



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

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06.10.2018

My Dearest sisters,

I greet each one of you affectionately as I take up my responsibility as the 12th Provincial of the Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Shillong. Our God is a God of surprises who takes us often by surprise and comes into our life the way He chooses to come. Yet, we know that He is a loving and benevolent Father who does what is best for us, His children. Therefore, I trust God, as I gratefully accept this mandate given to me by the Institute, joining my **YES** to the **FIAT** of Mary and the **YES** that each one of you has said in faith when the news of my appointment was announced to you. I thank Mother General and her Council for the trust placed on me. The change of leadership every six years calls for a mutual exercise of faith. I believe that with God's help and with the sisterly support of each one of you, I will be able to give my best to the task entrusted to me. I take up this task confidently because it is not '**I alone**' but '**we together**' who are going to make a difference in whatever we will undertake in the coming years. In other words every one of us is called to play crucial and decisive roles in various capacities for building up God's Kingdom. Here I am reminded of the words of St. Teresa of Kolkata who said: "*What I do may be like a little drop in the ocean, but if I fail to do that, the ocean will be less of that drop*". We are on a journey together and I welcome everyone to this journey as I count on your intelligent, responsible and sisterly co-operation.

The Province of Shillong is the 2nd oldest of the Indian Provinces and it has given life to the two daughter Provinces of Kolkata and Guwahati. I am extremely grateful to the former Provincials who have made valuable contribution to bring the Province to its present stature. I also acknowledged the unique contribution made by each sister of the province through her hard work and exemplary life.

I am inheriting a legacy of 30 canonically erected communities and 255 professed Sisters who are committed to the mission of the Church and the Institute. I sincerely thank Sr. Isabella Suja who lays down her office gracefully after handing over this rich legacy of human resources to me. Therefore, I believe, my major task would be to support, promote, and increase the personal and community effectiveness of this rich heritage, quantitatively and qualitatively. We are a significant number and we are blessed with many young vocations. The 24 Postulants who entered the novitiate this year and the 23 Aspirants who are starting their period of Postulancy this month are clear indications of a vibrant province, blessed numerically with an increasing number of vocations. With such rich blessing from God, we ought to make a qualitative difference and create a significant impact through our life and ministry.

A happy coincidence



It is a happy, meaningful and unique coincidence that I am taking up the responsibility of the Province on the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin. This reminds me of the words spoken by Don Bosco to our first Sisters on August 5, 1872: *“You now belong to a religious family that is all Mary’s... Let the beautiful title of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians be your glory and often think that your Institute is to be a living monument of Don Bosco’s gratitude to the great Mother of God under the title of Help of Christians”*. (Cronistoria 1 pg. 303) .I had the joy of visiting the Basilica and I prayed that each one of us might truly be a stone that embellishes the living monument of Mary.

Mother General too in her Circular No. 978 invites us to discover the grace of being the living memory of Mary, by living her style as communities committed to express today ‘the yet unwritten events of her life’ and transmit her motherly presence to the younger generations. In the same circular she beckons us to revive the Marian face of the Institute by making ourselves available to write a piece of history everyday with the young people and make the song of the *Magnificat* complete and shine with the beauty of the Salesian charism.

Starting Afresh from Christ

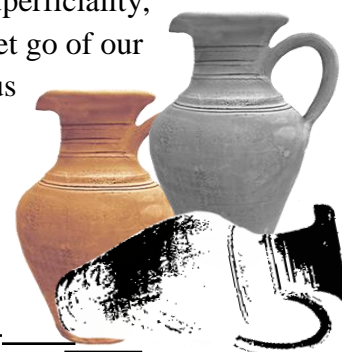
At the turn of the 21st Century, the Church promulgated the document ‘Starting Afresh from Christ’, inviting the religious for a renewed commitment. Can we think of the historic moment of the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians and the beginning of a new term of animation in the province as auspicious occasions to start afresh from Christ? I quote the document “Starting afresh from Christ means proclaiming that consecrated life is a special following of Christ, a living memorial of Jesus way of living and acting as the incarnate Word in relation to the Father and in relation to the brethren... Starting afresh from Christ means once again finding one’s first love, the inspiring spark which first gave rise to the following – a response in love to the love of God.” (N. 22)

Imitating Jesus’ way of living and acting today

Jesus was strong in His two dimensional relationship – vertical relationship of communion with the Father and horizontal relationship of compassion for the people. Because of his constant communion with the Father Jesus could say, “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me.” Jesus communed with his Father and consulted him before He made any important decisions. The Gospel presents ample examples of this as well as His love and compassion for sinners, the poor, the sick and the down trodden of the society. He broke many man-made laws, which went against human justice in order to do good, to heal and empower people. He went in search of the lost sheep. A typical example of this is the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman who during her encounter went through a process of conversion and became an ardent disciple of Jesus and an evangelizer.

Our call to religious life is for a primary mission, that of proclaiming Jesus through the various ministries that we perform. But like the Samaritan woman to be an efficacious apostle we need to go through a process of conversion. We too need to recognize in Jesus the one who is capable of giving us the life giving water. We too need to surrender our life to Him. Finally we too need to leave behind our jars. What are the jars we need to leave behind?

It could be our jars of our pride, arrogance, prejudices, the jars of our superficiality, our resistance to change, our attachment to persons, our unwillingness to let go of our ideas for the common good or common mission, the things that hold us bound and keep us in fetters. It is anything that we prefer to God whom we are supposed to love above all else – our work, our time, our reputation, our status, our titles, our travels, our health, our appearance etc. The moment we leave aside these and similar jars that are barriers to recognizing Jesus, we become passionate apostles of Jesus.



A close look at our Founders

Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello exemplified Jesus' way of living and acting through their continuous union with God. Don Bosco was defined 'Union with God' and Mother Mazzarello accused herself of having spent 15 minutes without thinking of God. They were deeply rooted in the love of God and firmly grounded in the realities of the world. They were both contemplatives in action. Therefore, they were profoundly moved by the situations of the society in which they lived and rose to give creative response to the problems of the young, becoming signs of God's love for them.

Be with us Mary



I cannot end my first circular without making a reference to our blessed Mother-the woman par excellence. She is the woman who persevered faithfully in the pilgrimage with Jesus, accompanying Him at every stage of his life. We, as a province are on a journey together. May Mary who identified herself with the saving mission of Jesus, she who was the Inspirer and Model of our Institute help us at this new juncture of our Province to "start afresh from Christ", that we make Jesus the focal point of our life and become passionate in the mission that is entrusted to us. May we look at our charism through the prism of today's society and become capable of courageous and creative responses to challenging forms of apostolate. Even carrying out the traditional apostolate of schools demands new challenges today. Jesus said new wine should be put into new wineskins. Are we prepared to pour the new wine into new wineskins? What are the new wines and new wineskins? 'How would Don Bosco and Mary Mazzarello respond to this situation today? These and similar questions keep us on track – faithful to the charism and faithful to the times.

Before I conclude, I sincerely thank Sr. Isabella Suja and all of you dear Sisters for being generous and magnanimous in surrendering to God's loving plan for the Province of INS. I am sure God will do great things for us as He did for Mary. I fully trust the Good Lord whose presence I experienced

very tangibly during the past six years of my animation in the Province of Guwahati. I also trust in the good will and cooperation of each one of you as I have been assured by several of you on hearing the news. My special thanks to Sr. Isabella Suja, the Provincial and other senior Sisters who came to greet me personally the very day the news was announced. Many of you communicated with me through messages, emails or phone calls thanking me for my “yes” and “availability” to God’s plan and welcoming me to Shillong. These were gestures of assurance for me and I thank God for you. I want to assure you that from the day I was given the obedience, I welcomed each one of you into my heart and I began to pray much for the Province of INS and for every Sister and young person the Lord is giving me as a special gift for the next six years. I am sure you have done the same for me. I believe that the Lord has already gone ahead of us to prepare for this wonderful time of grace and life together. Together we shall do great things for God and for His people. Please continue to support me with your prayers so that in turn I can truly become a blessing for each of you. May Our Blessed Mother, the woman of Magnificat accompany our journey together and enable us to make of our lives a lasting hymn of gratitude to God.

The time spent at Mornese in preparation for my new mission was very precious to me. It was simply beautiful, breathing the air of Mornese and spending quiet moments recalling the saintly life of Mother Mazzarello and our first sisters. I certainly remembered every one of you and prayed that we may be able to make a beautiful journey together in the spirit of Mornese in the context of our Province and replicate “*houses of the love of God*” where the young people will experience the warmth of genuine love and friendship.

Since I was in Rome, Mornese, Milan and Turin, I bring you fresh greetings of Mother General and her Councilors, Sr. Anna Lamperti who is at the rest house in Milan and all our dear Sisters who are either studying or rendering service in Italy.

Thank you dear Sisters once again for your trust and confidence, which will help me to embark on the journey ahead with optimism and hope. I thank particularly the Provincial Councilors – Sr. Pyngrope Rosa, the Vice Provincial, Sr. D’Cunha Celine, Sr. Shangpliang Marvella, Sr. Puweñ Helen and Sr. Maslai Celina, Sr. Susngi Kyntiewlin Euginia (Provincial Secretary), Sr. Pohrmen Gemima (Provincial Economist), all the Community Animators and the Provincial Team who will be my closest collaborators in our journey of holiness. We invoke the Motherly protection of Mary under the title ‘**Immaculate Heart of Mary**’ and the special intercession of our Holy Founders -St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello, so that we, as a province, bring forth fruits of holiness and move courageously with missionary enthusiasm and audacity.

I assure you of my prayers and sisterly accompaniment.

Affectionately,



Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial