



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

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01.02.2023

My dear Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

We are beginning a new month, a new sign of Blessing and of Hope to experience the providence of God in every way. At the beginning of the month, the Church celebrates the feast of the presentation of the Lord at the temple. Pope Francis says that the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple is also known as the Feast of the Encounter: Jesus goes to meet his people. Thus, this is the encounter between Jesus and his people, when Mary and Joseph brought their child to the Temple in Jerusalem; the first encounter between Jesus and his people, represented by Simeon and Anna.



The Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is also a strong opportunity to reflect on our life and vocation as consecrated persons which has been an occasion to also celebrate the World Day of Consecrated Life as established by Saint John Paul II. Mary and Joseph, obedient to the Law, after forty days from the birth of Jesus present him in the Temple. A God who became man enters the Temple, an awaited Messiah who presents himself as a small child so that those who await him with faith like Simeon and Anna can recognize, welcome and bless him because in Him they recognize that God has been faithful to His promises of good and salvation for humanity.

This yearly celebration is a propitious occasion to look at the journey made as consecrated persons at the service of the Church and in bearing witness to others. This feast invites us to pause, discern and pray for what the Lord wants from Consecrated life, in the context of the Church and Society today, how we must read the signs of the times, the difficulties, the scarcity of vocations, the call to

review the different works and activities- if they are still relevant and draw souls to God, if our life still becomes the proclamation of the Gospel. On a day like this, it is good to go back to the galilee of our vocation story and ask ourselves “What does the Lord want from us? What is he asking of us? How can we respond to the expectations of the Church and of our society today?

Today, consecrated men and women are expected to be women of prayer, of listening to the Word of God, of sacramental life, of hope because we know that God does not break his promises but the time has come to be together with men and women of our time with their frailties, with their great family problems, of identity, of health, of poverty, of addictions, of work, mobility ... etc....We can no longer evangelize without questioning ourselves and singing to the world with our lives a new song that is not of words but a song of love that comes from the heart. And so we are no longer allowed to worry more about ourselves, about our structures to maintain, than about people especially the young who go out looking for an encounter with the only One who can give meaning to life even without being aware of it. and which can also make them sing the new song of those who have felt loved by God. Only in this manner can our consecrated life be truly worthy of the call and can become a testimony of the love that God has lavished on the earth.

Our Lady of Lourdes and 31st World Day of the sick

On February 11, 1858, Mary manifested herself as "the Immaculate" to Bernadette Soubirous in the grotto of Massabielle, no less than 18 times until 16 July. This event means that we can well count the spiritual and privileged sign of God who chose this young and special messenger to announce the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Bernadette is the apostle of the message of Lourdes which we can summarize in the canticle: *I bless you, Father because you revealed to the little ones the mysteries of your love.* As our Blessed Mother appeared to little Bernadette, she does appear to us too in different ways and through various persons and situations in life. However, she does not shine only as a sign of certain hope. She also shows us how to walk in this world to be authentic disciples of Christ and true children of the Father. Penance, prayer, service to those in need: these are the milestones of the journey that she proposes to us as she revealed herself to Bernadette.

Penance was Mary's recommendation to Bernadette. Acknowledging our sins, confessing them to God with confident trust, walking on a path of permanent conversion, letting ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit: this is what Mary repeats to us insistently.

Prayer -Trusting, simple, humble prayer is what Mary asks of us again. Prayer which is supplication for us and for all the sinners of the world; humble prayer for oneself and for others; constant, persevering in the name of all humanity.

Service to those in need is yet another invitation of our Blessed Mother from the grotto of Lourdes. She invites us to care for each other with more love; that we "take care" of one another, especially those in need, both materially and spiritually with attention and availability, generosity and humility.



This day is also celebrated in the Church as the World Day of the Sick. The theme for this year 31st World Day of the Sick is more than fitting: “«*Take care of him*». *Compassion as a synodal exercise of healing*,” with an immediate reference to the evangelical figure of the Good Samaritan.



In the message, the Holy Father recalls how “illness is part of our human experience. But it can become inhuman if it is lived in isolation and abandonment, if it is not accompanied by care and compassion. When walking together, it is normal for someone to feel bad, to have to stop due to fatigue or due to some accident along the way. It is there, in those moments, that we see how we are walking: if it is truly walking together, or if we are on the

same path but each on their own, looking after their own interests and letting the others "get by"». Therefore, "in the midst of an ongoing synodal journey", Pope Francis invites us “to reflect on the fact that it is precisely through the experience of fragility and illness that we can learn to walk together in God's style, which is closeness, compassion and tenderness.” As we celebrate this day in communion with the Church, let us keep a special remembrance of all the sick people and those who care for them and let us remind ourselves that we have the duty of reaching out to the sick and weak ones with a heart open like that of the good Samaritan, that looks at them with compassion, embraces them with closeness and takes care of them with love and tenderness.

Family News and Communications

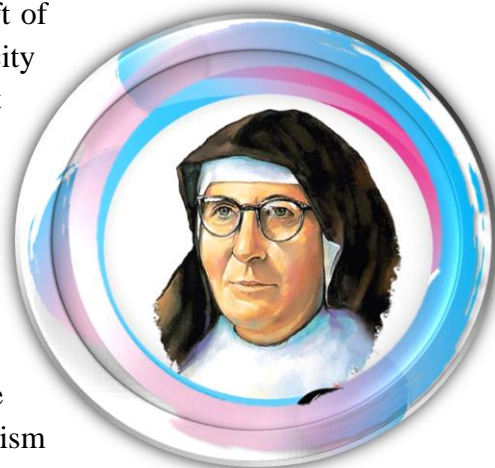
Anniversaries in the Institute: As we journey towards the second half of the second century in the life of our Institute, we are blessed with many opportunities and occasions to deepen our Spirit and Charism in our contemporary world. Our Superiors from Rome have reminded us that such opportunities can also be concretised in the remembrance and celebration of the various significant events in the life of the Institute.

DATES	EVENT
January 5, 1873-2023	150 years since the birth of the Venerable Servant of God Mother Laura Meozzi
January 6, 1923-2023	100 years since the first profession of Blessed Sr. Maria Romero
February 16, 1883-2023	140 years since the birth of Blessed Sr. Maria Troncatti
August 3, 1903-2023	120 years since the first profession of Sr. Teresa Valsè Pantellini
September 3, 1988-2023	35 years since the beatification of Laura Vicuna

October 2, 1973-2023	50 years since the inauguration of the "Ciudadela de Maria Auxiliadora" founded by Blessed Sr .Maria Romero in Costa Rica with the first 7 little houses
November 9, 1893 -2023	130 years since the birth of Blessed Sr. Amparo Carbonell

Let us remind ourselves and our communities of these important events as a means to revive and renew our charismatic identity and vocational fruitfulness. For each personage/ event, there will be an article on the Institute’s website which recalls their significance with some initiatives which will be organized at the places where they lived.

On the 16th of this month of February, we will celebrate the 140 years of the birth of Blessed Sr. Maria Troncatti. Let us thank God for the gift of this unique figure and model of Salesian Holiness lived in simplicity and great sacrifice. Her heroic life has breathed the essence that holiness is the duty and privileged of every Christian which must be radiated to build solidarity, love and peace with all. Sr. Maria Troncatti has been a holy missionary who, with her total dedication to Ecuador among the Shuars made the Gospel and the Salesian charism credible and fruitful. As we celebrate the 140th anniversary of her birth, may she inspire us that like her we may be filled with ardour and passion in our mission and become the trustworthy witnesses of the Gospel and of the Salesian Charism wherever we are.



In communion of Prayers: Our Superiors in Rome have requested our communion in prayers with the whole Institute to speed up the process of glorification of our Blessed, Venerable and Servants of God in our Institute. For this special intention, we unite in prayers:

1. At the daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Rosary
2. Offering one Mass every month for this intention.

Quoting from the letter of Sr. Maria Luisa Nicastro, the Secretary General *“Let us entrust the difficult cases to our Blesseds, Venerables and Servants of God, in the certainty that their intercession will be effective as was their testimony of charity, their fidelity to God and to young people, their unconditional dedication to proclaiming the Gospel. Let us spread the knowledge of these figures among young people and families, also through the social networks using the materials available on the website or on the pages dedicated to these sisters.”*

The miracles and favours received through their powerful intercession can be sent to the email animacionesantitafma@cgfma.org or by ordinary mail to the General Secretariat. In this way, on our part too we can contribute towards the advancement of their journey towards the altars.

Annual Spiritual Retreat: I would like to remind you that the Annual Spiritual Retreats for the month of February 2023 will be as follows:

DATES	PARTICIPANTS	PREACHER
03 -10 February 2023	Provincial Council and Animators	Archbishop Thomas Menamperampil SDB, DD
14 -21 February 2023	Perpetually Professed Sisters	Fr. George Maliekal SDB

The participants are requested to arrive on the starting date of each retreat latest by lunch at FMA Outreach. The retreats will be followed by a day of animation on 10th and 21st February 2023 respectively. The participants can depart on the following morning after the Holy Eucharist.

The Members of the Provincial Council and the Animators will also go for a day of Pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. Mary Mazzarello, Guwahati on 11 February 2023. We anticipate our gratitude to Sr. Alphonsa Kurisinkal FMA and the Sisters of Guwahati particularly the community of St. Mary's, Guwahati. We will remember each of you in our prayers through the intercession of Mother Mazzarello.

Congratulations: We extend our warmest and affectionate congratulations to Sr. Majella Fernando FMA and Sr. Margaret Devadoss FMA who were appointed on this great solemnity of Don Bosco as the new Provincials of Trichy Province (INT) and Chennai Province (INM) respectively. We assure them of our prayerful support in this noble mission. May Don Bosco, our Father and Founder intercede powerfully for them and their mission and may our Blessed Mother accompany them in their journey forward.

PCI 2023: The PCI 2023 will be held at Auxilium Provincial House, Manikandam, Trichy from 14-16 March 2023 with the theme "*With Mary reawakening the original freshness of vocational fruitfulness, placing ourselves in a state of ongoing formation*". From our Province, Sr. Wismary Kharbihkhiew (National Coordinator for the Youth Pastoral), Sr. Mary Lamare (National Coordinator for the Salesian Family) and myself will participate as ex-officio members of the PCI Meeting. Sr. Rosina Susngi and Sr. Euginia Laloo will represent the Province as the Province Delegate and the Delegate nominated by the Provincial Council respectively. We send ahead our prayers for the fruitfulness of the meeting that will become effective for the FMA Mission in India.

Missionary Request: I would like to remind the continuous request of Mother General to send missionaries to spread God's Love and the spirit of our Institute to different parts of the world. As we celebrate the centenary of our presence, it is also an occasion to show our gratitude to our pioneers and missionaries who have come from across the sea to plant the Charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello in our land. Therefore, dear Sisters, I would kindly exhort everyone of us to spend time in prayer and discernment and listen to the voice of the Lord to be missionaries in other parts of our Institute. May our holy Founders guide and inspire us to give heed to God's call with generosity and sincerity to serve Him beyond our own confines. Let us continue to pray for the increase of more authentic missionary vocations.

World Day of Gratitude: The Vicar General of our Institute Sr. María del Rosario García Ribas has communicated that the World Feast of Gratitude 2023 will be celebrated in **Bogotá, Colombia** and will be animated by the 4 Colombian Provinces. In due time, she will send us the theme and the preparations for the same. Meanwhile we are invited to unite in communion to pray for our dear Mother General and to prepare ourselves well for this great and significant feast of love in our Institute. As Sr. Maria del Rosario says *“In our charismatic tradition, the feast of world gratitude is a significant moment in the family life of our Institute, a sign of love and fidelity that we celebrate in an atmosphere of prayer and joy, to express the gratitude and affection that unite us to our Mother, as the center of communion of our Institute.”*

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, relatives of our Sisters and members of the Salesian Family. We remember in our prayers particularly:

- Sr. Patricia Nongkhlaw who is hospitalized.
- The father of Sr. Embahlang Dhar.
- All our Sisters who are sick in the communities, and
- All the sick relatives of our Sisters.

We also offer our heartfelt condolences and prayers to all our Sisters who have lost their dear ones in the past month and all the members of the Salesian Family. 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. We offer our heartfelt sympathy and prayerful support particularly to:

- Sr. Celibon Maslai at the demise of her sister on 10 January 2023.
- Sr. Mary Concepta Pakma at the passing away of her brother on 12 January 2023.
- Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil FMA and the Sisters of Bangalore Province (INK) at the departure of Sr. Annie Kottaram FMA on 17 January 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Dimapur at the demise of Fr. Mathew Tharakkan SDB on 3 January 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of the Salesian Province of Kolkata at the passing away of Fr. Thomas Pulickal SDB on 8 January 2023.

Feasts of the month

02 February	- Presentation of the Lord/ World Day of Consecrated Life
04 February	- St. John de Britto
07 February	- Blessed Pius IX
09 February	- Blessed Eusebia Palomino
11 February	- Our Lady of Lourdes and World Day of the Sick
18 February	- St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara
22 February	- Ash Wednesday
25 February	- Saints Aloysius Versiglia and Calistus Caravario

As I conclude, I would like to extend my prayerful greetings of a very **Happy and fervent Lenten Season** to all. Lent is a time of journey, of progress in freedom, of fighting within oneself the evil inside and of liberation from it. Lent is the time when each of us can, in the same way as Jesus Christ, withdraw into one's personal desert to meditate and prepare for Easter, the moment when the all-encompassing love of God manifests itself in giving His life for us. With the imposition of the ash on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday (22 February), we will be reminded of our Christian obligations to repent, to pray and to come closer to God by our good life and deeds in Prayer, Fasting and Charity (Almsgiving). While we enter into this holy season of grace with these 3 key elements indicated by the Holy Church, let us remind ourselves that prayer is not so much in saying "many formulas" in our prayer moments and animations, but rather in dedicating time to create a deeper relationship with God, to read reality by letting ourselves be guided by the presence of God in us at all times. Fasting is not only abstinence from food but rather it calls us to take something away from our bodily likings and wishes and fill the soul with spiritual nourishment - Fasting that become a "formation of one's heart" (love of oneself) inseparable from prayer (love of God) and charity (love of neighbor). The act of Charity (Almsgiving) instead reminds us to offer something of ourselves, something that gives us pleasure and happiness, something that would costs us- not just money, but time, affection, attention, consideration, intelligence, a listening heart and in rediscovering that it is "compassion" towards others. Let us prepare ourselves to enter worthily into this favorable season of grace with an open heart to the blessings of God.

Lent – a time to receive the love of God.
Lent – a time to rediscover the direction of life.
Lent – a time of renewal.
Lent – a time of recovery.
Lent – a time of liberation and healing.
Lent – a time of conversion.

- Pope Francis -



With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,
Affectionately,

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial