



# Provincial Circular

## Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/16/2019

01.12.2019

Dearest Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

**W**e have just lived the historic event in the life of our Province through the visit of Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, General Visiting Councilor from 17 August – 24 November 2019. The days were indeed blessed with God's presence and the assistance of our Blessed Mother in every way. During the 100 days of her visit, we have united in sincere prayers as a Province which no doubt has borne the fruits which we are called now to integrate in our everyday life.

Sr. Lucy Rose officially concluded the visit on 22 November and took leave on 24 November which were indeed significant days for us. The 22<sup>nd</sup> November marked the arrival of our first missionaries in India 100 years ago and the 24<sup>th</sup> of November was the 66<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Province. These events remind us that we are called to invigorate new enthusiasm, new passion and new creativity in life and mission. The visits of our superiors are always occasions to take note of these opportunities which we are called to live with fidelity and greater love.

May the fruits of this visit reverberate the charismatic vitality of our vocation in our daily life, in our communities and in our mission. As Sr. Lucy mentioned in her recommendation *"to deepen the roots in the rich soil of the Province [...] so that we may have a vision radically open to whatever is best for its growth"*. Let us continue walking this journey together in faith, love and true sisterly communion.



We express again our sincere gratitude to dear Sr. Lucy Rose for her amiable ways of sharing the life of our Province with much respect, serenity, delicacy and especially for her motherly care and concern for the growth of every member and mission of our Province. We are also grateful to Sr. Veronica Kamei, the Secretary of Sr. Lucy Rose for having accompanied faithfully the journeys of Sr. Lucy in our Province and for her delicate gestures in every encounter with us. May the good Lord who is all noble and gracious bless and reward them copiously. We thank our beloved Mother General for giving us this auspicious time of grace and blessing.

## *Advent*

The season of Advent is a holy and grace-filled season in which the Church yearly calls to mind to renew the memory of God's love for us through His coming. The season calls us to delve into the sacred mystery of Christ's incarnation, to acknowledge our human limitedness and rediscover all the more the immense love of God for humanity.



Advent invites us to pause in silence to welcome and understand the presence of Christ with humanity. It is an invitation to include that the individual events of everyday of this season are signs that God addresses to us personally, signs of His fatherly attention to us. It encourages us to contemplate this presence of the Lord with the certainty that helps us see the world with different eyes; to consider our whole existence as a "visit" of God, who comes close to us, who remains with us in every situation.

Celebrating the Advent of Christ in our lives is a commitment to grow in desire, in knowledge and in love for him and for those we meet daily on our journey. This is the sure way of salvation, and the most credible witness with which we announce that Christ is always with us. We are invited, therefore, to live every moment of this holy season as a privileged moment of encountering the Lord who is visiting us in very many situations. Let us then, not miss these opportunities of welcoming the Lord in our midst during this season.

## *Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception*

Mary was granted the extraordinary privilege of the Immaculate Conception because of her unique role in history as the Mother of God. She received the gift of salvation in Christ from the very moment of her conception. Even though Mary is unique in all humanity for being born without sin, she is held up by the Church as a model for all humanity in her holiness and her purity, in her willingness to accept the Plan of God for Her. With her 'YES' said to God, she walked her faith journey to the foot of the Cross. The solemnity of the Immaculate Conception invites us that in imitation of our Heavenly Mother, even our faith must be translated into daily works, in coherent choices, in obedience to love for God.

Mary is also immaculate because she never said NO to God. This Feast reminds humanity that there is only one thing that truly pollutes life: the NO to God – i.e.: Sin. It is here that Mary appears undoubtedly as the point of reference, the guiding star of our purity and our hope of living in this world more holily and in a way that responds to God's plans and to His divine will always.

Mary conceived Immaculate is our model for a holy life, a woman all for God. She is the mother and guide of all those who are on the way, seekers of meaning and truth, to find a final and definitive thirst for God. This is why we must never grow tired of looking at her, invoking her, imitating her virtues and her daily following of Christ and His Gospel. The Woman of the 'YES' facilitates our total and trusting adherence to the Word that, alone, is able to change the human history and the hearts of those who welcome it and let it flourish in life.



Mary Immaculate leaves us an example to follow- a two-way collaboration in the history of redemption which continues even today in our own times. If the work of salvation is a gift of God's love, its realization awaits our availability. As God asked Mary for collaboration for the birth and human growth of Jesus, so too He asks all of us for the YES of faith, a yes through which He invites us to trust and entrust ourselves totally to Him for the salvation of souls.

### *Christmas Novena:*

**C**elebrating the Christmas Novena reminds us that Christmas is at the door. The nine days of intense preparation for the Lord's incarnation brings to us vividly the attitude of **Hope**- Hope in the Lord who comes to rule the world and redeem humanity, Hope in the renewal of life at His birth. In fact, the prophecies of the birth of Jesus which will be sung during the 9 days, taken from the Old Testament, particularly from prophet Isaiah express to us not only the profound longing of God's presence on earth, but also express the great expectation and Hope for the coming of Jesus and His eternal presence in the history of humanity.

What does it mean to live the present time with hope in the Lord who comes? Living in expectation and Hope of the Lord's return is not an escape from history; it is to live the story even more fully and intensely. The evangelical attitude of Hope and vigilance thus finds an outlook of constant discernment: calling every Christian to live responsibly every act in the presence of God, and understand that the supreme value of every moral choice lies in the effort to please God and to sanctify his name by fulfilling his will.

Living the spirituality of watchful Hope is living the contemplative dimension in the profound awareness of God's absolute primacy over life and history. The total orientation of the heart to God fills the person with the joy and peace proper to those who live the beatitudes. Living the spirituality of Hope, therefore, requires sincerity of heart to be open to the surprises of God especially at His coming.

There are various metaphors that describe the joy of watchful Hope in the Novena: Jesus will come as light, as peace, as dew, as sweetness, as novelty, as a powerful King, as a universal ruler, as a child, as a just Lord. The Novena, thus, is an apt moment to stir up an attitude in every believer: to contemplate ever deeper the mystery of incarnation, to renew our Hope and to strengthen our Faith in the ever-growing Love of God.



## Strenna 2020- “Good Christians and upright citizen”

Our Rector Major has proposed the theme “Good Christians and Upright citizens” for the Strenna of this year 2020. In his very own words: *“This year's Strenna allows us to reconstruct what Don Bosco thought and what his way of doing and acting was, among the youth, with the intention of preparing them for the society in which they found themselves, subject to spinning changes, in the midst of the industrial revolution where poverty for many reached extreme levels: immense social and economic inequality, the growth of the phenomenon of begging, the abandonment of "migrant" children”*.



This theme brings to our minds the sanctity of Don Bosco's system of education which forms the young people to equilibrium of moral, ethical and political virtues. The Preventive System of Don Bosco has throughout times proved to be a system par excellence that seeks to educate a young person to a full stature of Christian and human virtues. The world today encounters great challenges in the Church as in the Society. For this reason, as Salesian educators we have greater responsibility to guide and accompany our young people who may be influenced greatly by the different challenges of their contemporaneity.

The Rector Major has also invited the whole Salesian Family to be attentive to the various cries of the world today, to the many challenges that it encounters. He encourages every Salesian educator to impart to the young people an attitude of commitment to the Church and the Society, to the growth of Christian virtues, to tackle the issues pertaining the conservation of the Church and Society's laws, to respect and maintain the ecological balance, to defend human rights and life, etc., It is high time now for us to rekindle the ardent apostolic zeal of coming out of our comfort zones and move towards those young people afflicted by the various conditions that hamper their moral, social and spiritual growth.

Let us give heed to the invitation of our Rector Major to educate and form our young people into upright and honest citizens of God's Kingdom and the Society by our commitment to give our best and our all for their sake and particularly to revive the spirituality of the Preventive System in all our educative ambience in order to authentically form the young people under our care into persons who are truly worthy for God and humanity.

## Triduum of the Centenary of FMA - India

On 22 November 2019, the whole FMA India launched into a three year preparation for the arrival of our 6 missionaries Sr. Teresa Balestra, Sr. Lougia Appiano, Sr. Catherine Marnetto, Sr. Consiglia Tarricone, Sr. Teresa Merlo and Sr. Maria Angeleri in the Indian soil which will be celebrated in 2022. We thank God for these valiant and courageous souls who sowed the seed of the Salesian Charism in our land. As we launch into this preparation of these 100 years of bountiful grace, we raise our gratitude to God for the humble beginnings which has now grown into a mighty tree of 7 Provinces. Let us unite in prayers and authentic preparations in this Triduum with the theme and yearly proposals of the FMA PCI.



**THEME:** “*With Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and beyond ...*”

**2019-2020** : Give thanks: “Let us truly thank the Lord who gives us many graces” (L 37, 10)  
Living our FMA Identity with Gratitude

**Objective** : *To re-live and transmit the Spirituality of the (Preventive System) Salesian Pedagogy.*

**2020-2021** : Accept the mandate: “I entrust them to you.”  
Reviving the Family Spirit and strengthening Community Communion

**Objective** : *To revive the Salesian Family Spirit and strengthen Community Communion.*

**2021-2022:** Plan the future boldly: "Courage! Let us go ahead with a great and generous heart" (L 47, 12)  
Prophets and witnesses for a transformed society in the style of synodality.

**Objective** : *To accompany the young towards integral formation making them agents of social change*

Let us join hands to thank the Lord for His marvels wrought in our land and we salute our pioneers for their undaunted faith to keep ablaze the charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello in our soil. May this journey we have launched together truly be a spiritual renewal of every FMA in our Province and in our country and an opportune time to rekindle the missionary impulse of our Institute in our land.

### *St. Francis Xavier*

Francis Xavier is hailed for all ages as an authentic missionary of Christ. Flipping over the pages of St. Francis’ life, one can say that God intervenes in our lives in mysterious and unexpected ways even to the highest degree of sanctity. “*Go set all on fire*” the parting words of St. Ignatius of Loyola to St. Francis Xavier seemed to be his watchwords that truly guided His missionary journeys especially in India and other parts of Asia. Notwithstanding the seemingly obstacles that he had to encounter, Francis travelled the length and breadth of his mission land solely for the sake of Christ and His Gospel. This has prompted and guided him to adapt himself to all cultures where he found himself. He was truly to his people a **prophet**, an **evangelizer** and an **authentic missionary**.

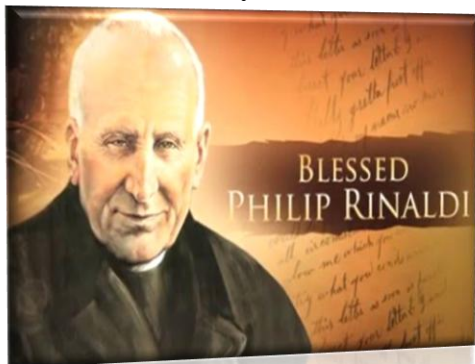


Traditions narrate to us that on his missionary tours, Francis had to risk his life in very many occasions, but that did not dampen his missionary ardour and thirst for souls. His missionary time span did not last a very long time, but the impact that he has made is stupendous. Definitely the secret of his fruitful mission especially in baptizing the thousands of people for whom he dedicated his entire life is nothing but his constant union with his Master and his self-surrendering to the power of God’s love. He was also known for his love for a life of poverty, love for the people whom he served and his missionary creativity to attract more souls to God. His apostolic zeal was so much in him that he preferred nothing else but souls. We are reminded in this same line by the life and prodigy of our father and founder Don Bosco who also invites us to work tirelessly to seek souls for God and desire nothing more beautiful than gaining souls for Heaven.

This giant saint and ardent apostle is a model for us today to set ablaze our hearts with the missionary zeal and constant desire to bring more souls to God, to find Him present in all things, in all people and cultures and to become true missionaries in our time and space.

### *Blessed Phillip Rinaldi*

**P**hillip Rinaldi, the third successor of Don Bosco was a man of his own times who faithfully carried on the legacy of Don Bosco in all fidelity. Gifted with the grace of intelligence and open heart, Rinaldi served the congregation in his many capacities as formator, Vicar and Rector Major of the Salesian Society. He worked untiringly to bring Don Bosco's dream into a reality in the context of his times. He was a master of Salesian ways and spirituality and brought about a renewal in the interior life of Salesians, absolute confidence in God and unlimited trust in Mary Help of Christians. He manifested his humble nature in his noble service as a leader with the humble attitudes of a caring father and able guide. He preferred doing things unseen and unnoticed by others. This testifies to the tremendous degree of his zeal for souls and his saintly life.



Rinaldi was once quoted as saying, "What must you do to have life? Before all else, the first thing you have to do is pray for courage every day to carry the cross the Lord has assigned

you. Then let each of you do your own work really well, the work proper to your state, as God wants it, and according to your condition."

He never allowed his intense work to impede him from exercising his ministry as priest and spiritual guide. He is a great model who lived totally committed to his vocation fully trusting in God's grace and intercession of the Heavenly Mother. Let us pray to him- the outstanding personality of Holiness that we may live with fidelity the daily demands of our vocation.

*["If you do something for the Virgin Mary, she will do much more for you." - Rinaldi]*

### *Communications*

**Congratulations:** Heartiest congratulations to Sr. Manoda Sangma who successfully defended her Doctoral thesis on 21 November 2019 at the Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati. We congratulate her for the hard work and sacrifices put in to arrive at this milestone. We wish her all the best for her mission henceforth.

**Local Economers' Meet:** As was communicated earlier, there will be a meeting of all the local economers on 20 and 21 December 2019 at FMA Outreach. All the sisters concerned in the mission are kindly requested to participate in this important meeting. Sr. Gemima Pohrmen, our Provincial Ecomer will facilitate the programme of these days and will give further details.

**Come and See Programme:** The Vocation Pastoral of our Province is organizing the 'Come and See Programme' at Sacred Heart, Mawlai from 17-20 December 2020. We wish Sr. Carmelina Sun, the Coordinator and the team all the best and God's blessings for the camp. We pray for the many girls who will take part in it that they may give heed to God's voice with generosity and conviction.

**Second Novitiate:** The first phase of the second Novitiate will be held at Mazzarello Convent, Dimapur of Guwahati Province from 20 December – 20 January 2020. From our Province, the following sisters will participate in it. We support them with our prayers in this important moment of their religious life.

- Sr. Aquila Makri
- Sr. Deimon Dhar
- Sr. Hamdiaw Suchiang
- Sr. Ibansara Kharkongor
- Sr. Jacinta Sana
- Sr. Maria Wanpyntngen Sariang
- Sr. Martilin Nongkynrih
- Sr. Sinjak Marak

**NDF Meeting:** The 16<sup>th</sup> National Development Forum (NDF) Annual Meet on the theme ‘*Emerging Challenges: FMA Response*’ will be held at Yercaud from 12-14 December 2019. Sr. Merilyn Bahun Wahlang and Sr. Igina Kharjana will participate in it.

**Winter Apostolate:** The winter vacation is approaching and I would like to recommend to keep up the good apostolate of our Province to visit the different villages and families. Let us capture this occasion as an opportunity to bring people closer to God and God to people through our generous and enthusiastic apostolate as we prepare for His coming at Christmas. Kindly send a report with photographs on the various winter ministries carried out in your communities to the Provincial Office.

**1<sup>st</sup> Spiritual Retreat:** The first retreat of the year 2020 will begin on 6 January 2020. Prior to it, all the Principals and school sisters will have a three-day animation programme which will begin on 4<sup>th</sup> morning and will conclude on 6<sup>th</sup> afternoon. All the participants are requested to arrive at the scheduled venue (FMA Outreach) on 3 January 2020. Please send ahead prayers for the fruitfulness of the different retreats.

**Provincial Visit 2020:** I am happy to begin anew my pilgrimage to our communities. While we still relish the freshness of the Canonical Visit of Sr. Lucy Rose, it is a privilege for me to meet you once again as we continue our journey of becoming communities that generate life. For this, the theme of my visitation as well as other spiritual animations in the province for the year 2020 will be: “*Communities that generate life by living the spirituality of the Preventive System*”. May this theme guide us as we journey forward together in unison with the Institute for the preparation of the forthcoming General Chapter XXIV and the FMA- India in the celebration of the centenary of the arrival of our first missionaries.

**Special Training for Boarding Assistants:** A special training will be conducted for all the boarding assistants and those who are directly involved with the young people in the Boardings and hostels on 13 and 14 January 2020 at FMA Outreach. Sr. Helen Puwein will coordinate the programme. I request all the sisters concerned and those who are free to attend in the said programme which will definitely facilitate and boost the efficiency and fruitfulness of our mission especially as we journey together in this year to make our communities places that generate life through the spirituality of the Preventive System.

**Home coming:** Sr. Catherine Sutnga, our missionary in Angola is in the Province for holidays as well as some medical checkup. We welcome her back and wish her a happy stay in the Province.

### *Prayers for the sick and the dead*

We extend our prayerful support to all the sick members of our communities and families through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. We pray especially for:

- The father of Sr. Teilanda Syngkon
- The mother of Sr. Mildred Kharsyiemlieh
- The sister of Sr. Rosa Tuscano
- The mother of Sr. Lily Kharbuki



We offer our heartfelt condolences and prayers to all those who lost their dear ones in the past month:

- Sr. Rosa Tuscano who lost her cousin on 11 November 2019.
- Sr. Celine D'Cunha at the passing away of her aunt on 18 November 2019.
- Sr. Jubil and Sr. Hunbih Dkhar at the departure of their cousin on 26 November 2019.
- Sr. Rose Ezarath and the Province of Kolkata (INC) at the passing away of Sr. Alice Olickal on 30 November 2019.
- Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot SDB and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Shillong at the demise of Fr. Paul Vadakumpadan SDB on 18 November 2019.

May all the dear departed ones rest safe in the arms of Jesus and intercede powerfully for the needs of the Province and their family members.

We are coming to the end of the Liturgical year in the Church, the end of the scholastic year in many of our houses and drawing close to the end of the calendar year. This reminds us that we have ample reasons to thank God for the graces we were able to receive from His bountiful hands and to acknowledge His tangible presence in every situation of our life and mission. This year has truly been a year of blessing for our Province in many ways. As we enter into this last month of the year, let us gratefully live it as a period of thanksgiving to God for every grace we have received. Let us also beg pardon for the moments we were not able to correspond fully to God's intervention in our lives and let us surrender ourselves to Him as we journey towards our common vision of making our communities places of generating life. Once again I wish each and every one of you a happy and fervent season of Advent.

Assuring you of my prayerful remembrance especially during my spiritual retreat in Sri Lanka from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019. Please do remember me and all the Provincials of FMA India.

Affectionately,



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