple is not merely someone who arrives at a certain place, but one who sets out decisively, who is not afraid to take risks and keeps walking. This is the great joy: to keep walking. He acknowledged the courage of the young people to take risks and to keep journeying. He remarked that they are from different places and are different in so many ways, but none of it has stopped them from meeting one another and rejoicing to be together. The unifying force is nothing but Jesus.

He strongly stressed on the point that to encounter one another does not require similarities in looks or thoughts, neither a common liking for music or games...but rather the culture of encounter is a call inviting to dare to keep alive a shared dream, a great dream that has a place for everyone. The dream for which Jesus gave his life on the cross, for which the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost and brought fire to the heart of every man and woman in the hope of finding room to grow and flourish.

He posed to them few thought-provoking questions: What keeps us united? Why are we united? What prompts us to encounter each other? The certainty of knowing that we have been loved with a profound love that we neither can nor want to keep quiet about a love that challenges us to respond

in the same way: *with love* - the love of the Lord, a daily, discreet and respectful love; a love that is free and freeing, a love that heals and raises up.

He concluded his message saying that the most hope-filled result of the World Youth Day will be the faces of the young people - the youth who would return home with the new strength born of every encounter with others and with the Lord. He invited them to repeat with him “Lord, teach me to love as you have loved us”.

### *Salesian Models of Sanctity*

#### **Blessed Pius IX (7 February)**



Pope Pius IX was the longest-reigning elected Pope in the history of the Catholic Church, serving from 16 June 1846 until his death in 1878, a period of nearly 32 years. Apart from his influence in many major events and decisions of the Church like the First Vatican Council, the definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the proclamation of St. Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church, Pope Pius IX has a lot of acquaintance and influence on the birth of the Salesian Family.

Pius IX supported and guided Don Bosco in the founding of the Salesian Congregation and he convinced Don Bosco to write his memoirs to leave the Salesians a spiritual legacy. During his Pontificate he approved the Salesian Society, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Pious Union of Salesian Cooperators, and was amongst the first to enroll as a member. Don Bosco had great love for Pius IX and accepted all his advice, even when it cost him great sacrifice: In fact, he is the beloved friend, patron and confidant of St John Bosco and is revered as Don Bosco’s Pope.

During his lifetime, Pius IX was testified by many as a man of profound prayer, of deep union and communion with God and a contemplative in matters related to the Divine. In spite of the demanding concerns and commitments as the head of the Church, his rapport with God grew even stronger especially his long hours spent before the Blessed Sacrament. His spirit of prayer was conjoined to his pastoral sense which characterized him in his big and open heart that embraced all people- his faithful followers and rebels, friends and enemies alike. Pervaded and sustained by the spirit of faith, he always sought to correspond his life to the highest ideal of Christian perfection.

Beatified on 3 September 2000 by John Paul II, Blessed Pius IX has truly become for us a model of prayer and faith, of constant communion with God and of conviction to live by the correct principles that leads to the excellence of Christian living – *Sanctity*.

#### **Blessed Eusebia Palomino Yenes (9 February)**

Eusebia Palomino was born on 15 December, 1899 in a poor and humble family but rich in Christian faith and human formation, in an ambient of mutual love, charity and cordiality to everyone. Her heroic ways of living the sanctity of ordinary life and work was noticed and appreciated much. She was accepted in the Institute of the Daughters of Mary help of Christians and made her first religious profession in 1924. Soon after her first profession, she was entrusted



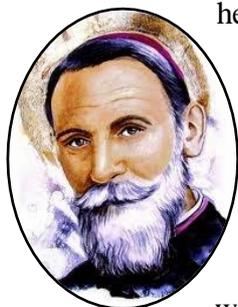
with the mission as cook and domestic help and later on in the oratory. She carried out her ordinary service extraordinarily like Don Bosco had wanted, in humility and silent communion with God. The girls always wanted to be near her, attracted by her deep spirituality and her capturing human traits. Although Sr. Eusebia had no education in theological doctrine, her heart was full of God's wisdom and she made time for everyone. Her spirit of prayer and convincing faith is well noted to all and she attracted many people - seminarians, adults and even priests to seek her advice.

The kitchen was for her, a place to educate and better still a sanctuary for holiness. Like Don Bosco she had received the gift of prophecy from the Lord. She predicted the Spanish civil war and offered herself as a victim for Spain. Her holiness is summed up in an intense spirituality and a profound humility in daily life. She was born to Heaven on 10 February 1933. Her short life was full of challenges and hurdles, but she turned them all into a refuge of joy and godliness which she bore with grace and piety. Eusebia is indeed an example par excellence in our times to live the grace of God with joy and trust in every situation of life. She has taught us more by her simple and humble life to transform every apostolate and mission of ours into a school that educate God's Love, a home that welcomes everyone without distinction into her circle and an altar that offers every act of life so that God's Love may be known and experienced in the world. Let us imbibe the simple principles of living daily Love and Holiness from this authentic and holy Daughter of Mary Help of Christians.

### **Saints Aloysius Versiglia and Calistus Caravario (25 February)**

Saints Aloysius Versiglia and Calistus Caravario, the martyrs in China are the protomartyrs of the Salesians of Don Bosco.

**Luigi Versiglia** was born at Oliva Gessi (Pavia) on 5th June 1873. He came to Don Bosco's Oratory when he was twelve years old and went on to become a Salesian Priest. After his ordination in 1895



he spent ten years as novice master at Genzano, Rome. In 1906 he led the first Salesian missionary expedition to China, fulfilling a prophecy often repeated by Don Bosco. He was a man of wisdom and tireless energy, a real shepherd totally dedicated to his flock. He gave his Vicariate a solid infrastructure with a seminary, houses of formation, various residences, an orphanage and old people's homes. He was more of a father than an authoritarian. He led by his example of hard work and Christian love and never asked people to do anything without first weighing up their capabilities.

**Callistus Caravario** was born at Cuorné, on 18 June 1903. From his earliest years, everyone thought he was an excellent child for his meek and reflective nature. On the advice of Fr. Garelli the then Rector of the Oratory, he entered the Novitiate and became a Salesian. In 1922 Bishop Versiglia was in Turin who spoke of the missions to the Brothers. Callistus told him: "Bishop, you will see me in China".



On 13 February 1930, Fr Caravario was in Shiuchow to accompany the bishop on his pastoral visit to the Linchow mission along with some young boys and girls who were studying in Shiuchow. On 25 February a group of Bolshevik pirates stopped the Bishop's boat, wanting to take the girls. Bishop Versiglia and Fr Callistus stopped them.

They were taken by force and ultimately shot, but before they were killed they heard one another's confessions. Their last breath was spent for their beloved China. Their journey towards attaining the crown of holiness was marked by ardent faith and fidelity to God and His works even in the face of death. Their missionary passion and thirst for souls notwithstanding the obstacles in their mission land, is indeed an example for us to follow and to live.

### *Communications*

**Provincial Chapter of the SDB:** We assure our prayers and sisterly support to all the Salesian Provinces of India as they prepare for their Provincial Chapter in the coming months. May the Spirit of the Lord stir every participant that every discussion and decision be guided and inspired by God.

**Animators' Retreat:** The Provincial Councilors and the community animators will have their special days of grace during the spiritual retreat preached by Fr. George Maliekal SDB from 22 February- 1 March. I request the prayers of all the communities for a lasting and fruitful outcome of this retreat.

**Awareness cum training programme organized by the Youth Ministry Sector:** The FMA Youth Ministry Sector of our Province is organizing an important Awareness cum training programme on the topic '*Drug Addiction is a social and Family Disease*' in view of our future plans to initiate some services to address the issue of drug addiction particularly among the young people. The Programme will be on 21 February 2019 at Bellefonte. With resource persons who are competent in the area, the programme will provide useful insights on how to launch into this new ministry. Considering the importance and utility of this programme, I request all the Animators to participate in this meeting which will be held from 9: 30 a.m. to 3: 30 p.m. In addition, all the School Principals and youth animators from our communities are invited to take part in it.

### *Request for Prayers*

#### **For the sick:**

Let us lift up all our sick brothers and sisters to the touch of Jesus the Divine Healer through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes.

- The mother of Sr. Aitihun Lawai
- The sister of Sr. Regina Dkhar
- The sister of Sr. Elizabeth Thannimoothil
- The sister of Sr. Makriana Marwein
- The brother of Sr. Linda Horne
- The brother of Sr. Bertina Kurbah
- The cousin brother of Sr. Luigina Duia
- The brother in law of Sr. Celibon Maslai
- I thank you sincerely for the prayers you offered for the successful operation of my brother, Fr. Paul George and I kindly request you to continue remembering him in your prayers so that he may have a speedy and complete recovery.

**For the dead:**

- We unite in solidarity and prayers with the family of Sr. Aitihun Lawai at the departure of their dear father on 8 January 2019. May he rest in peace forever.
- We offer our heartfelt sympathies and prayers to Fr. Matthew Thonikuzhiyil SDB and the Salesian Province of Bangalore at the demise of Fr. Joseph Thekadathu and Bro. Mathew Aayila on 15 and 20 January 2019 respectively. May the departed ones intercede for the needs of the Province.

I wish you a happy month of February filled with God's blessings in every way. Many of our schools will begin the new scholastic year in this month. May the Spirit of God guide every step that you take so that together with the young and the educating community, you may soar new heights of wisdom and holiness. I conclude with the following saying of St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata as a wish and reminder for all.

*"Holiness is not a luxury for some but a simple duty for all"*

**(Mother Teresa)**

Assuring you of my sisterly support and accompaniment.

Affectionately,



**Sr. Elizabeth George FMA**  
**Provincial**