



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

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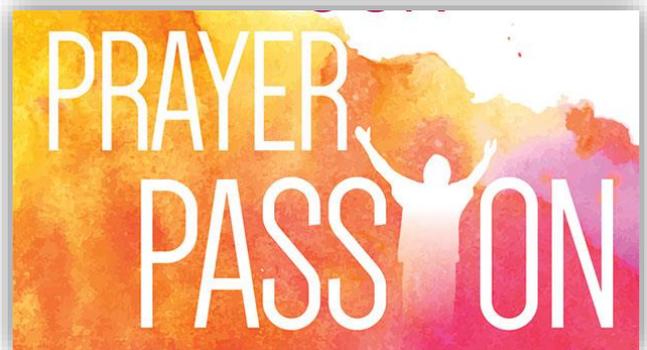
My dear Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

We are coming almost to the end of our Lenten journey - a great spiritual pilgrimage through which the Church accompanies us to bring us back to the awareness of our human condition marked by fragility and sin. We were accompanied throughout this holy season by the Word of God that enriched our journey of spiritual renewal. Very soon we will enter into the most solemn week of our salvation with the celebration of the Holy Week. This celebration comes every year as a commemoration of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. However, each year has got its own significance that adds meaning and substance to our spiritual journey. As we come to the end of the Lenten season and approach the most solemn moments of Jesus' life, it is good to remind ourselves of the exhortation of our Holy Father for this Lent 2022 "...Let us not grow tired of doing good, [...] Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil..." This thought gives us the opportunity to stop a while and examine ourselves if we have faithfully given heed to the invitation of our Holy Father and if not, we have this precious time left to strive ever better for holiness. The great mystery of our salvation finds its profound and complete meaning with the celebration of the solemn moments of Jesus' self-gift to us which we celebrate in a special way during the Holy Week.

"Passion and Prayer" are two important words to grasp the profound meaning of the Palm Sunday that marks the beginning of Jesus' journey to the Cross. Jesus begins his journey to Jerusalem in the last hours before his crucifixion, through an intense time of prayer. He retires to the garden of Gethsemane with His disciples and invites them to pray; and it is in prayer that Jesus renews his "yes" to the Father: *"Father, if you are willing, take away this cup from me. Nevertheless, let your*

will be done, not mine". This noble gesture of Jesus to remain united with His Father in Prayer especially in moments of great trial and suffering is a reminder for us of how important Prayer is for our spiritual life. All of us may go through different moments of trials, problems, difficulties and obstacles in life. In such moments, unlike Jesus we may be tempted to flee instead of facing them, before enduring the Passion like Him, perhaps because suffering frightens us. Instead, Jesus shows us by his great example that perseverance in prayer and suffering leads to the maturity in faith because precisely when we live the



mystery of the cross, can we, like Jesus, bow to God's Holy Will and say: "Not my will, but yours be done".

Another important and meaningful Paschal event is the Holy Thursday celebration which invites us to gaze our attention towards "***Love and Sacrifice***" manifested by Jesus in His great act of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist and washing the feet of the apostles. Today we do not make a historical commemoration in which we remember the Last Supper, but we actualize the Passover of Jesus in which we celebrate the memorial of our salvation. St. John in his gospel does not tell us about the institution of the Eucharist, but he helps us to understand the profound meaning of Christ's love for us to the very end. He narrates a concrete gesture that takes on a prophetic value, that of the washing of the feet, an act of love and a reminder of the beauty of sharing of love towards our brothers and sisters. Jesus reveals himself fully in a love that becomes service, as happens in the Eucharist: body given and blood shed for our salvation. He asks us to take up His example, not by returning the favour but by extending it to our brothers and sisters. From the Love of God revealed in Jesus Christ should spring the capacity for mercy towards one another.



The commemoration of the death of Christ has its center in the "***Cross and death for life***" marked by the crucifixion, death and burial of the Lord Jesus. But within the death of Christ on the Cross, there is the mystery of a new, liberating, redemptive life, which is why Good Friday becomes the day of hope for a new life. The cross of Jesus reveals the great love of Him who gives his life for us. The whole life of Jesus is an outpouring of love for us. We heard in the celebration of Holy Thursday: "Before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end." This experience of love in contemplating Christ on the cross invites us to grow in mercy and tenderness - an invitation to faith, to believe that love is stronger than death; that love lived, shared and given freely has a strength that overcomes pain, suffering and injustice, especially when it is translated into solidarity with the weakest and those in need. Yes, the Cross reveals the truth and the effectiveness of God's love for every person on earth. A crucified

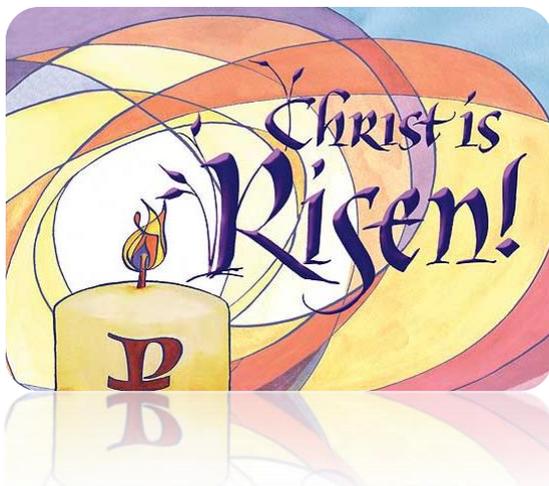
love, however, does not stop at the drama of suffering and death, but opens up to life and generates the joy of the Resurrection. In this joy, sins are forgiven and peace is given.

The burial of Jesus is marked by a sense of “*Silence and contemplation*” which we celebrate on Holy Saturday in communion with our Holy Mother of God standing in front of her Son's tomb, awaiting his resurrection. It is the day of silence, of recollection, of prayer - Silence to create the most suitable interior environment permeated and inhabited not by the death of Christ but by the signs of life that He came to bring with his death on the cross; Silence inhabited by a life that is renewed, a life that opens up to hope. The tomb becomes full with life, the silence is shattered by the new life that is reborn, that presents itself not as defeated, but triumphant. Pope Francis reminds us that it will be good to think on a Holy Saturday of the silence of Our Lady, the "Believer", who, in silence, waited for the Resurrection. Our Lady should be the icon for us, of that Holy Saturday that she lived in expectation; [...] of the love that does not doubt, but which hopes in the Word of the Lord, so that it may become manifested and shine on the day of Easter. Mary keeps watch in expectation, believing in the certainty of God's promises and the hope in His power that raises the dead. In unison with her, we are given the chances to read our expectation, our hopes and our faith to be lived as a continuous passage towards the mystery of our salvation.



Alleluia! He is Risen

Alleluia! the Lord is risen is the Easter proclamation that resounds in the Church at the triumphant victory of Christ over death. The echo of the news of the empty tomb once again reaches us and gives us a time of celebration. Above all, it is a moment that changes life, changes the way we look at our lives, changes the way we live our relationships, changes the expectation of the future that becomes a space in which to welcome a gift and a presence of the Risen Christ. The resurrection of Jesus is more than a turning back, more than a starting again, it is a departure towards newness of life. Even the disciples, in order to recognize Jesus after the resurrection needed to make a journey. They cannot simply go back to doing what they did before, life is no longer the same as before with the resurrection of Jesus. With it, new opportunities are open to us to relaunch towards the future, but a future that makes us believe and be convinced that "the Lord is there, the Lord is risen".



The Easter Resurrection, however, is not only an event of the past and does not only concern Jesus Christ. His resurrection is the beginning of a new condition for every person: the risen Lord lives in us and we can live in him and for him, already enjoying the never-ending joy of eternal life. For we, by virtue of Baptism, have already been buried in Christ's death and have risen with him. Being made anew and sharing in the resurrection of Christ, we are reminded of the exhortation of St. Paul who said in his letter to the church in Colosse: “Seek ye those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God! (Col 3:1). We can look with confidence to Heaven and call God by the name of Father. We live in this

world looking up to Heaven, where we know that Jesus is present with his resurrected body: that is why we are full of confidence. Our faith is joy; a serene but sure joy, a joy that makes us strong and the witnesses who are eager to share with the world the gift we have received from the Resurrected Christ.

World Gratitude Day

We unite with the whole FMA World to celebrate the World Feast of Gratitude in the land of our origins. This year's celebration will take us back to the humble beginnings of our Institute 150 years ago. These days we are being guided by a deeper reflection on the essence and significance of our belongingness to the Institute through the animations provided by the host province – the Piedmont Province “Mary Help of Christians”, Italy.

“*They are my daughters*” is the theme chosen for the celebration to recall the dream that Don Bosco had before the foundation of our Institute where he saw himself in the midst of young girls pleading for his help at Piazza Vittorio. While trying to recede from the situation, Don Bosco was instead graced by the appearance of our Lady who said “*Take care of them, they are my daughters*”. Thus, we have seen and experienced the guiding hands of our Blessed Mother that accompanied us through, since the inception of our Institute to this 150th year of its foundation. As we have seen in the dossier for the preparation the feast is divided into three stages of celebration:



- 1st Week (28 March – 3 April) CALL – TURIN: “Take care of them, they are my daughters”
- 2nd Week (4 April – 10 April) IDENTITY – MORNESE: “You are the living Monument”
- 3rd Week (18 April – 24 April) ACCOMPANIMENT – NIZZA: “Mary walks in this house”

We are grateful to God for the gift of Mother Chiara Cazzuola who in this important and significant year in the life and history of our Institute, has been chosen by God to steer the Institute to the next century together with the sisters of the General Council. We pray that the grace of God, the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of our Founders guide every step that she takes. This celebration also reminds us that while we celebrate the gift of fidelity in the Institute, we are invited to be driven by the very same slogan that is resounding in our generations today in different ways- to become mothers to those entrusted to our care especially the needy, the downtrodden, the marginalized and all those who are in need of our maternal care and affection with the same attitude, love and passion of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello.

As we continue to live the days of preparation, let us unitedly journey with greater enthusiasm and sense of wonder at the marvellous deeds God has done in the life of our Institute and in each of us through the powerful intervention of our Blessed Mother. As Sr. María del Rosario García Ribas, our Vicar General invites in her letter for the feast, let us live with gratitude and may “*The celebration of the World Feast of Gratitude unite us all in the desire to go forward with a big and generous heart (cf. L 47,12), as Mother Mazzarello asks of us*”.

Family News and Communications

God's Blessings: We implore God's abundant blessings upon Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil FMA who has been appointed by Mother Chiara Cazzuola and her council on the solemnity of St. Joseph 19 March 2022 as the 6th provincial of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Province of Bangalore (INK) for the term of office 2022- 2028. We congratulate her for this noble mission that is being entrusted to her care and we assure her of our prayerful support.



— *Congratulations!* —

Novices to INB: I am glad to inform you that two of our Postulants will continue their Novitiate formation at Mumbai Province (INB). Sr. Meenakshi D'Silva the Provincial of Mumbai had made this request after obtaining the approval of Mother General, for two Postulants to do their formation in Mumbai Province. They will leave for Mumbai Province in the month of May. Besides increasing the numerical strength of the Novitiate, I am sure, the sharing of personnel will result in a mutually enriching experience for the Novices. We accompany them with our prayers as they continue their journey of formation at Sacred Heart Novitiate, Nashik. We also express our sincere gratitude to Sr. Meenakshi D'Silva, Provincial, Sr. Supriya Noronha, the Novice Mistress and all the sisters who will accompany our 2 Novices in these 2 years of formation.

Congratulations: We congratulate Sr. Jenney Iawphniaw and Sr. Ibaniewkor Warjri who received the award as gold medalists of the Bachelor Degree of Computer Applications (BCA) and the General Proficiency Award from the ICFAI University in Shillong on 30 March 2022. We congratulate them for their outstanding results and hard work. Their performance has brought laurels to the Church and the Province. May the Lord continue to accompany them in their mission. Congratulations also to all our sisters who have fared well in the various semester exams. I wish them all the best as they continue their mission.

Research Work: In these past months, the sisters who are writing the history of the Provinces of FMA India in view of the centenary celebration are doing extensive research on the history of our FMA presence in India. The sisters who are involved in the mission of North East India which comprises of INC, ING and INS are having a meeting together in these days in Guwahati. For the last stage of collecting the data, they will need to consult the General Archives in Rome. Therefore, they will be travelling to Rome for this purpose after Easter 2022. From our Province, Sr. Eugenia Laloo will be part of the group along with Sr. Lily Perumpekkunnel (INC) and Sr. Penny Rose Chinir (ING). We wish them a fruitful work and safe journey.

GCXXIV Sharing and Spiritual Retreats: The last group of the GCXXIV Sharing concluded on 23 March 2022. All have had the opportunity to live the experience of the Chapter in various forms of participation. The two of us who participated in GCXXIV, namely Sr. Celine D'Cunha and myself have tried our best to give the participants a holistic experience of the Chapter and present elaborately the Chapter Document,

the priority choices and action plans which indicate the way forward in the coming years. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who have participated with much eagerness and interest in the life of the Institute and the growth of the Charism in different parts of the world with much appreciation and sense of belonging.

Each sharing was also followed by an inspiring spiritual retreat preached by Fr. Biji Thomas SDB. Everyone has been enriched and renewed spiritually with the rich animation of Fr. Biji that has triggered our conscience and our desire to live our religious commitment with greater passion and authenticity as he himself expressed “*there is so much of goodness and holy desire among the Sisters*”. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Fr. Biji for having been instrumental in guiding our sisters to experience God in a personal way through His Word. May the Lord bless him copiously in all his endeavors especially in his noble ministry of preaching God’s word and proclaiming His love to the world. I am also grateful to Fr. Anthony Roy SDB who generously preached the first retreat for the school sisters. With his youthful spirit he has put fire into the hearts of the participants to enkindle our mission with the passion and zeal of Don Bosco. May his apostolic works be rewarded and blessed by God.

After the enriching spiritual experiences, we have had, I would like to recommend to all our communities to keep up the fervor and blessings which we have received gratuitously from God’s hands. Let us continue to support and pray for one another that our journey forward may be richly blessed by God and that together we may grow in holiness. Let us send our prayers ahead for the fruitfulness of the retreats for the temporary professed Sisters, Novices, Postulants and Aspirants scheduled for the month of July.

Prayers for the sick and the departed

We extend our prayerful support to all the sick ones through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother especially our sick sisters. We pray in particular for:

- Sr. Celine Michael who is recuperating from her ailments these days in Bellefonte, Shillong.
- All our sisters who are sick in the hospital and in the communities
- All the relatives of our Sisters and members of the Salesian Family.

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

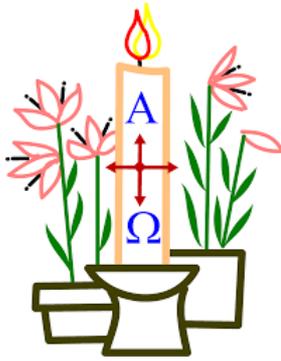
- All our Sisters who lost their dear ones in the month of March
- Sr. Alphonsa Kurisinkal and the Sisters of Guwahati Province (ING) at the passing away of Sr. Mary Edattukaran FMA on 1 March 2022.
- All the members of the Salesian Family who have departed from this world during the past month.

May the departed ones enjoy the loving embrace of God forever in His Kingdom and may all those who mourn their passing away be consoled by the strength and grace of God.

Ppeace is a precious gift that the message of the Resurrection leaves to the world. "The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord". One of the most significant gift of peace is joy, not the noisy and superficial joy, but the inner joy that illuminates life whatever its condition, joy that becomes serenity. These days,

there is much need of Peace in the world especially in the countries of Russia and Ukraine. While the Church celebrates the gift of Peace of the Risen Lord, it is being disturbed in some parts of the world. As we celebrate the gift of the Risen Lord, we pray that this gift reaches the depths of every person's heart amidst experiences of fear, fatigue, disappointment and uncertainty. It is the risen Jesus who during this Easter presents to all his gift: "Peace be with you". With him it will surely be, despite everything, a "Happy Easter", the Easter of the Risen Christ Jesus.

May the Blessings and Peace of the Risen Lord be always with us, with our communities and our mission.



happy easter

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,
Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sr. Elizabeth George FMA".

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial