



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/19/2020

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Dearest Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

We are in the holy Season of Lent- a period in which the Church gives us ample opportunities to grow in Faith, Love and Holiness. Our Holy Father Pope Francis in his Message for Lent 2020 reminds us that Lent is a time for deeper dialogue with God through prayer, for renewed gratitude for God's mercy and for increased compassion for the suffering people. The theme of the Pope's message, "*We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God,*" (2 Cor 5:20), invites us to return to God through constant conversion and reconciliation, and experience new life in Christ. The Pontiff speaks of the urgency of conversion especially at the personal level for an open sincere relationship with God, genuine love and compassion for our brothers and sisters and commitment to our mission.

The Salesian Spirituality too always motivates us to turn the Lenten Season into a season of joy. It teaches us that it is not enough to offer services, to show compassion, to do many charitable deeds; but what is more important is to bring Jesus to others and to bring to Jesus the people and the mission under our care, by proclaiming the joy of the Gospel in a spirit of cheerfulness and youthful vigour.

As we traverse through this favorable time of grace and blessing and while journeying together with the guiding theme of our Province '*Communities that generate life by living the spirituality of the Preventive System*', it is very apt to stop a while to ponder, reflect and actualize the call of the Preventive System in this Holy Season of Lent.

The pillars of the Preventive System in the Lenten Season

The Church teaches that **Prayer** is personal relationship with God. It is our raising of our heart and mind to God in order to build up a strong personal communion with him. During this time we are expected to spend a little more in prayer in order to grow closer to the Lord. Prayer reminds us of the need to allow ourselves to be loved by the Father, to place ourselves in an attitude of listening, of interior docility and to present to Him all that we are, our expectations and hopes. Pope Francis in his message recalled that prayer is "*more than a duty,*" but that it is "*an expression of our need to respond to God's love which always precedes and sustains us.*"

The spirituality of **Religion** in Don Bosco's teachings too speaks to us very tangibly of the need to be in constant rapport with God in prayer and in constant raising of our minds and beings to Him. While the Lenten Season invites us to a closer communion with God in prayer, the teachings of Don Bosco

remind us to turn all the circumstances of life into occasions of loving God & serving others with joy, bringing into the world a living & active faith.



Fasting is one of the most ancient practices linked to Lent. By fasting, the Church encourages the faithful to abstain something during the season of Lent as a participation in the sufferings and incredible sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for humanity. Fasting is not motivated simply by abstaining from food but rather the capacity to judge and think wisely and with full liberty the action done. It should be linked to our concern for those who are forced to fast by their poverty, those who suffer from the injustices of our economic and political structures, those who are in need for any other reason. Fasting helps us to rediscover the need and desire of God as the profound soul of our existence, disposing ourselves to be empty of self in order to be full of him. It is the spirit of fasting that the Church encourages the faithful to accompany the journey of Lent not just the traditional accomplishment of the ancient practice.

This same idea of living the spirit behind any action is disseminated by Don Bosco through the spirituality of **Reason** in his Preventive System. He was a firm believer that young people ought to know the reasons behind all the rules and practices not just following them out of fear and blind obedience. He taught that behind every action there lies the spirit of genuine concern for others. If the spirit is understood better, then the young will become mature in their choice of following the guidance and proposals made.

The aim through **Charity** is to love others as Jesus loved us; to live our profession of faith not just through our words, but also through our actions. It's simply our response to God. Far from being an act of giving; it is an attitude of the heart, a heart that is humble, repentant, merciful, compassionate, which seeks to reproduce in its relations with others the experience of mercy that each one of us lives in our relation with God. Charity is a small sacrifice, a gesture of love, possibly humble, hidden, but genuine, which costs something and is done in praise of God. Pope Francis reminds us that *“Charitable giving makes us more human, whereas hoarding makes us less human, imprisoned by our own selfishness”*

In the very same way, the **Loving Kindness** of Don Bosco's System of education paves the way to open one's heart to God and neighbours through genuine charity and response of love in relationship to God and people. It opens the heart to be more human and more loving. It is a daily attitude of love that has the good of the other at heart and works to enable them realize their potential with growing independence, a charity that goes beyond the love of self towards love of others. The spirituality of

Loving kindness of Don Bosco expresses itself in concrete gestures of humility and loving attention to the aspirations and needs of others. Just as the Church teaches us that Charity is an attitude of the heart, so too Don Bosco showed by his life and example that Loving Kindness is rooted in the charity of the Good Shepherd. It is the key that gives access to the heart of every person we encounter in life.

May the Spirit of Don Bosco- the spirituality of the Preventive System be our guiding principle as we make our journey onward in this Lenten Season.

International Women's Day

March 8 marks the yearly International Women's Day. Every year the celebration is marked as an occasion to take note of the contribution of women in the Church and the Society. This celebration brings to mind the inspiring role of women around the world to secure women's rights



and build more equitable societies. It also turns our attention to the voices of many women that go unheard and who continue to be dominated from securing their rights and realizing their full potentials. Commemorating this day, reminds us of the commendable and outstanding role that women are undertaking.

The tribute given to the figure of a woman on this day reminds us of the great impact they made to the Church and society in various capacities. Therefore, this day marks an occasion to express love and gratitude for the women's contribution towards the advancement of humanity. It is also a day to celebrate the heroines of that cause. Rightly the theme proposed by the United Nations for this year's celebration "*I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights*" reminds us of our human obligation to respect the equity of each person and the dignity that each one possesses. As women endowed with enormous potentials to enhance life, let us strive hard to ensure that the dignity of life is respected in every sphere and that we live the pride of being women consecrated for God and for humanity.

Solemnity of St Joseph

The solemnity of St. Joseph is a surprising interruption of the Lenten journey. Yet he is a singular witness of what it means to be ready for Easter, that is, for the salvific intervention of God in human history. St. Joseph is characterized by some distinctive qualities that make him an example and a qualified witness of reaching out to Christ. St. Joseph poses in front of us an example of a just, prudent and faithful servant of God who cooperated so well in the salvific plan of God in order to generate life to the world.



As a "just man" St. Joseph knew how to keep up his place, to the best of himself. Not a place that had been chosen, but one that

had been entrusted to him by God. In spite of a situation that seemed embarrassing, St. Joseph continued to live as a righteous man in the eyes of God, as God found him available, to do what is right in His plan. St. Joseph was so righteous that "he did as the angel of the Lord had ordered" (Mt 1:24). It did not have its own projects, nor did it activate deliberate strategies to achieve self-referential objectives. He was totally at the service of God's plan, which he welcomed in his heart more willingly than if it were his and brought it to fulfilment in an absolutely conforming way to God's expectations! He believed in God's plan, even in the traits he could not understand. Thus, he remains for all ages a model of true fidelity. Let us pray to St. Joseph to instill in us an ardent desire for holiness of life as we move on towards the celebration of our salvation at Easter.

Solemnity of the Annunciation

The Annunciation of the Lord is one of the most important solemnities of the Church. On this day while contemplating God's Divine love for humanity, we celebrate the Feast of Mary's faith: she who believed, who was redeemed, who was chosen to be the promised virgin for the Incarnation of the son of God. For her *faith*, the promises of God found fulfillment; for her *obedience*, the prophecies were realized; for her *faithfulness*, the redemption was accomplished.

The story of the Annunciation is a story of vocation. Therefore, it is an event that concerns us too, because we are all marked by a vocation, by the call of God in different ways. In many instances of our life, God sent an Angel to deliver a message and our life is nothing but the answer to the call of the Lord. As we celebrate this great feast of the Annunciation, let us go to the school of Mary to learn her '*FIAT*', and that like her we may be generous to God and say in faith '*Here I am!*' Looking at our Blessed Mother, our life should be a continuous and loving search for God, who shows us His will, day after day, and then imitates her in pronouncing with docility and love: '*Let Your will be done*'.



World Feast of gratitude

Sr. Chiara Cazzuola, the Vicar General of our Institute in her letter dated 11 February 2020 has communicated that the World Feast of Gratitude will be celebrated on 26 April 2020 in the Roman Province of St. John Bosco, Italy. The theme chosen by the host Province is "*Your life is a tree that bears fruit*". All the communities have received already the dossier for the preparation of the feast. Let us unite in solidarity and communion to pray for our dear Mother General in a very special way in this last year of noble service to our Institute and as we journey together towards GCXXIV.

As a proposal from the Roman Province to study, reflect and pray together with the educating community any of Mother General's Circulars, the Province therefore, has chosen **Circular No 992** having the theme "*Regenerated by the Holy Spirit communities that generate life*" for the preparation and celebration of this feast. In our own creativity, let us read, reflect and share on this

Circular as a sign of communion and love. Let us offer our gift to dear Mother General by striving to be communities that truly generate life in our personal lives and mission.

Other proposals with regard to the feast are:

- To reflect and meditate together **Psalm 1** as a community. The prepared reflection of the psalm by the host Province has already been sent to the communities. If you wish to use it in any other form of creativity, you are free to do so.
- To make a gesture that expresses the commitment of reconciliation and ecological conversion together with the educating community. Some examples proposed by the Province are taking care of a flower bed, a small garden, etc... (Please refer to the letter). Kindly take a photo (taken not with the mobile phone) or a short video (maximum 60 seconds) and send the same to the Provincial Office by 20 March 2020.



Communications

Writing of applications: On the feast of the annunciation, our temporary professed Sisters, Novices and Postulants will write their application for acceptance to the different stages of religious life. We support them with our prayers that their 'Yes' may truly be a generous '*FIAT*' like our Blessed Mother.

Welcome: We warmly welcome Sr. Alphonsa Kurinsingal, Provincial and her Council and all the Animators of Guwahati Province ING who will make their spiritual retreat in our Province from 24-31 March 2020 at FMA Outreach. We wish them a happy retreat and an enjoyable time with the Lord.

Meeting of the History Writing Committee: Sr. Euginia Laloo and Sr. Rodalin Kamar will participate in the meeting of the committee for History writing on the 100 years of FMA presence in India which will be held from 15- 19 March 2020 at Kodambakkam, Chennai. We wish them all the best and thank them for this mission they are doing.

Invitation to Mission ad Gentes: Sr. Deretti Alaide, General Councilor for the Missions has made an appeal to all the Provinces for new missionaries ad gentes. Those who feel called to this mission, kindly pray, discern and make your application to Mother General through the Provincial latest by the 25 of March 2020. Let us be generous to the Lord and our Province will be blessed.

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 elderly and sick sisters of our Province
- The brother of Sr. Ba-i-thiangSten
- The nephew of Sr. Estelle Rani

- Please pray also for my brother Fr. Paul George who underwent a fresh surgery today 3 March 2020.

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

- Sr. Rihunlang Muthoh and her family at the passing away of the youngest brother on 11 February 2020.
- Sr. Alphonsa Kurisingal FMA and the sisters of Guwahati Province ING at the sudden demise of Sr. Teresa Puthenpurakel on 7 February 2020 and Sr. Teresa Mukalayil on 9 February 2020.
- Fr. Januarius Sangma SDB and the Salesians of Guwahati Province at the passing away of Bro. Aloysius Induar on 8 February 2020.
- Sr. Margret Amalanathan FMA and the sisters of Trichy Province INT at the departure of Sr. Barbon Arokia Jebamani on 14 February 2020.
- Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot SDB and the Salesians of Shillong Province at the demise of Bro Dominic Induar SDB on 28 February 2020.
- Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah and her dear ones at the loss of her dear mother today 3 March 2020.

May the departed ones enjoy forever the eternal Peace of Heaven.

As we continue to enjoy the graces of God's Love and Mercy in this holy season of Lent, let us give heed to the exhortation of our Holy Father to open our hearts *"to hear God's call to be reconciled to himself, to fix our gaze on the paschal mystery, and to be converted to an open and sincere dialogue with him"* so that everyone become *"what Christ asks his disciples to be: the salt of the earth and the light of the world."*

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,

Affectionately,



Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial