



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/17/2020

01.01.2020

Dearest Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

On this first day of the New Year, I extend my warmest and affectionate greetings to each of you. May the New Year 2020 be filled with every grace and blessing of the Lord in your personal lives and mission. We are indeed privileged to see the end of the old year and to witness the dawning of the New Year, the beginning of a new decade. As we bid farewell to 2019 and welcome 2020, it is an opportunity for us to take stock of God's benevolent love and express our gratitude to Him for the many graces received from His bounty. It is a time for deep reflection, for personal introspection, for appreciation of the many graces we've been so blessed to receive from God, from people and from situations in our mission. It is a time to take note of every blessing we have obtained, every fruitful encounter we have made; also of every opportunity we have missed and every grace not corresponded to.



New Year reminds us of new birth. As baptized Christians and consecrated persons, the beginning of a new year reminds us that God is giving us another and more chances to turn the pages of an old way of life and embrace a new one with His Grace; to make our lives whole with His love and infuse the same to others too. Most of us begin the New Year with hope; we make resolutions and set goals for ourselves, for our mission. This gift of the New Year invites us to direct our goals towards God who will bring an impact of true happiness for us and for others, for nothing can fill us with more happiness than strengthening and deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ. Each of us needs newness and rejuvenation in our lives. Our efforts to renew will be coupled with the new things and new graces of God only if we correspond to His grace and stay close to His heart. As He says through Isaiah: *"Look, I am doing something new, now it emerges; can you not see it?"* (43:19).

Our Saintly Mother Mazzarello in her conference at the end of the year 1880 reminds us that a good religious is not content with what opportunity brings, but finds the means of doing more for the love of God, for souls and for one's own soul. She exhorts us that the ***"New year be for all a new life"***. [cf. *FMA Constitutions: Conference of St. M. D. Mazzarello at the end of the year 1880, Pag.464-466*]. As we embrace the New Year, let us allow God to work in us and through us so that

we may truly become agents of His Love to the world in the coming days of the New Year and let us continuously remind ourselves of the holy encouragements of our Saintly Mother Mazzarello:

- *Let us take things seriously*
- *Let us not seek satisfactions*
- *Let us be careful not to bring the world into religious life...*
- *Let us be careful about little things, little defects and never make peace with them*
- *Let us keep ourselves always humble before God and others*
- *Let us pray and act in everything as if Our Lady were at our side*
- *Let us truly love and practice religious poverty so dearly loved and practiced by our Lord Jesus*
- *Let us continue to live united in charity.*

Mary Mother of God

It is very significant to begin the first day of the New Year with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. God had bestowed on Mary many privileges but the greatest of them all was her divine motherhood. With this solemnity, the Church announces that Jesus came to be truly human like us because he assumed the human nature in the pure womb of the Virgin Mary through her generous ‘YES’. The divine nature and human nature are united in the Person of the Word through the collaboration of Mary with God’s grace. Therefore, Jesus Christ, the child who was born on Christmas night in Bethlehem is true God and true man, he is God with us. For this reason, in the Hail Mary we can say: "Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us". The Mother of Christ became also the Mother of the Church and our Mother.



Mary stands among us as a mother who can be turned to and relied on to intercede with God on our behalf. Mary encircles in her arms not just her own Son Jesus, but all those who are destined to have life in him, the whole human race. As the New Eve she is truly Mother of all the Living, and so is Mother of each one of us. It is indeed a great and true consolation in life to have Mary the mother of Jesus as also our mother who guides, inspires and cares for us.

We are fortunate to begin the New Year under the maternal gaze of our Blessed Mother. As we begin this year, we seek her intercession that with new heart and new life we may look at the reality of life and mission with the gaze of Christ and see in every situation and encounter a possibility of growth in Mary’s virtues of faith, hope and love.

53rd World Day of Peace

In the context of the consoling truths concerning Mary's divine motherhood, on the first day of the year the Church invites us to celebrate the World Day of Peace. The world today is very much in need of Peace in every sense of the word- peace in families, peace in the society, peace within each one’s heart. To keep up the tradition of the Church in celebrating this day instituted by Pope Paul VI in 1968, our Holy Father Pope Francis addressed the Church with his message entitled “***Peace As A Journey Of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation And Ecological Conversion***”

Pope Francis started his message by saying that “*Peace is a great and precious value, the object of our hope and the aspiration of the entire human family.*” In fact Peace is so much sought after by

every person, every society and every culture because the longing for it generates from the very origin of the person. Therefore, becoming agents and messengers of Peace is not just a call but also a responsibility of every person. As the Pontiff also clearly states *“The desire for peace lies deep within the human heart, and we should not resign ourselves to seeking anything less than this”*



Seeking and working for peace entails sincere efforts and enthusiasm because as the Holy Father says *“Peace appears today more than ever as a great challenge”*. Pope Francis brings in different ways in which Peace can be actualized in our world today through some elements that symbolize Peace as a **Journey** to be travelled and made together.

1. Peace, a journey of hope in the face of obstacles and trial
2. Peace, a journey of listening based on memory, solidarity and fraternity
3. Peace, a journey of reconciliation in fraternal communion
4. Peace, a journey of ecological conversion

Pope Francis further says that Hope is the virtue that inspires us and keeps us moving forward. As we celebrate this day, let us resolve to be true agents and messengers of Peace in our communities, families, in the society and in the world with the sure Hope that the King of Peace will grant us the desired Peace through our life of conviction, witness, true fraternal dialogue and genuine relationship.

Christian Unity Octave

Yearly we celebrate the week long prayer for Christian Unity (18-25 January) where Churches of all faiths are invited to commune in prayerful witness for Christian Unity giving heed to Jesus’ prayer *“that they all may be one.”* The theme for this year’s Week of Prayer is *“They Showed Us Unusual Kindness”* (cf. Acts 28:2). In today’s world, many instances show that the quest for Christian Unity is hindered by many separation and divisions. It is here that we are called all the more to stand as one in faith and love and pray that all be integrated so that together we may form a united witness for justice and be a means of Christ’s healing grace for the brokenness of the world.



Communities that generate life

This year’s theme of animation in the Province is centered around the slogan *‘Communities that generate life by living the spirituality of the Preventive System.’* I would like to highlight here that our striving to become communities that generate life does not focus solely on our *‘doing’* the apostolic activities that will usher in

abundant apostolic fruits in others and the mission. Rather, it focuses more on our ‘*Being*’ the carriers of God’s grace and generators of fruitful life in mission.

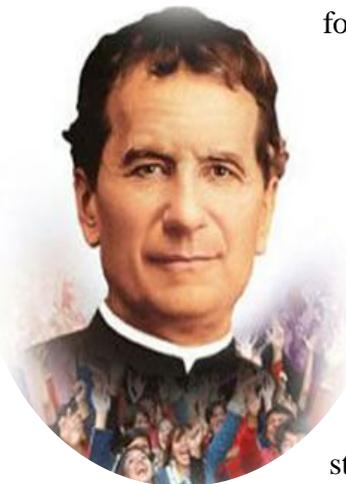
To be communities that generate life calls for a more convinced and authentic way of sharing our life in communion for a common educative mission. In Circular 988 Mother General invites us to “*intensify the family spirit in the communities, which provides the conditions for a more Synodal style of life*”. There is much need to gift each other “*an attentive listening that expresses acceptance of the other as a part of myself and that values everyone’s contribution*”. . As we journey together towards becoming the communities that generate life, let us live concretely the Preventive System and the Salesian Assistance.

Salesian Saints- Models of generating life

We have frequently heard that God calls everyone to holiness and prayer helps to recognize the beauty and greatness of this journey that leads to and witness to it. The Salesian Saints especially those whom we venerate in this month **St. John Bosco, St. Francis de Sales, Blessed Laura Vicuna, Blessed Luigi Variara and Blessed Bronislao Markiewicz** are perfect examples of life generating power which they so well incorporated in their life and mission.

The significance of generating life in its fullness in the light of the Gospel was lived, interpreted and proposed by **Don Bosco**. There are many examples, occasions and instances that throw light of the generating spirit and dynamism of our father Don Bosco. We are well aware that the major contributions of Don Bosco lay in the field of education. In his work among young people, he

followed an educational system that became the archetype system of education even to these days. If the Salesian Charism is so fruitful and fecund in our own days, we cannot but owe our gratitude to our saintly father who, vested with an immense grace of God worked untiringly for the sanctification of souls in very many ways. In particular, we recall here some values of the Salesian Spirit which he constantly emphasized: service and help, especially to the neediest, simplicity in practices of piety, pastoral charity in apostolic and educational commitment, joyful fraternity and family spirit. Don Bosco in his own creativity has truly lived and witnessed with great passion the words of Jesus “*I have come that you may have life, life in all its fullness*” (Jn. 10:10). His power to generate life in others especially the young is so much seen in his educative strategy which is so well interwoven with the Spirituality of the Preventive System based on the strong pillars of Reason, Religion and Loving-Kindness.



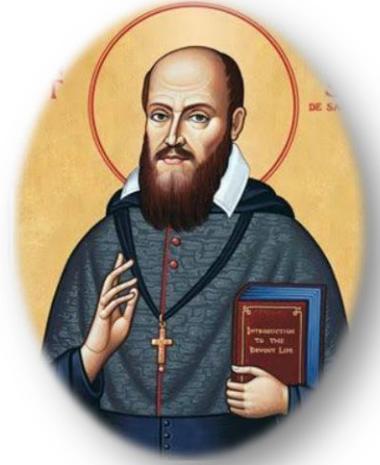
Don Bosco’s ideas may have been practiced in the nineteenth century, yet they are very much relevant to the educational needs of young people even today. At the moment in society, when many young people feel the need to have their voices heard and be understood, *Reason* can provide us the means to create spaces where dialogue and participation are fostered; when they search for deep spirituality and something divine *Religion* can foster a healthy sense of spirituality where they can truly find meaning in life; when the young look for an adult educator whom they can trust and open their lives to, *Loving-Kindness* comes as an efficient teacher and create an atmosphere where they feel cared for and loved.

For this reason, the Preventive System is still relevant in the contemporary world and we are indeed privileged to be the inheritors of this great legacy. As we celebrate the solemnity of our saintly Father it is appropriate to ask ourselves: *How do we live and pass on this legacy entrusted to us?* Let us seek our Father’s blessing and intercession that we may imitate him in his generous and selfless

giving for the young and that we may truly become the worthy recipients of this great hallmark entrusted to our care.

St. **Francis de Sales** is yet another example of a life lived in all its fullness. His saying “*Nothing is so strong as Gentleness; Nothing so gentle as real Strength*” has proved so true through his way of relating to himself, to God and to people which was consistently and visibly human. He was very human and gentle, optimistic and positive about life and the world, strong in character and compassionate in ministry and most of all he had a harmonious and peaceful spirit, which in turn attracted many people to a nobler and worthy life and led them into the experience and knowledge of Christ.

St. Francis never failed to emphasize that God knows our whole heart perfectly and our best response to his absolute love for us is to abandon ourselves with utter confidence in him. May he be for us an example of total surrender and rapport with God who ultimately will transform our lives into channels of fruitful life for others as did the Saint in his lifetime.



The Sainly life lived by **Blessed Laura Vicuña** is indeed a living testimony of a life given for others in particular for the conversion of her mother. Her short yet intense years of life on earth were marked by sheer suffering for her sake. The sacrifices she bore, the afflictions she carried in her heart and the painful moments she underwent at her young age were blessed and accepted by God. The young life that was being consumed as a living sacrifice instead generated new life in the conversion of her mother at her death bed. Her life was a testimony of great love for God, a mature character that stabilized moral, spiritual and human values. The FMA Superior in her school at Junin said “*from her first days in the school, they noticed in Laura a sense of judgment well beyond her age and a real inclination to piety. Her devotion was serious without affectation or exaggeration of any kind.*”



Her spiritual depth drew strength from God who had always the first place in her life and for whom she would always do her best to give him the priority- in words, thoughts and deeds. The virtue of purity which she so dearly loved and practiced made her to understand that her mother had gone far away from God. Love for her, meant a desire for the loved one’s peace with God, and for this she sacrificed her young life to reconcile her mother with God. May this young saint teach us that Love is the best way of generating spiritual life in others and in revealing God’s love to them.

Blessed **Luigi Variara** and **Blessed Bronislaw Markiewicz** were both saintly examples and fruits of Don Bosco Spirituality. They did not just inculcate the Salesian Spirit in their lives but went on further founding religious institutes that took on the spirituality of Don Bosco while adapting the rules to reflect their own Charism.

Luigi joined a Salesian mission in 1894 and worked in leper colonies in Colombia where he dedicated himself with love and passion and later, he also started a small town to raise the children of the outcast lepers. Towards the



end of his life, his health deteriorated but his spirit was ever young with the grace he received in spending time in Eucharistic devotion and prayer.

Blessed Bronislao Markiewicz joined the Salesian Congregation in November 1885. As a spiritual student of Don Bosco, he remained faithful to his teachings and spirit. He worked without measure for the sake of young people especially the orphaned boys. He started a trade school for poor and orphaned boys and gave himself wholeheartedly to empower and care for their spiritual and material well being. His concern was that the boys learn the professional trades for their livelihood.



The lives of these saints invite us to be more outgoing in our generous embrace of everyone in the Church and Society and to move out toward a society of greater fraternity and solidarity especially among the less privileged ones. They show us by the example of their lives what it means to give life for others so that they may also have life in abundance. May the example of these saints remind us constantly of our need to add more evangelical love to our mission in order that we may become the true generators of life for ourselves and others and to have the strength to carry out our mission to the end with joy and efficacy.

Communications

Congratulations: Heartiest congratulations and prayerful wishes to Fr. Agilan Sarprasadam SDB and Fr. Joseph Pauria SDB who are appointed the 5th and 17th Provincials of the Salesian Province of Trichy and Kolkata respectively. We assure them of our prayers in their noble mission of animating the Provinces.

- We also express our warmest greetings and congratulations to his Grace Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil SDB, Bishop Emeritus of Guwahati Archdiocese who was conferred “*Ambassador for Peace*” award by the International Human Rights Council on 9th December 2019 in New Delhi. We applaud him for his commendable endeavors for peace building and social harmony. May he be blessed abundantly in all his efforts and initiatives for promoting Peace and Harmony in the society.

Apostolic Experience: The 21 Second year Novices will make their apostolic experiences in the different communities of our Province in the coming one and a half month. We accompany them with our prayers that they may have a fruitful mission experience in their vocational journey. I thank the communities for the accompaniment and care they will render to our young Novices.

Mission EXPO 2020: The 9 Sisters of the Intensive Juniorate will participate in the 11th mission exposure programme organized by the Archdiocese of Guwahati at Ambagaon from 13- 19 January 2020. We wish them a fruitful experience of learning and living the art of evangelization.

SIGNIS India National Assembly: The SIGNIS India National Assembly and General body Meeting 2020 will be held at Alpha Pastoral centre, Edakochi , Kerala from 28- 31 January 2020. Sr. Euginia Laloo will participate in it. We wish her all the best.

Prayers for the sick and the departed

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 brother and maternal aunt of Sr. Patricia Nongkhlaw
- The nephew of Sr. Carmelina Sun

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

- Sr. Lydia Pala who lost her beloved father on 24 December 2019
- Sr. Entilia Nongkynrih at the passing away of her cousin on 24 December 2019
- Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret FMA and the FMA Province of Trichy at the passing away of Sr. Asirvatham Amalorpavam FMA on 19 December 2019
- Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot SDB and the Salesian Province of Shillong at the demise of Fr. Alphonse Malngiang on 25 December 2019

May they rest in peace forever and intercede for the needs of their Provinces and families.

As I conclude, I wish you once again a very Happy New Year 2020. Let us welcome God's blessings that will come in this year with joy and with total surrender to His will. We pray that this year be filled with Peace, Love, Joy, Generosity, Good Health and Fidelity. May the Lord let fall His blessings upon our communities, our families and our mission. May we live with greater joy and commitment the gift of our vocation to move on together with stronger conviction as we strive to become communities that generate life, life in all its fullness.

A very Happy and Grace filled New Year 2020!

Assuring you of my sisterly support and accompaniment,

Affectionately,



Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial