



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/18/2020

01.02.2020

Dearest Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

Communities that generate life

As a Province we are reflecting this year on the theme “*Communities that generate life by living the spirituality of the Preventive System*”. It is appropriate to take note that making a journey together to generate life in our mission calls for an authentic spirituality of love as inspired by the Preventive System. Art. 7 of our Constitutions says that *the spirit of the Preventive System must characterize our life style and permeate our relationship with others*. In this perspective, the community represents a precious space to live a spirituality that knows and values individuals as persons, capable of confrontation, sensitive to dialogue and willing to get involved in relationship. We are placed in a community, not because it is perfect, but because it gives shape to that possible alternative that the Gospel message indicates, to give meaning to our personal lives and to our mission.



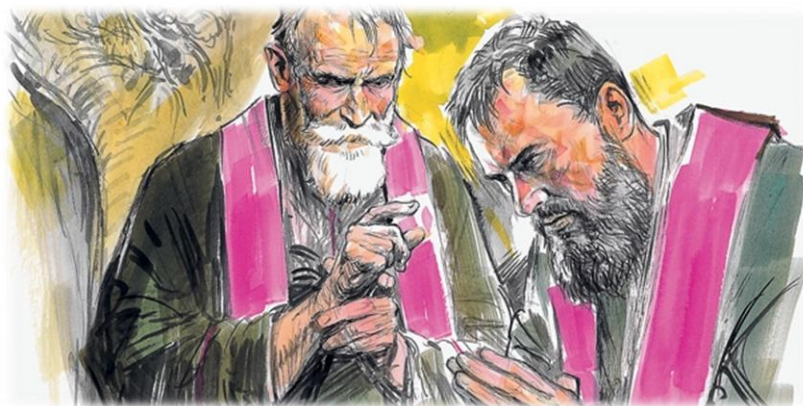
Saintly Models of generating life

The Saints and Martyrs are exemplary role models of human excellence. The stories of their lives and mission clearly manifest their union with Christ. They led their lives with heroic virtue rooted in faith, hope, and charity. They demonstrated by their lives how to really live and die. Their lives were so well integrated that they were able to give life to others. During this month, we recall few examples of the Salesian Saints who tell us that life is worth living for the sake of God and others.

The Proto martyrs of the Salesian Family *Saints Aloysius Versiglia* and *Calistus Caravario* whose feast we will celebrate on 25 February are models and testimonies of love for God and humanity. These two great martyrs were killed on 25 February 1930 because they were preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and also because they had protected some young female catechists travelling with them, whom the bandits wanted to carry into slavery.

Versiglia was the leader of the first missionary expedition to China under the then government of Don Michael Rua, the successor of Don Bosco as the Rector Major. He was an ardent missionary for his people after the heart of Christ the Good Shepherd. Later with the erection of the new Vicariate, Versiglia was appointed its Bishop. During those years, he gave his entire life and service for his

flock and for his vicariate with tireless activity – spiritual and physical. Personal holiness, wisdom in pastoral care and passion in evangelization characterized his priestly and missionary life.



Caravario was ordained priest in 1929 by Bishop Versiglia himself and soon after was assigned with the apostolate at Lin Chow under the vicariate of Bishop Versiglia. His priestly missionary life was very short but characterized by immense love for God. Though very young still, yet his life was marked by outstanding virtues, pursuit of holiness and missionary zeal.

These two Salesian martyrs died not only for their faith in Christ, but also for defending human dignity at the cost of their own lives. Their lives bore significant fruits of life-giving energy which they cultivated throughout their life span. May their example stimulate our desire to live our lives with greater ardor and thirst for souls.

Blessed Pius IX whose feast we commemorate on 7 February was known as Don Bosco's Pope. He had a close association with the Salesian Congregation and its spirit. He was the great supporter of Don Bosco in the initial years of the foundation of the Salesian Congregation. It was during his pontificate that the Salesian Society, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and the Pious Union of the Salesian Cooperators was approved. His love and admiration for the Salesian Charism moved him to the extent of being enrolled among the Salesian Cooperators. He went further to convince Don Bosco to write his memoirs as a legacy for the Congregation and the generations to come. This clearly manifested his great love for Don Bosco and the Salesian Congregation. He did not limit his love and knowledge to himself but wanted that the Salesian Charism gets perpetuated with time.



Researches and studies made on the life of Pope Pius IX revealed that he had a personality vested with complete trust in God, goodness of mind, sincerity and utmost dedication to the Church. His spirituality that was simple and profound remained united with that spontaneity that had always made him sympathetic in dealings with others. It is said that Pope Pius had a cordial kindness of heart ready to do everything for everyone as far as possible, combined with an instinctive gift of grace and a more practical than speculative intelligence. His pastoral care for the Church coupled with his immense humanness gave life to the Church and its members. May this great Saint, a lover of Don Bosco and his spirituality inspire us to live with ardent piety the gift of our Salesian vocation and with creative fidelity to the teachings of our Founder.

The life of **Blessed Eusebia Palomino** whom we will remember and celebrate on 9 February is clear indication of a fruitful life lived for God and others. Her life was simple, poor, hidden yet impregnated with tremendous potential and enormous spiritual energy to give life to others. Many examples and real situations can be cited from the life of Eusebia which reveal her life-giving capacity as a faithful religious, a loving sister, an authentic educator and a spiritual guide.

She was always available and docile to God in her mission while still helping the sisters in the community chores or as a professed member in the Institute. She did everything with a heart full of Love - in the kitchen, collecting firewood, cleaning the school, accompanying the students, in the laundry, working in the garden, keeping company with the children at the oratory and running errands. She was always ready to "give a hand" and to transmit a joyful and simple spirit of service to those around her. In fact the many souls whom she met in life, encountered God through her simple life and spirituality. She had a unique capacity to draw everyone to God notwithstanding her limited theological and doctrinal education. The many young people and adults who came in contact with her recognized the depth and profundity of her soul and sought her spiritual counsel.



Her simple life style and humble ways manifested her capacity to incorporate the Spirituality of the Preventive System in her life and apostolate. Her life can be well summarized in the beautiful words of Art. 7 of our Constitutions "*We are called to live Patient Charity that excuses all, trusts all, bears with all and never loses hope*". Let us follow her heroic example of living a simple spirituality that we too may become capable of generating life.

Presentation of our Lord

On 2 February we celebrate the feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the temple. On this day we welcome and contemplate Christ as the light of the world and light of our life. Since recent times this day is also celebrated as the day of consecrated life reminding the consecrated persons of their total surrender to God, following the example of Jesus, the anointed one of God.

The feast of the presentation of our Lord at the temple reminds us of our Christian and religious responsibility to continually desire to know God better, to see Him face to face. We will also experience the joy that Simeon and Anna had on the day of the Presentation of Jesus, when we encounter Jesus daily in the Eucharist, in listening to the Word, in the exercise of charity, in our brothers and sisters and in community living.

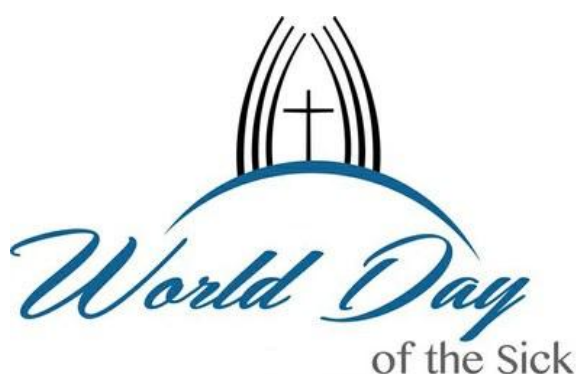
Our Lady of Lourdes

February 11 marks the first apparition of our Lady of Lourdes to Bernadette Soubirous, a girl of only fourteen years of age. At her apparition in 1858, when Bernadette asked the Lady who she was, she received the reply, "*I am the Immaculate Conception*." Less than four years before, on December 8, 1854, Pius IX had pronounced the teaching about the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady to be a dogma of faith. The message of Our Lady at Lourdes revealed the sanctity of **prayer**, **poverty** and **penance**. Mary comes to remind us that prayer which is humble and intense, trusting and persevering must have a central place in our Christian life. Prayer is indispensable if we are to receive Christ's power. Mary's words come as a message of hope for all people of our times; hope in the power of God's love, hope in the power of the Cross.

In fact, it is significant that, during the first apparition to Bernadette, Mary began the encounter with the sign of the Cross. More than a simple sign, it was an initiation into the mysteries of the faith that Bernadette received from Mary. The sign of the Cross is a kind of synthesis of our faith, for it tells how much God loves us; it tells us that there is a love in this world that is stronger than death, stronger than our weaknesses and sins. The power of love is stronger than the evil which threatens us. It is this mystery of the universality of God's love for humanity that Mary came to reveal in Lourdes. In celebrating the feast of our Lady of Lourdes, we are reminded to raise our hearts and lives to God and to the Cross of His Son Jesus, so as to discover there the source of life, the source of our salvation.

World day of the sick

The World Day of the Sick was established by Pope John Paul II in 1992 to draw attention to the sick and their caregivers and highlight the redemptive value of human suffering. ***"Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest"*** (Mt 11:28) is the theme for the 28th World Day of the Sick which will be celebrated on 11 February 2020. In his message for this year's world day of the sick, Pope Francis urges the human warmth and personalized approach of Christ, the Good Samaritan, in healthcare professionals, workers and volunteers. *"What is needed is a personalized approach to the sick, not just of curing but also of caring, in view of an integral human healing"* he said. Citing example from Christ himself who had to undergo tremendous suffering in the world, he encouraged the sick and the suffering to surrender and rely on God's power of love rather than to dwell on the frailty of the infirmity. He said *"Jesus does not make demands of those who endure situations of frailty, suffering and weakness, but offers his mercy and his comforting presence. He looks upon a wounded humanity with eyes that gaze into the heart of each person."*



As we remember the sick people on this day, let us offer them our humble prayers and generous service. In the sick people is reflected the image of the suffering Christ; therefore, may our small acts of tender love and closeness bring comfort and peace to all of them and solace to Christ Himself.

Lenten Season

The Lenten season begins with the celebration of the Ash Wednesday on **26 February 2020**. It is the 'holy time' that prepares us for Easter, the climax of the liturgical year and the life of every Christian. Lent is *the favorable moment to make a journey of true conversion*, indeed this holy season provides us with the itinerary that leads us to the Easter Triduum, the memory of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection-to the heart of the mystery of Salvation.



Tradition teaches us that **Prayer, Fasting** and **Almsgiving** are the spiritual commitments of Lent. Lent is a privileged time for *Prayer*. In Prayer, we realize our human realities, we discover our need for God and we gain strength to remain faithful. St. Augustine says that fasting and almsgiving are "*the two wings of prayer*" which allows it to take momentum more easily and reach God. Fasting is made holy by the virtues that accompany it, especially by charity. Pope Francis reminds us that fasting "*constitutes an important opportunity for growth*", because this spiritual act leads us to a better comprehension of those who do not have enough and brings our consciousness to a better attention for God and humanity. The Holy Father further recommends that in giving and practicing *charity* in the Lenten season, we acknowledge that the other person is our brother and sister. This season provides us with more opportunities to live charity by every gesture of generosity that comforts the poor, the lonely and the needy.

International year of the Nurse and the Midwife

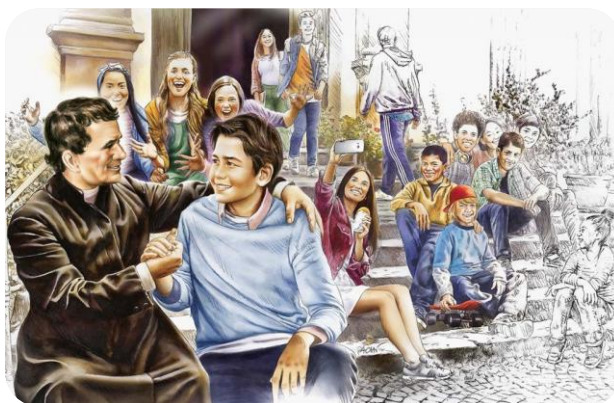
The World Health Organization (WHO) has named this year 2020 as the International Year of the Nurses and midwife to mark the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, who is considered the founder of modern nursing care. Our Holy Father Pope Francis has also acknowledged the recognition of this year while praising the work and dedication of the profession as the '*noblest of all professions*'. In his words "*Nurses are the most numerous and closest to the sick, and midwifery is perhaps the noblest of the professions. Let us pray for all of them, that they may do their precious work in the best possible way*".



Nurses and midwives are known for their valid contribution to the Church and the society from time immemorial. As we dedicate this year to them, let us thank and salute their noble sacrifices made on behalf of humankind. We express our gratitude in a special way to all our sisters who are directly involved in the healing ministry.

New Scholastic year

In many of our communities February marks the beginning of the new scholastic year- the students coming back to our schools, the young people back to our boardings and hostels. Let us welcome all our young people who will frequent our educative ambient with open hearts and welcoming spirit. Don Bosco said "*In every young person a point of goodness is accessible and it is the primary duty of the educator to discover that spot, that sensitive cord of the heart, so as to draw out the best in the young person.*", As we journey forward with the thrust of the Preventive System, let us be motivated by these words of our father Don Bosco to be true educators who see goodness in every young person and desire their holistic development always. This is precisely the task of the educator, to go and find that point accessible to the good and cultivate it as a small sprout,



taking care of it with one's own presence, nourishing it with friendship and eliminating the sprouts that do not bear fruit with fraternal correction.

Let us strive to live the spirituality of the Preventive System (especially the Salesian Assistance) sincerely among ourselves and with our young people so that our journey forward may be more fruitful, that the seed of hope planted may urge us towards the full realization of our vocation.

Communications

PCI Coordinators' Training: There will be a training programme organized by the FMA- PCI from 22-24 February 2020 at Auxilium Provincial House, Dum Dum- Kolkata for the National Coordinators and another sister from each Province. Sr. Mary Lamare, the National Coordinator for the Salesian Family and Sr. Euginia Kyntiewlin Susngi will participate in it. We wish them all the best.

XXVIII General Chapter: The GC28 of the Salesians of Don Bosco with the theme "*Which Salesians for today's young people?*" will be held at Valdocco from 16 February- 4 April 2020. We accompany our beloved Rector Major Don Ángel Fernández Artime SDB and all our Salesian brothers with our remembrance and prayers in this important and historic moment in the life of the Institute. May the Holy Spirit inspire every discussion and decision; May Mary our Mother and Don Bosco our father guide and accompany them throughout this spiritual journey.

Annual Spiritual Retreat: The Spiritual Retreat for the second group of perpetually professed sisters will be from 4-11 March 2020. Prior to it, there will be a two-day seminar. Therefore, all the participants are requested to arrive the scheduled venue at FMA Outreach, Shillong not later than 4:00 pm of **2 March 2020**. We send ahead our prayers for the fruitfulness of the retreat.

Examination: We extend our warmest greetings and prayers for all the students who will appear in the various public examinations in the coming months. May the Holy Spirit inspire their thoughts and may they be blessed abundantly in their pursuit of learning.

Launching of the Institute's Website: On the feast of Don Bosco 31 January 2020, Mother General Sr. Yvonne Reungoat launched the new website of the Institute. We congratulate and thank the Social Communication Sector of the Institute under the able leadership of Sr. Maria Helena Moreira, General Councillor for Social Communications, Sr. Gabriela Imperatore and the team for this innovative step. Let us enrich ourselves with the formative materials available in the website and let us contribute generously by sharing ideas, news and communication for the Institute's website.

Prayers for the sick and the dead

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. We pray especially for:

- The aunt of Sr. Gemima Pohrmen
- The father of Sr. Ibaniewkor Warjri
- The father of Sr. Teilanda Syngkon

We offer our heartfelt condolences and prayers to all those who lost their dear ones in the past month especially the maternal aunt of Sr. Patricia Nongkhlaw who passed away on 29 January 2020. We convey our prayerful regards and condolences also to:

- Fr. Januarius Sangma SDB and the Salesian Province of Guwahati at the passing away of Fr. Milon Narjary SDB on 4 January 2020
- Fr. Jose Kuruvachira SDB and the Salesian Province of Dimapur at the demise of Fr. Matthew Ponnattil (PK) SDB on 30 January 2020

May the dear departed ones rest in peace forever.

As we enter the threshold of the Holy season of Lent, let us become aware of God's predilection and mercy towards us. May the 40 days of our journey with the Lord be truly a time of spiritual renewal and recommitment. Let us give heed to the Lord's invitation to return to Him with contrite hearts. Let us allow Him to guide us so that we may be strengthened with necessary graces to live worthily and convincingly our journey of faith.

A very Happy and Holy Season of Lent to all!

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,

Affectionately,



Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial