



# Provincial Circular

## Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/56/2023

01.03.2023

My dear Sisters,

Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

The dawning of a new month brings us new opportunities and occasions of grace particularly in this month of March when we are given many examples of personages who humbly and submissively encounter God in a very unique manner through daily events of life and mission. We have the example of our Blessed Mother who humbly said her '*FIAT*' and continues to live on that spectacular moment that becomes a redemptive encounter. The figure of St. Joseph is another model who silently and unassumingly met God in life and perpetuated his encounter as a salvific occasion for humankind. It is amazing to think what happens when we seek God and encounter Him in the everyday tasks of life, in the daily mission we are entrusted with, in the persons and situations we encounter that could bring about a change in our attitude, a change in our life, a transformation in our relationships and a moment of reconnecting ourselves with God and with others in every sense.

The preparation for our centenary celebration is one such unique opportunity to bring about this transformation, to reconnect ourselves with our Creator and with our origins in particular, to become the agents of change and of renewal in the next century. While we delve into the mystery of God revealing himself in people and situations, we are invited to stop a while from the frenetic and busy schedule of our life and mission to encounter God in the simple and humble situations where He reveals Himself to us. It is an occasion to renew our choice for him and to refresh ourselves for a more genuine and committed charismatic and vocational renewal. Following the example of our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph who responded with a generous 'Yes' to God's call, so too our first sisters, our pioneers, our missionaries and our sisters who have preceded us, responded with great love, passion and faith giving a positive response to God, to encounter Him in the people and in the mission entrusted to their care. We are certain that they met God in every person, in every circumstance, in every trial and difficulty, in every moment of joy and accomplishment. The fruit of their encounter with God is seen in the growth of many vocations and development of the mission in the years that followed their tenure of life. Today, we are the privileged beneficiaries of their sweat and labour; we are the lucky recipients of a legacy borne by their Faith, Love and Passion; we are the heirs of a perennial patrimony that is born out of their intense rapport with God and with each other. In our hands today is vested the baton to carry forward our spirit and our charism, in our hands is given the torch of light to set ablaze the fire of our origins, to renew ourselves and our mission with the freshness of our origins. While we strive to arrive at this goal in this centenary year, let us pose before ourselves these questions that may enthuse us for a sincere renewal of our hearts and life.

- *Are we ready to say our genuine 'YES' to God and encounter him in our life and mission with faith and love?*
- *Are we moved by the same passion of our pioneers and missionaries to live authentically our religious vocation today?*
- *Are we ready to give up something of ourselves today in order to give fruit to our mission for the generations that come after us?*

Let us turn to God in prayer to increase our love and our choice for Him and let us take the hand of our Blessed Mother that like her, we may generously say 'YES' to God always. May she guide and accompany us constantly in our journey of rediscovering God's will and in our sincere efforts to bring about a charismatic renewal in our religious journey. Let us unite in closer communion praying for one another and for the needs and intentions of our Province. Let us also continue to pray for the suffering people of the world, for those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, for those stricken by the consequences of war especially in Ukraine and Russia, for the persecuted brethren and for all those who are affected by violence in different forms. We also pray for our political leaders and peace in our country. As invited by our Mother General- Mother Chiara to pray to our Blessed Mother for the people of Turkey and Syria in particular, let us also raise our hearts in prayer for all these intentions through her powerful intercession. May our Blessed Mother intercede with her Divine Son as she did at Cana.

### *The exemplary life of St. Joseph*

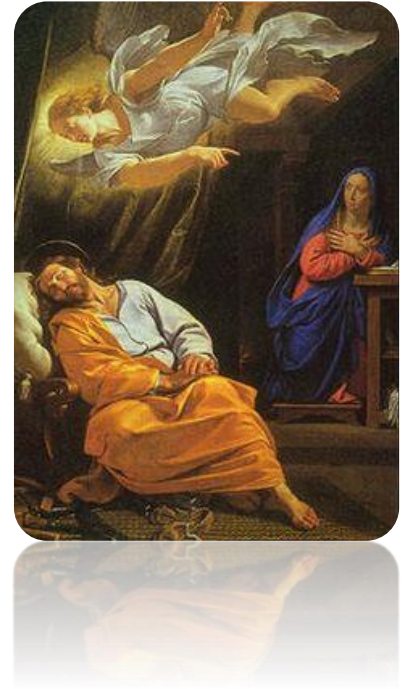
The solemnity of St. Joseph - husband of Mary, foster father of Jesus reminds us always of the encompassing greatness of St. Joseph enveloped by great humility, simplicity and deep interior life. Reading through the life of St. Joseph, we can well say that he is truly the reflection of God's fatherhood. God our Father in the fullness of time made Joseph a participant in this paternity of his; a father not according to the flesh, but according to the promise. The angel said to him: *"do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her comes from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus."* It took a lot of simplicity, a lot of silence and a lot of faith to be able to accept all these facts which Joseph did not understand humanly. Truly, there are countless things that we can think and say about Joseph and of the many things that he can do in our lives and in the life of the Church. Among the many virtues and values that we can speak about and learn from him are his **Silence**, his **Faith**, his **Obedience**.



*The Silence of St. Joseph* - There are very few instances of Joseph in the Gospel. His figure is covered by sacred silence. His presence is enclosed with a noble mission of supporting the motherhood of Mary on earth. Joseph silently and humbly carried on God's work and faithfully cooperated in His plan of salvation taking Mary as his wife and becoming Jesus' foster father. Many instances in the life

of St. Joseph shows him a man of deep interiority. All of his life was a silence. Mary was the one who spoke when the Child was lost in the temple. We can imagine that in his daily work Joseph would speak, but his words were above all a deep interior silence. In that atmosphere of holy silence Jesus grew up. St. Teresa of Jesus called St. Joseph a teacher of interior life. May he help us to be persons of prayer, of silence, of interiority, alert to listen to God, to discover Him and to welcome Him in our lives.

*The Faith of St. Joseph* - The episode of the Angel appearing to St. Joseph in his dream to take Mary as his wife was a manifestation of Joseph's faith. It was his pure faith that led him to surrender himself totally to God's plan. Joseph was the father of Jesus, father of the Church, father of the new people of God and an image of divine fatherhood because he believed. There are many other episodes that portrays Joseph's faith. For instance, when the Child Jesus was presented at the temple, he listened to all the wonders that are said about Him: that He is the light of the peoples, that He is the consolation of Israel, that he is a sign of contradiction, that a sword will cross the heart of Mary. Joseph received all these in faith; he is amazed, he does not understand. When the Child was twelve years old and got lost in the temple and was found, it was Mary who spoke and broke the silence: "your father and I were looking for you in pain". It is the pain of faith that he seeks, just as before it was the pain of faith that he offers.



*The Obedience of St. Joseph* - The prompt obedience of St. Joseph is seen in his quick readiness with which he accepted God's plan. We see his obedience to God when he received Mary in his house and did as the angel had told him. Afterwards, in obedience to the law, he went down from Nazareth to Bethlehem and there in Bethlehem Jesus was born because of Joseph's obedience to the law. When the angel came to him in the night, to take away the Child Jesus and his Mother to Egypt, he did not delay for the new dawn to break but immediately took the Child and his mother and fled; and he did the same thing on return: he took the Child and his mother, the promptitude of obedience. Joseph did not hesitate to obey despite the uncertainties and hardship that came along with his obedience. He allowed himself be guided by a mysterious plan that his understanding did not comprehend and that did not go with his will. Saint Joseph becomes the perfect model of obedience submitting his life, his will, his desires, his wish and plan to follow the call of God. Like Joseph, may we readily obey God's call without seeing the whole path ahead of us and learn from him to be submissive to God at all times.

### *Mary's Humble "Yes" of Love*

Every year, on March 25, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. In other words, it is solemnly remembered that, on a day like this, the history of humanity radically changed course, at the moment when a humble maiden from Nazareth, Mary, gave a courageous "Yes" to God, who invited her to cooperate in His salvific plan for humanity. Through her 'yes', Mary conceives Jesus and becomes the mother of God himself, the protector of the One who would be born

and die for the redemption of the human race. The story of the Annunciation is a story of vocation and therefore it is a story that concerns us, because we are all marked by a vocation, by one call. God has sent us too, in different ways an Angel to deliver us a message and our life is nothing but the answer to the Lord's call.



The solemnity of the Annunciation gives us the motivation to stop and look at our Mother who shows us the way to meet the Son. It is she, Mary of Nazareth who gave us Jesus and it is also she, who on Calvary, became our mother- a mother who knew how to stand beside the cross and how to say 'yes' to life with a fruitful love. Mary by her 'Yes' teaches us the way to get to know Jesus better: to know how to say 'yes' to God's will and to His plans, which always surpass us. The celebration of Mary's FIAT helps us to reflect and ponder about how often we live our experience of faith. Mary, in her attitude of strong Faith and Humility, generously and freely gave her total and unreserved 'Yes' to be the Mother of God. This greatness of

Mary stands as the greatness of her humility. She teaches us through her humble obedience that our freedom is not bought, but is given to us and is born from the ability of our heart to know how to say yes with love, giving our life with trust to the people we love, to the family and community, to the Church and to life itself. Mary teaches us that there is more joy and full freedom in giving our hearts and lives to God and His service.

As we continue to live our Lenten journey to meet Christ, let us renew together with Mary our 'yes' to the Lord and to his will, trusting him, knowing and hoping that we will thus have, like Mary, a new and fruitful life in God's service. Let us recall our first Yes to God and courageously move forward to live with greater faith and audacity the call to which we have once so generously and convincing said 'Fiat'. Let us go to Mary's school and learn from her the generous "Yes", and committed "Here I am!"

## *International Women's Day*

The theme for International Women's Day, 8 March 2023 is, **"DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality"**. This theme is aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-67), *"Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls"*.

March 8 is a very important date to remember all the battles and victories that the female gender has achieved, but also the discrimination of which it is still often the victim today. Compared to the past, women have really come a long way. The true meaning of International Women's Day should be precisely this: remembering the



path taken, full of obstacles but also of goals achieved, and using it as an incentive not to stop. On the one hand, to celebrate the battles that the female gender has had to face in the last century to establish itself. And on the other to honor the sacrifices made by women by continuing to carry on their struggles for a brighter future.

This year's celebration gives an idea that in taking into consideration the current status of technological progress, it is also worth noting that with each technological advancement, not only the well-being and level of comfort of humankind advances respectively, but also the significant change in social relationships takes place, especially in gender relations. As the theme for the celebration provides "A gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology and digital education can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement."

### *Preparation for the World Feast of Gratitude*

This year the World Feast of Gratitude 2023 will be celebrated in Bogotá, Colombia, as was already communicated in the month of February which will be animated by the four Colombian Provinces. The Vicar General of our Institute, Sr. Maria del Rosario García Ribas exhorts the whole Institute that this feast can be a song of Peace and a moment to build it up in a time when the world is much in need of it. To gear together as a family towards this goal therefore, the theme proposed for the celebration illuminated by the Word of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:9), is:

*"With Mary we generate a culture of Peace"*

The logo of the Feast encloses a profound message which is expressed through the various elements that compose it:



**Mary / Outstretched hand:** Mary reminds us of our identity as daughters. She continues to walk in this house, the "house" of Colombia, in the life and works of the FMA who, by recognizing the dignity of children, young people and women, generate new opportunities to build a culture of peace. Her outstretched hands are a sign of welcome, the same that the Colombian country will offer to Mother.

**The Orchids:** symbolic flower of Colombia, epiphytic plant, which can inhabit a living body without depriving it of nutrients. This feature, added to its delicacy and ability to harmonize, reminds us that we are called to build peace, fraternity, and synodality.

**The Paths:** the variety of works and ways in which the FMA Institute generates a culture of Peace on the Planet. The colors are those of the Colombian flag.

**Coffee beans:** express the richness of Colombia, the bond with the land and the commitment to care for our Common Home.

The Colombian Provinces offer us a three-week itinerary in preparation for the Feast of Gratitude. Each stage will be accompanied by the act of entrustment to Mary proposed for this occasion and by the prayer "Hail Mary for peace in the house".

- 1st Week (26 March - 5 April) Peace in the interior home (Salesian illumination)
- 2nd Week (April 6 - April 15) Peace in the house that welcomes (Ecclesial illumination)
- 3rd Week (April 16 - April 25) Peace in the common home (Biblical enlightenment)

Let us prepare ourselves for this feast with greater sense of commitment and belongingness to the Institute and to our Charism and in gratitude to God for the gift of our beloved Mother Chiara.

[Kindly find in the attachment the letter and particulars for the Feast]

### *Family News and Communications*

**A Blessing to the Church of Nongstoiñ:** We rejoice and thank God for the singular gift of the new Shepherd in the Diocese of Nongstoiñ in the person of Fr. Wilbert Marwein, the present Parish Priest of Nonbah Parish in Nongstoiñ Diocese. The news conveyed by His excellency Leopoldo Garrelli, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal on behalf of Pope Francis on 4 February 2023, came as a gift and blessing for our Church which has been waiting eagerly for a new shepherd. We congratulate the Bishop elect Fr. Wilbert Marwein at this noble appointment as the Shepherd of God's flock and we assure him of our prayers in his mission while reassuring our collaboration in the mission of the Church at Nongstoiñ Diocese.



*Congratulations!*

**Commission for Integral Ecology:** We congratulate Sr. Wismary Kharbihkhiew who has been nominated by the PCI to be a member of the '*International Commission for Integral Ecology*' at the Institute level. The Commission is formed with the contribution of all the Interprovincial Conferences, aimed at animating the path indicated by the Chapter Deliberation in response to the conversion to integral ecology required by GC XXIV. We wish her and the commission members all the best in this mission and may I appeal everyone to collaborate with her in carrying out the various initiatives proposed to correspond with the call of the General Chapter. The members of the Commission are:

1. Sr. Ruth del Pilar Mora (General Councillor) - *Coordinator of the Commission*
2. Sr. Nsofwa Constance (Youth Pastoral Sector)
3. Sr. Analfreda Miranda (Formation Sector)
4. Sr. Linda Pocher (Faculty of Auxilium)
5. Sr. Theodora Alloumba (CIAM)
6. Sr. Nguyễn Mai Thanh Huyen Anna (CIAO)
7. Sr. Silva (da) Jane Maria (CIB)

8. Sr. Burgalat Ada (CICSAL)
9. Sr. Piril Yessica (CIMAC)
10. Sr. Siragusa Maria Lucia (CIME)
11. Sr. Mollo Freytas Rosa (CINAB)
12. Sr. Benitez Melissa (NAC)
13. Sr. Kharbihkhiew Wismary (PCI)

**Writing of applications:** On 25 March, all our temporary professed sisters, Novices and Postulants will be writing their application to the next stage of their religious formation. I invite all the communities of our Province to keep a day of special prayer for each of them that their desire to give themselves to God's service may be strengthened by His grace and may our Blessed Mother who generously said her 'Yes' accompany and guide our young sisters and candidates in their journey of fidelity.

**Safe journey:** We extend our prayers and good wishes to Sr. Riotalin Ramshon who will leave our Province for her new mission at Casa Madre Ersilia Canta, Rome. We implore God's blessings and grace upon her that her presence may be a source of blessings to all those whom she will encounter in her mission. She will leave the Province on 13 March 2023. We wish her a safe journey and a fruitful apostolate in Rome.

**Welcome back home:** We are happy to welcome back our dear Sr. Iahunlang Kyrasian after the completion of her studies in Pune. We wish her a safe journey back and wish her God's blessings in the mission ahead of her. She will return to the Province on 31 March 2023.

**New Mission land:** I am happy to inform that Sr. Ester Suting received the obedience from Mother General on 26 February 2023 to go for her new mission in South Sudan, Africa. We congratulate Sr. Ester for her courageous and generous 'Yes' to serve God and His people as a missionary. We assure her of our prayerful support and remembrance always and may her mission be filled with great joy, passion for souls and abundant blessings of God.

### *Prayers for the sick and the departed*

**W**e 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:

- The mother of Sr. Daphira Lawai
- The brother of Sr. Kyrkhulang Sutnga
- The brother of Sr. Sandra Diengdoh
- All our Sisters who are sick in the communities, and
- All the sick relatives of our Sisters.

**W**e 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. Iris Suchiang at the demise of her father on 6 February 2023.
- Sr. Joycy Dhar at the passing away of her father on 9 February 2023.
- Bishop Thomas Pulloppillil of Bongagiaon Diocese and the Provincial Superior and Sisters of the Fatima sisters at the tragic death of Fr. Mathew Das, Sr. Melagrine Dantes, Sr. Promila Tirkey and Sr. Rossie Nongrum respectively along with the teacher and driver at a fatal road accident on 26 February 2023 at Sumer, Ri Bhoi.

**A**s we embrace the Lord's blessings in this new month, let us constantly remind ourselves of the need to grow closer to God particularly during this holy season of Lent. Let us review our lives and re-examine our spiritual conscience and discover the truth about ourselves, to feel the need for Christ and strengthen our life in him. May the exhortations of our Holy Father Pope Francis guide us on this journey during this Lenten Season.

- *“In life we will always have things to do and we will have excuses to make, but brothers and sisters, today is the time to return to God*
- *“Lent is the time to verify the paths we are travelling, to rediscover the path that takes us back home, to rediscover the fundamental bond with God, on whom everything depends.”*
- *“The journey back to God is hindered by our unhealthy attachments, it is held back by the seductive bonds of vice, by the false security of money and appearances, by the paralyzing victim lament. To walk you have to unmask these illusions.*
- *“Lent is a humble descent within ourselves and towards others. It is understanding that salvation is not a climb for glory, but a lowering for love.*



Let us turn to God with true conversion of hearts and welcome God's overwhelming grace as Pope Francis continues to say *“Conversion of the heart, with the gestures and practices that express it, is possible only if it starts from the primacy of God's action. What makes us return to Him are not our abilities and our merits to flaunt, but his grace to welcome.”*

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,

Affectionately,

**Sr. Elizabeth George FMA**  
**Provincial**