



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

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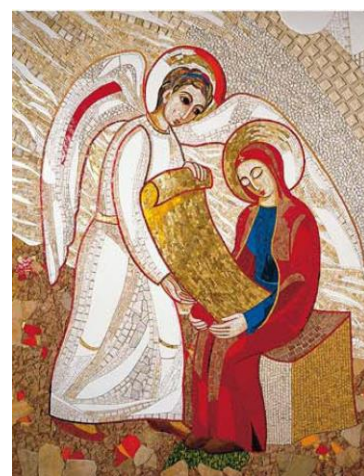
My dear Sisters,

Loving and prayerful greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

The month of March is rich in perfect models and vivid examples of Faith that is manifested in actions of wholehearted acceptance of God's message of Love. In Mary who pronounced her humble 'FIAT' at the annunciation, we have a splendid model of faith, humility and submission to God's plan of love for humanity. The same attitude of surrender is seen in the life of St. Joseph, her spouse who bowed his will and said 'YES' to God in many circumstances of his life and that of the Holy Family. Many such occurrences are seen in the life of Saints and Holy people who reveal to us the depth of their docility to accept the will and mandate of God in their lives.

The Response to God's mandate of Love

At the Annunciation, Our Blessed Mother readily accepted God's word and submitted herself in an act of faith and humility, offering her availability to the plan of salvation. Our Blessed Mother showed her trust in the Lord by becoming a docile instrument in God's hands. She replied to God presenting herself as the servant, as the one who allowed Him to act freely in her life: "Here I am, I am the servant of the Lord...Be it done to me according to your word". She listened humbly, she accepted God's initiative without having any personal interests, but that of serving Him wholeheartedly.



The mandate so to say given by God to Mary was to become the Mother of God, the Co-Redemptrix in the history of salvation. In all humility she accepted the divine motherhood with enthusiasm and total availability towards the will of God. She let herself be convinced by God's truth and by what He told her. The feast of the Annunciation, therefore, speaks to us of a "yes" to faith and trust even in what seems humanly impossible, of a "yes" to listening, despite deafening disturbances; of a "yes" to life even when there is anxiety of problems and uncertainty. Mary teaches us to say "yes" with boundless confidence in what is to come, with complete trust in God.

St. Joseph's resignation to God's Holy Will is manifested in his great faith and in his silence permeated with devout contemplation of the mystery of God, in an attitude of total availability to divine revelations. He surrendered himself entirely to the plan designed by God for him and

accomplished his will in the most ordinary circumstances of daily life. We see this in his fidelity in the everyday life circumstances, to his concern and respect for the Holy Family. St. Joseph's noble act of submission and acceptance of God's will did not simply derive from the scrupulous observance of the commandments, but from his earnest desire to discern and obey the Divine will always. He fulfilled every plan of God in an attitude of silent acquiescence which revealed the fullness of faith that he carried in his heart, and that guided his every thought and action. No word of him is remembered: we speak only of his behavior, of his attitude, of what he did: and everything in silent concealment and in perfect obedience.



His total surrender to God is seen not just in his life but even in his dreams- he appeared as a man who welcomed God's dream, because in some way he himself knew how to dream a story in which God is totally involved for the salvation of his creatures and of which he, Joseph always readily obeyed God's orders. In all this emerge the portrait of Joseph as of a man who discovered God's love for humanity and an evident figure of faithful receptiveness of God's mandate of love in the world.

In contemplating these wonderful models of total acceptance of God's message of Love and the mandate of salvation, we are reminded all the more that God's will is not some abstract idea to be figured out or puzzled over. The simple truth is that God's will is what God actually wills to send us each day by way of circumstances, places, people and situations. The holy resignation of Mary and Joseph set before us examples to learn to recognize God's will in the reality of everyday life. The challenge lies in learning to accept this truth and act on it by our readiness to accept and fulfill the plans of God.

We are given ample opportunities to discover God's call for us on a daily basis. The mandate of Love God entrusted to His only begotten Son, to Mary his predilected daughter, to St. Joseph, his chosen one continues to inspire us and remind us of our call to remain faithful and to live concretely the mandate "I entrust them to you" of our Blessed Mother to St. Mary Mazzarello. By this we are made inheritors and caretakers of a great legacy of God's love.

The Holy Week - A contemplation of Jesus as the perfect image of God's Love

Jesus is the perfect model of Obedience to God's will and subsequently the perfect image of God's love for us. While we reflect on the essence of a rightful attitude of surrendering to God's will, Jesus Himself comes as an example for us to follow. In this Holy Season of Lent, we are reminded always of this fact that God loves the world and humanity so much that He sent His Only Son to save us. This eternal promise finds its fulfilment in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus which we annually celebrate during the Holy Week.

The Son of God, after becoming man in obedience to the Father, accepted to carry out His will to the end, facing the passion and the cross for our sake, to make us participants in his resurrection. It is good to understand that Jesus freely chose to live the passion and it was never a forced act. In the Holy Week, we recall Jesus entering Jerusalem to take the last step, in which he summarized His

entire existence: He gave himself totally, He kept nothing for himself, not even his life. Jesus decided to obey the Father: He decided to do his will! - that of making the supreme sacrifice of His life for the salvation of the world.

Reflecting on this self-emptying attitude and total surrender of Jesus to God's will, we are given the clear picture on the criterion that guided every choice of Jesus throughout his life i.e: the firm will to love and obey the Father. This decision to correspond to the Father's love for him led Jesus to embrace, in every single circumstance, the Father's plan, even when this involved sacrifice, suffering and death.



As we relive the Holy Week, let us prepare ourselves to contemplate the mysteries of God's love revealed in the face of His Son Jesus and contemplate on the Son's conformity to the Father's Holy Plan of salvation. Let us welcome God's will into our lives by meditating, reflecting and living with greater awareness and gratitude the various moments of our salvation. Perhaps it would be good to take a moment and ponder on the questions as invited by our Holy Father Pope Francis:

- What does it mean for me to live the Holy Week?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus on his way to Calvary, to the Cross and to the Resurrection?

Amoris Laetitia Family Year [19 March 2021 - 26 June 2022]

On the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (19th March 2021), our Holy Father Pope Francis will inaugurate the Year "*Amoris Laetitia Family*," which will conclude on 26th June 2022 with the X World Meeting of Families in Rome. A particular aspect that emerges in the context of the Year "*Amoris Laetitia Family*" is the desire for greater involvement of married couples in diocesan and parish structures to set up family pastoral care and a deepening of the formation of pastoral workers, seminarians and priests so that, working with families, they are up to the challenges of today's world. It also includes sharing the contents of the apostolic exhortation more widely, proclaiming the gift of the sacrament of marriage and enabling families to "become active agents of the family apostolate."



Our Holy Father invites us to entrust this journey, with families all over the world, to the Holy Family of Nazareth, in particular to St. Joseph, the devoted spouse and father. Let us pray for all the families in the world in this important year that they may truly grow in faith and communion and may become the cenacles of evangelization and mediation of God's love to all. Let us put our efforts

to plan and organize various programmes and activities together with the families in our own mission and apostolate in order to live concretely and creatively the call of our Holy Father in this special year. May the hopeful prayer of our Holy Father in announcing the year be ours too - "*May the families of the world be increasingly fascinated by the evangelical ideal of the Holy Family and with the help of the Virgin Mary may they become the leaven of a new humanity and a concrete and universal solidarity*".

International Women's Day 2021

The International women's Day 2021 will be celebrated on 8th March with the theme "***Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.***" This year's celebration calls for recognizing the remarkable efforts made by women and girls around the globe to shape a more equitable future and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women are powerful agents of change, and the far-reaching benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all spheres. Still, women continue to be vastly under-represented in decision-making in politics, businesses, and communities. We salute the many women, who notwithstanding the weight of responsibility and other social and political obstacles, take the stand as front liners in many set ups of our mission and the society. Women have become far more confident about what they have to contribute. They have learned through experience the value of female solidarity and support.



As we celebrate this important day, we are reminded that we are also called to be leaders and agents of change in the Church, the Institute and the Society. We are vested with grace and gifts to empower one another and to lift up the inner potentials of many women we encounter in our mission and in the society. Let us forge ahead as women of faith and commitment to take the lead in sowing and restoring goodness in the mission and in the world, to become agents of change and promoters of equity and integrity.

Family News and Communications

Congratulations: We extend our heartiest congratulations and prayerful support to Sr. Meenakshi D'Silva FMA who is appointed by Mother General as the Provincial of Mumbai Province (INB). May the Lord bless the Province of Mumbai with its new leader and sustain Sr. Meenakshi in a special way with His divine graces in this important and noble mission of animating the Province.

Thank you: We express our sincere gratitude to Fr. Barnes Mawrie SDB who preached the retreat of our sisters from 21-27 February 2021. He has enthused the participants with the right attitude of

living the call to discipleship and our charismatic identity as FMA. He stressed much on the need to keep alive the spirit of our Founders and imitate the passionate zeal of our pioneers. May the good Lord bless him abundantly for his generous spirit and bless his mission with fruitfulness.

Annual Spiritual Retreats: The Retreat for a group of temporary professed sisters and those up to 10 years of profession will begin this evening. We implore God's blessings upon Fr. V. M. Thomas SDB, the retreat preacher and on all our sisters.

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1. The Annual Retreat for the Provincial Council and the Animators will begin on the evening of 10th March 2021 and will conclude on the morning of 17th March 2021. On **17th March 2021**, there will be a full day animation programme for this group.
2. The annual retreat for the group of perpetually professed sisters scheduled for 21-28 March 2021 is preponed to **19-26 March 2021**. It will begin on the evening of 19th and conclude on 26th morning. This change is made in order that the participants of the retreat can travel back to their respective communities for the celebration of the Holy Week.
3. The participants are requested to reach the venue latest by 3:00 pm on the starting day.

We send ahead our prayers for the fruitfulness of all the coming retreats.

A month's preparation for a 'YES' to God: On 25th February 2021, all the temporary professed Sisters and Candidates of our Province have begun a month's preparation to make their application to the next stage of their vocational and religious journey. We accompany them with our prayers during this intense month of preparation and we assure them of our special remembrance in prayers on 25th March 2021 when they will make their applications. May the Lord sustain them all with His grace and fidelity.

Examinations: We accompany our Sisters and young people who will have the various State Board and University Examinations in the coming months.

Prayers for the sick and the departed

We extend our prayerful support to all the sick ones through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother. We offer our special prayers for:

- The complete recovery of Sr. Sylvestra Khonglah.
- The sister of Sr. Jubil and Sr. Hunbih Dkhar.

And we continue to implore God's mercy on the suffering world and for the complete deliverance and protection from Covid-19.

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

- Sr. Marvella Shangpliang at the passing away of her brother in law on 6th January 2021.
- Sr. Lily Kharbuki at the demise of her maternal aunt on 9th February 2021.
- Sr. Sabina Mawrie who loss her nephew on 10th February 2021.

- Sr. Deimon Dhar at the demise of her maternal grandmother on 14th February 2021.
- Sr. Catherine Phawa and Sr. Celestina Phawa at the passing away of the cousin brother and nephew on 24th February 2021.
- Sr. Margareth Changte at the demise of her brother today the 1st of March 2021.
- Fr. Jose Kuruvachira SDB, Provincial and the Salesian Province of Dimapur (IND) at the demise of Fr. Pulinthanathumalayil Cyriac on 4th February 2021.
- We pray also for the repose of the soul of Sr. Ernestina Quattri FMA, missionary to our Province who concluded her earthly sojourn on 9th February 2021 in Italy.

May the departed ones enjoy forever the eternal Peace of Heaven and may all those who mourn their passing away be consoled by the strength and grace of God.

As we continue to journey in prayerful communion this Holy Season of Lent, let us once again renew our commitment to walk along with God who gives us ample opportunities and occasions for a profound rethinking and renewing of our life, to return to the essentials, to be truly and profoundly reconciled with God and others. May the journey of life always see us, until the end of our days, committed to conversion and returning to God "with all our hearts". Let us constantly turn our gaze towards Jesus and the Cross, so that our path towards Easter may become a path of Love, Joy and Fidelity to witness the triumph of Life. Let us remind ourselves of our Christian and religious obligations to live in love with the words of our Holy Father:



“Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives. It enables us to view those in need as members of our own family, as friends, brothers or sisters. A small amount, if given with love, never ends, but becomes a source of life and happiness” [cf. Holy Father’s Lenten Message 2021]

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,

Affectionately,

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial