



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

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01.11.2018

Greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

Dearest Sisters,

My maiden visit to the communities of East Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills has given me a quick glimpse into the life and mission of our sisters. I was happy to encounter personally each of the sisters working in these beautiful mission centres that the Lord has entrusted to the Province. I was impressed to see many young sisters with wonderful gifts and talents being placed in these communities where there is great scope for evangelization. Using your God-given talents and relying fully on the strength that comes from a deep communion with Jesus and among yourselves, you will be able to do a yeoman service in spreading the Good News to people. At the conclusion of my first round of visits, I was happy to participate in the 40th Annual Meet cum Ruby Jubilee of the Salesian Co-operators of Shillong Province hosted at St. Mary Mazzarello Convent, Jowai. It was a great joy to witness the fervour, love and commitment of the Salesian Co-operators who had come from various SDB and FMA units. We are proud of these committed lay leaders who show great sense of loyalty to the Church and society. We are also blessed to have vibrant groups of young people who are the protagonists of our mission and many committed lay leaders willing to support us in our various endeavours. May God grant us great courage and generosity to match the expectations of the young people.

All Saints' Day

"The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence"

{Pope Francis in Gaudete et Exsultate(GE) §1}



On 1st November, the Church celebrates the solemnity of all the saints, persons like us who have reached the perfection of Christian life in their earthly sojourn and who now enjoy the beatific glory in the Lord's eternal mansion with the whole of the Triumphant Church. An immense multitude of canonized saints and other non-canonized saints have reached the fullness that God wants for everyone. In celebrating this feast, there is a universal call to holiness that the Lord addresses to us: *"Be perfect as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect"* (Mt 5:48) On this feast we celebrate the merits of all the saints, which means above all to celebrate the gifts of God, the wonders He has worked in their lives and their wholehearted response to the grace of God.

Pope Francis in his Apostolic exhortation ‘Gaudete et Exultate’ speaks of the call to holiness in today’s world. In it he proposes the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. The Lord has chosen us “to be holy and blameless before Him in love” (Eph 1:4). This is a rich document written in simple language. I don’t intend to go into it in depth as I am sure you would have made personal and community efforts to read and assimilate its contents. Let the example of the saints, most of whom lived in very ordinary circumstances like us, struggling with defects and failings and at the same never losing sight of their goal, encourage and lead us forward to merit that reward prepared for those who persevere in faith till the end. Listen to how the Pope speaks very concretely and realistically about the saints “Next Door”. Let us then discover the holiness of the persons among whom we live - our Sisters, our family members, our children and the members of the educating community, the simple and humble people that we meet in the Parishes, in the villages etc. Finally let us realize that holiness is not an option for us but an obligation. By our religious vocation we are doubly called to walk the path of holiness. Along this path there is no place for mediocrity and superficiality. Let us therefore strive to become holy following the path traced out by our Holy Founders, St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello. And let our holiness be perceptible by the way we speak and act, that people recognize us as persons of God not by our dress alone but more especially by our life of communion.

We are called to holiness in the Salesian way

Every religious family in the Church came into existence through the intervention of the Spirit and the inspiration given to the founders in order to respond to the needs of the Church according to a specific charism and through the holiness of its members. There are certain things common to all consecrated religious – like the vows, community life and mission. What distinguishes us, as FMA is the way we live our vows, the way we live our community life and the way we carry out our mission. The specific path of holiness indicated by Founders is outlined in our Constitutions. We are **Called** to a life of holiness by following Jesus Chaste, Poor and Obedient, in the style of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. We are **Consecrated** for the mission among the young whom the Lord gives us and we are **Sent out** to proclaim the Good News as apostles and credible messengers of Christ. Each one of us freely responded to this unmerited and gratuitous gift of the Lord’s Call with the covenant we made with Him on the day of our profession. Let this conviction of our being **CALLED, CONSECRATED** and **SENT OUT** keep us always on the path of holiness.



Mary was the educator of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. She was a living presence in their life. She continues to play a key role in every vocation that comes into our Institute and we believe that she continues to exercise her motherly presence among us. Let us implore her help that we become like her women open to God and in solidarity with humanity. May she help us to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit who dwells in us, docile and ready to collaborate with His work of holiness in order to render our rapport with Christ and with one another more authentic and our educative work more fruitful.

Models of Salesian Sanctity

The path of sanctity in the Salesian way characterized by a simple and joyful daily living has undoubtedly raised to the altars very many members of the Salesian Family. The heroic example of Blessed Artimedes Zatti (13 November), Blessed Magdalene Morano (15 November) and Venerable Mamma Margaret (25 November) gives us the surety that sanctity is possible for all and to excel in it is our responsibility.

Artimedes Zatti was known for his heroic virtues practiced on a daily basis especially in the hospital. His cheerful attitude, the jokes, and his affection for every one of his patients were his medicines for them. He was not only a nurse, but an educator in the faith, in times of trial and sickness – a good Samaritan in the style of Don Bosco, a sign and bearer of God’s love.

Magdalene Morano spent her whole life in teaching and in catechizing. In Sicily, she began a fruitful educational work among the girls and young women of the working classes. With “one eye on the ground and ten on Heaven,” she opened schools, youth centers, hostels, and workshops all over the island. Blessed Morano is an eminent model of authentic Salesian life, which began with personal contact with Don Bosco. She was the bearer of a special apostolic spirituality, in the style of her union with God, the spirit of initiative, hard work, and generosity of vision. At her beatification on November 5, 1994 the Holy Father St. Pope John Paul II referred to her as an outstanding witness of a woman and a consecrated religious who reached the apex of touching beauty. “*We must become saints at any cost*” was her motto which she lived faithfully to the very end and by her example she shows the Salesian Family the sources of our charism and encourages us to renew our ardor.

Mamma Margaret was a woman of great faith and God was always the foremost in her thoughts and words. For ten years, her life became entwined with that of Don Bosco and with the beginnings of the Salesian work. She was the first and principal Cooperator of Don Bosco and she became the maternal element in the Preventive System. Her pedagogical teachings and Catechism arose always from her daily experiences. Hers was a total and effective Love, made up of words and many heroic deeds- a constant example of complete self giving.

All Souls’ Day

It is very significant that soon after the feast of all the saints, the Church celebrates the All Souls’ Day. Our Christian faith is truly a source of joy in which, after our death, we do not end up in nothingness, nor do we lose ourselves in the anonymous nebula of a faceless illusion, but each one remains oneself with one’s own individuality and personal soul. The soul in heaven waits to be reunited with its own body to resurrect gloriously to the “Resurrection of the bodies” and the ‘Communion of Saints” at the end of time. This was confirmed by Jesus Himself with His Resurrection.

The Church, in fact, with her faithful is always a mother and wants everyone to feel present in a single embrace of God’s love. Therefore she prays for the dead, as for the living, because they too are alive in the Lord.



“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” {Phil. 1, 21}

For God's merciful Love has no limits of time and space, this is why we can say that the maternal love of the Church goes beyond the grave. Those who have gone before us have lived the testimony of faith with their earthly lives and have left behind a legacy of faith that we gratuitously inherit. Commemorating the holy souls is always a reminder for us of our temporary sojourn on earth and an opportunity to rekindle our Christian faith in the invincible goodness and mercy of God.

On this day, we not only remember the dead, but we are called to be generous in renewing and professing our Faith through different acts of mercy; to unite ourselves with the Suffering Church in our prayers and suffrages. According to the traditional teachings of the Church, there are two plenary indulgences attached to All Souls Day, one for visiting a church and another for visiting a cemetery. Let us not miss these opportunities of obtaining the desired indulgences for our earthly pilgrimage towards our eternal home.

Synod of Bishops

The Synod of Bishops has just concluded on the 28th October 2018. The Holy Father said that the result of the Synod is not the document but rather that it should continue to work in our hearts. The Document of the Synod brings the episode of the Disciples of Emmaus and ends with a vocational thrust of the call to holiness "Vocational differences are gathered in the unique and universal call to holiness". Let us try to strive ever better in our journey with the young to motivate them to a life of daily sanctity and faithfulness to the Gospel values, thus to bring about a spiritual renewal and vigor in the Church. We await the English translation of the document which will definitely pave way for a more fruitful ministry among the young people.

Conclusion of the Scholastic Year

We are coming to the conclusion of the scholastic year. Every end of the year brings us new prospects to reflect on the year gone by - the challenges we faced, the hurdles encountered, the accomplishments achieved but above all the journey made with the educating community and especially with our young people. The hard work you've put in throughout the school year has paid off. I am sure many lives have been blessed with your encouraging and educative presence and many souls have been drawn closer to God. I am certain too that the aphorism of Don Bosco "*In every young person, a point of goodness is accessible, and it is the primary duty of the educator to discover that sensitive cord of the heart so as to draw out the best in the young person*" has been the guiding zeal in all our educative presences. As we conclude this yearly session, I wish all the members of the educating community and the young people a happy ending and all the very best for the winter vacation. We look forward to welcoming you all back, refreshed and rejuvenated for what lies ahead of us.

40th Annual Meeting cum Ruby Jubilee

The Salesian Cooperators of Shillong Province had a two day celebration commemorating the 40th Annual Meeting and Ruby Jubilee of the Association on October 27- 28, 2018 at St. Mary Mazzarello Convent, Jowai. Rt. Rev. Victor Lyngdoh DD, the Bishop of Jowai Diocese presided over the concelebrated Mass in the Cathedral ground, Jowai, during which 19 new members took their promise. Cooperators from all the units of the SDB and FMA Provinces of Shillong were

present for the occasion. The Ruby Jubilee Souvenir as well as the Khasi translation of the Project for Apostolic Life (PAL) was released on the occasion. I congratulate Sr. Christina Kharkongor, the Provincial Delegate and the Community of St. Mary Mazzarello, Jowai for the great contribution they made to the success of this event.

COMMUNICATIONS

Updating Courses

- **New Animators' Course:** In answer to the need for better formation of formators and animators of communities, the Province is offering opportunity to 9 new animators of communities to attend a course for Local Animators organized by the National CRI from November 1-7, 2018 at New Delhi.
- **Principals' Course:** 9 Sisters engaged in School apostolate will participate in the National Conference on Education organized at Don Bosco Institute, Kharghuli, Guwahati from November 8-10, 2018.
- **Nurses' Annual Meeting:** All the Sisters engaged in health Ministry will attend the Nurses' Meet organized at FMA Outreach on November 12-13, 2018.

Team Meeting

As communicated earlier, the Provincial Team will have the first meeting with new team members on December 1, 2018. I thank Sr. Celine D'Cunha, the new General Coordinator and other new team members for their availability to be at the service of the Province and I wish everyone a fruitful journey of animation.

FMA - India History Commission

As you are well aware, we are heading towards the Centenary of FMA Presence in India which will be celebrated in 2022 – 2023. The National PCI commission has already given guidelines for writing the History of each Province which will eventually be compiled into two volumes. Sr. Euginia Laloo who is working on the history of Shillong Province will be assisted by a team consisting of Sr. Catherine Susngi, Sr. Linda Horne, Sr. Rosina Susngi, Sr. Maria Crescensia Swer, Sr. Rodalin Kamar and Sr. Euginia Kyntiewlin Susngi. We wish them all the best and I request the communities concerned to extend your support and collaboration in order to speed up the work.

Prayer for peace

We are anxiously and prayerfully looking forward to the forthcoming elections in our country. In this regard, as true citizens of our Motherland we have our duty and responsibility to intensify our prayers for its fruitful outcome. Therefore, there is a proposal to pray the Jericho prayer for Peace, in union with our Christian brethren across the Nation. (The copy of the prayer is attached along with this Circular)

Retreats 2019

The dates of retreats for 2019 are as follows:

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| 1. January 10-17, 2019 | - | School Sisters (Fr. George Maliekal SDB) |
| 2. February 22- March 1 | - | Animators & Prov. Councilors |

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| 3. April 24 - May 1, 2019 | - | (Fr. George Maliekal SDB)
Temporary professed Sisters |
| 4. May 25 – June 1 | - | (Fr. George Palamattam SDB)
Perpetually professed Sisters |
| 5. June 6-13 | - | (Fr. James Mathew SDB)
Perpetually professed Sisters (Fr. Sunny Jacob SJ) |
| July 22-29, 2019 | - | Novices & Postulants |

Please note:

1. All the Animators and the Sisters engaged in school ministry will kindly join the retreat that is indicated for them.
2. The retreat will begin on the evening of the first day and end on the morning of the last day.
3. Every Retreat of the Sisters will be followed by a two full day animation programme, starting on the last day of the retreat.

Special Retreat for Priests and Religious

There is a special retreat organized at the Divine Retreat Centre, Khetri, Assam from December 3-8, 2018 exclusively for Priests and Religious. It will be preached by Fr. Augustine Vallooran of the Potta team. Those who wish to avail of this special time of grace may kindly book your seat in advance through the Provincial office, Nongthymmai before the **10th of November**.

Request of Prayers

For the departed:

- Mother of Sr. Hamdiaw Suchiang
- Brother of Sr. Dorothy Kharduit
- Fr. Chitoor Varkey (We offer our heartfelt sympathy to Archbishop Dominic Jala SDB DD and the Archdiocese of Shillong at his departure)

For the sick:

- Mother of Sr. Aitihun Lawai
- Sister of Sr. Andriana Pyngrope
- Sister of Sr. Manoda Sangma
- Sister of Sr. Regina Dkhar

"Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy." (Pope Francis)

I assure you of my sisterly support and accompaniment.

Affectionately,



Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial