



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/58/2023

03.05.2023

My dear Sisters,

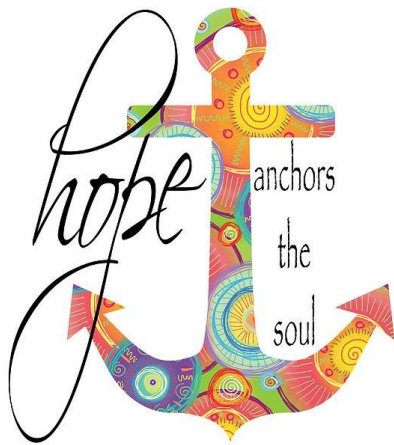
Loving greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

We have entered a beautiful month very dear to each one of us, a month that fills the heart of every member of the Salesian Family with great joy and happiness since Don Bosco himself has entrusted the family to the protection of our Heavenly Mother, the Help of Christians. Don Bosco took Mary as the mother, protector, guide and helper of the Congregation to shield us from the snares that draw us apart from God and to accompany us safely on the journey of doing God's holy will. The month of May reminds us that we have a great Mother whom we can cling to especially in times of difficulties, problems and uncertainties. Mary Help of Christians has always fought in defense of the Church and has always won in favour of God's people. She is indeed an invincible mother armed with the grace and power of God to help and assist us in fighting against the power of the evil one and to grow deeper in God's love. Invoking her name with great trust as Don Bosco teaches us will bring answers to the many questions and difficulties of daily life. Mary was full of God's power because there was not a single time that she stayed away from seeking to please God and to do His holy will always. She found favour with God as the '*full of Grace*'. The Virgin Mary Help of Christians showed ease and readiness continuously to know and do good; in her there was always a perfect disposition to God in **Faith, Hope and Charity**. We have no doubt that in her, we can confide everything who will take all our petitions, our needs and our desires to the throne of God's love. Let us reflect and imitate her virtues in our spiritual journey particularly during this month of May.

FAITH was the prime attitude that Mary possessed, which prompted her total surrender to God's grace, docile to His action, following only His voice and letting herself be guided by Him. She is indeed an example of serene, strong and sincere faith. Mary had such an absolute and unconditional faith, that came to her as a gift from God. This was the reason she was able to recognize that it was God who spoke in her heart and who directed her life. Although she had to undergo problems and difficulties that humanly speaking can put a person to great trials, yet she was firm and strong in her faith by treasuring everything in her heart. Mary's faith was outstanding and the many instances of her life that display her great and unconditional faith are captivating examples for us. At the wedding feast of Cana, she said "*Do whatever He tells you*" (John 2, 5), the words that proved her acceptance of her Son Jesus' words; she understood and fully trusted them. She believed in the absolute truth and power of her Son's words and recognized the power of God in it. When Mary

visited her cousin Elizabeth, she responded to her greeting: “*Blessed are you for having believed that the promises of the Lord would be fulfilled!*” (Luke 1,45). She faithfully believed and accepted God. Her entire life was a path of **FAITH** - the Annunciation was part of her walk and pilgrimage of faith, the birth of her son in Bethlehem, her flight into exile in Egypt, her return to Nazareth and every moment of her life become moments of great and unshakable faith. The Second Vatican Council in stating about Mary’s faith said “*the Blessed Virgin advanced in the pilgrimage of faith and faithfully maintained the union with her Son until the cross*” (Lumen gentium, 58). At the foot of the cross Mary lived intimately the paschal mystery of her Son bowing in faith to God’s will “Thy will be done” as she had already pronounced at the Annunciation. In all things and at all times, Mary not only believed, but she knew how to distinguish what the will of God for her was.

HOPE was another virtue that Mary clothed her life with. The Hope that she lived was a manifestation of her great Faith. Mary journeyed in life with great hope in the love and promises of God that she also received it as a sanctifying grace. Mary’s constant hope in the providence of God gives us the example and the assurance that the foundations of Hope is in the omnipotent power of



God. This also gives us the assurance of God’s goodness and His faithfulness to His promises and the hope to receive the necessary grace to reach heaven. By her example of trustful hope in God, Mary invites us to live hope with confidence and faith, since it is necessary for our salvation. By her hopeful attitude, Mary leads us to discover that God is present in the history of humanity. This can be testified in her jubilant song of the *Magnificat* “*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour*” (Luke 1, 46.47). With great justice, the Virgin Mary represents the hope of humanity, especially those who are subjected to injustice of every sort. The Mother of God, Help of Christians

teaches us that acts of hope are necessary for salvation. She shows us by example that we must trust that God gives us all the necessary graces to serve him faithfully and lead us to eternal life. Although hope does not always assure us of our fidelity to God, it does assure us of God's fidelity to us. The Virgin, in her sublime song of the Magnificat, teaches us that we must trust in God and that He will always take care of us. The different instances of Mary’s personal life, show vividly her complete confidence and hope in the power of God: she hoped in God’s ways at the anxiety of her Son’s birth and trusted in the divine assistance of God, she hoped in the Divine Providence when the family had to escape to Egypt, she hoped in the power of divine goodness that her Son would do the needful at the wedding feast at Cana. She truly lived hope in its highest degree. As Christians and religious on a pilgrim’s journey, we need to learn from the exemplary hopeful attitude of our Blessed Mother.

CHARITY was an outstanding virtue of Mary just as she was a model and an exemplary woman in faith and hope. In her we find a model of charity who showed herself a person who truly and genuinely loved God above all else. We read in Luke 2,22-23: “*Likewise, when the day came when, according to the Law of Moses, they had to fulfil the rite of purification, they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord as it is written in the Law of the Lord*”. Mary thus teaches us

that personal love for God requires observing all the commandments, knowing that everything he commands us is born of his love. Charity is seen in her great love for God and her neighbour. Her charity on earth was so great that she willingly and promptly helped those in need even without being asked. The heroic examples of her charity are seen in her intercession at the wedding feast at Cana, her visit to her needy cousin Elizabeth, the offering of her Son to death for our salvation. Her amazing love for God is manifested in her sincere love for the neighbours particularly those who are in need. The charity of Mary's pure soul inspires us to imitate her and become convinced of the love she had for God which is transformed in her love for the others. By living united to the paschal mystery of Jesus, she passed to an ever more genuinely charitable love. This example of our Blessed Mother prompts us to be convinced that genuine and true love for God should transform us into a more overwhelming love for our neighbours in the community and those in our mission.

Our Blessed Mother therefore, becomes our great motivation to open our hearts to the virtues that she possessed, and to give our lives unreservedly for God and his service as she has shown by her life and example. **FAITH, HOPE** and **CHARITY** are the three great pillars that sustained the life of our Blessed Mother. As we spend this month in her company, let us rediscover more and more the need to grow closer to God by her examples. Let us contemplate and imitate the Help of Christians, our Mother and teacher in our daily effort of conforming our lives more to Christ. Let us seek her help to build up in our lives her attitudes of unshakeable faith, unfailing Hope and profound charity that will keep us ever faithful to Christ. Just as she stood faithful at the



foot of the Cross and at all moments in life, may we learn to live in Faith, Hope and Love at all times particularly at the foot of our crosses. As the Help of Christians, Mary teaches us not only to stand firm in times of trials but she assures us that her maternal presence will come to defend, protect and guide us. Just as she appeared as the 'new column' in the dream of Don Bosco, may she go before us in our life and mission and lead our journey safely towards God.

As we are fast approaching the days of the centenary celebrations, may I request all the communities to keep special intention during the Holy Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet, starting from this month, seeking the powerful intercession of our Blessed Mother the Help of Christians "*for the fruitfulness of the Centenary preparations and celebrations*". May our Blessed Mother who has guided the beginning of our Institute and throughout the years, continue to guide and accompany us in this significant year and beyond.

Marian Spirituality in the life of our Saints

The Marian Spirituality occupies a special place in the Salesian Charism and in the life of every member of the Salesian Family. Mary is called Help of Christians and is recognized as the powerful help that we Christians have on the way to Jesus. Mary played a significant role especially in the life of our founders and of our Saints. This month of May, we have two giant examples in Mother Mazzarello and Dominic Savio whose lives were noteworthy oriented by the guidance of our Blessed Mother the Help of Christians.

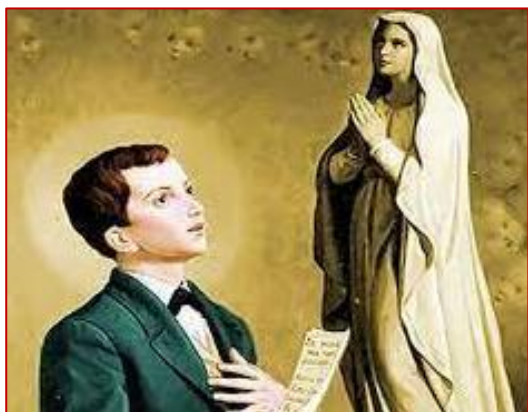
ST. MARIA DOMENICA MAZZARELLO, our co foundress understood that the Help of Christians was the One who collaborated with Christ and with the Church to carry out the work of salvation for humanity. Mother Mazzarello lived her maternity, her yearning and desire to win souls for God, her apostolic passion, her imitation of Mary by giving herself totally to the service of God and others with joy and sacrifice. For Mother Mazzarello, the Eucharistic and Marian mysteries were fundamental in her life. The great devotion that she had in the Mother of God and Help of Christians was so profound that Mary's presence in her life made the presence of Jesus equally alive. We read often this profundity of her love for Mary in the



letters that she wrote and exhorted the sisters and others. She would often say: *“Let us form one heart to love our beloved Jesus and Mary Most Holy”* [...] *“Always trust in Jesus our beloved Spouse and in Mary Most Holy our dear Mother...”* For Mother Mazzarello, love for Mary Help of Christians was more than a strong devotion, it was lived under the real and active presence of the Virgin Mary. She had a close and concrete rapport with Mary as the one who guided and lead the different activities in the house to the extent that she would leave the keys of the house every night at the feet of our Blessed Mother and considered herself only the Vicar of the Virgin Mary. The great attachment that Mother Mazzarello had to the Virgin Mother as a young girl and in the years that followed contributed enormously to the development of her holiness- a simple holiness, made of ‘everyday life,’ an ‘ordinary holiness.’ Her simplicity of life drawn from her intense love for God and her great faith and relationship with Our Blessed Lady in the concreteness of her daily routine of life made her life attractive. Following the virtues of the Blessed Mother of God, Mother Mazzarello was able to transform the ordinary things of life to extraordinary ones giving gospel and moral value to everything: work, prayer, time, etc. and she would often say: *“Make every stitch an act of love for God [...] Now is the time to love God, let us love him with all our hearts.”* In the path of holiness of Mother Mazzarello, we find in her Marian spirituality, a devotion that opens up to the grace of God, to live in purity and to preserve grace at all costs. She would consecrate herself to the care, protection and guidance of the Mother of God that would accompany her to the limitless horizon as the leader of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, to assume the new vocation of the ‘Spiritual Motherhood’ of Mary ever Virgin throughout her life and perpetuated with her saintly virtues that are being narrated and imitated by the generations that followed.

ST. DOMINIC SAVIO, a young yet giant Saint of the Salesian Family brings to our attention that love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is the sure route to holiness. He had such sweet and cordial veneration for the Madonna to whom he was deeply devoted and for whom he had a sincere and filial love in the oratory and in his entire life. His love and devotion to the Blessed Mother was such that among his First Holy Communion resolutions he wrote *“My friends will be Jesus and Mary.”* The friendship, signed on that day, had never been broken. Talking about the Madonna, honouring the Madonna, sacrificing oneself to the point of heroism for the Madonna had been the best of programs for Dominic Savio. On each Friday, together with some of his friends, Dominic would go to the chapel to pray the Seven Sorrows of Mary or the Litany of the Sorrowful Virgin. When Pope

Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1854, Dominic wanted to do something for love of the Madonna and consulted with Don Bosco. He gathered his best friends to begin the association “*Sodality of the Immaculate Conception*” with the aim of helping Don Bosco to save many souls through devotion and love for Mary. This expressed a great level of holiness in the life of the young boy, a work of Grace that Don Bosco himself recognized and appreciated. The young Dominic had great and special love towards the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In his prayers he used to seek her powerful intercession and grace to help him be chaste. He often invoked her: “*Mary, I always want to be your son. Let me die rather than commit a single sin against chastity.*”



“*Mary, I always want to be your son. Let me die rather than commit a single sin against chastity.*”

Family News and Communications

Formators’ Course: Sr. Lydia Pala and Sr. Rihunlang Muthoh are currently attending a 40 days course for Formators at Bangalore. This intense programme they are having will enhance the profundity of formation at personal level and also in helping and accompanying the young ones. We wish them all the best and an enriching time. They will return to the Province by the end of May 2023.

Welcome Back Home: A hearty welcome back home to Sr. Rosalin Warbah and Sr. Lini Fenylla Shabong who have completed their studies in Fashion Designing at Bangalore. We congratulate them for their fruitful results and wish them all the best for their new mission that is awaiting them. They will arrive in the Province on 4 May 2023. We also thank Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, Provincial of Bangalore Province and the sisters of INK Province especially of the community at Nirmal Jyothi for their help and accompaniment of our Sisters during their stay in Bangalore. God bless them all.

Safe journey and All the best: We implore God’s blessings upon our 4 Postulants who will be leaving for Mumbai and Bangalore Provinces to continue their formation in the respective Novitiates of INB and INK. We support them with our prayers that the years of formation may be fruitful in God’s service. They will leave the Province on 9 May 2023. Sr. Grace Mary Jyrwa will accompany them to Nashik along with 2 other Postulants of ING while another Sister from ING will accompany all the 4 Postulants of both Provinces to Bangalore. We wish them safe and pleasant journey.

For Bangalore : Altina R. Marak and Aitimary Bamon

For Mumbai : Magdalence Pohleng and Rosina Kharwanniang

Seminar on Catechesis and Evangelization: The Mission ad gentes sector of the Province will organize a three days seminar from 16-19 May 2023 on Catechesis and Evangelization with the theme “*Go...Proclaim the Good News*” (Mk.16,15) at FMA Outreach, Shillong. This is an initiative of the sector to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of our first missionaries to North East India. The programme is open to all the sisters involved in the mission of direct evangelization in the Province, representatives of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians (MSMHC),

representatives of the Visitation Sisters of Don Bosco (VSDB) and the Catechists from the Parishes where we are working. We pray that this programme may rekindle in us the missionary passion and dynamism of our pioneers.

Missionary ad gentes: We are happy that in this centenary year of the arrival of our missionaries to North East India, few sisters have generously offered themselves to go to the mission land and serve the Lord following the example of our missionaries who have come and built up our Province in the early years. They are:

1. Sr. Embok Suchiang
2. Sr. Idearland Lyngkhoi
3. Sr. Ibansara Kharkongor
4. Sr. Igina Kharjana instead has offered to render her service to care for the sick and elderly sisters in Italy.

We assure our prayers for these 4 sisters as well as Sr. Riodalin Ramshon who has recently left the Province for her service in Italy that the Lord may sustain them with His grace and strength in their loving service. We appreciate them for their generous self-giving especially in this significant year of the Centenary as a sign of love and gratitude to our missionaries who have crossed the ocean to give life to the Charism in our land. The sisters will leave the Province when the documents are ready.

Congratulations: Our prayerful greetings and congratulations to all the FMA Sisters, SDB Brothers and Novices who will be making their First and Final Professions this month of May. We appreciate them for their generous 'Yes' to respond to God's call and in their resolute choice to serve Him in the vineyard. May the Lord bless each of them abundantly.

Episcopal Ordination: We thank the Lord for the gift of another shepherd in the Diocese of Aizawl in the person of Fr. Joachim Walder who will be ordained Bishop on 28 May 2023. We implore God's blessings upon him in his mission of shepherding the flock of God. We assure him our prayers and collaboration in the mission of the Church in the Diocese of Aizawl particularly in the Barak Valley.

Studies: We assure our prayers and give our moral support to our sisters who will be doing the different studies this year.

- Sr. Deihok Mukhim for the Spirituality Course in Rome.
- Sr. Mary Skina Marwein and Sr. Hamdiaw Suchiang for the Fashion Designing Course in Bangalore. They will leave the Province in the month of June.

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. Catherine Susngi who is hospitalized at Nazareth Hospital
- Sr. Theodora Lyngdoh who is recuperating in the community.

- The brother of Sr. Celine D’Cunha
- 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. Gemima Pohrmen at the passing away of her father on 17 April 2023.
- The family members of (L) Sr. Percynia Synnah at the demise of their mother on 23 April 2023.
- Sr. Ruth del Pilar Mora, the General Councillor for the missions at the demise of her brother on 29 April 2023.
- Sr. Nirmala Lazar and the Sisters of Chennai Province (INM) at the passing away of Sr. Mariadoss Philomena FMA on 29 April 2023.
- Sr. Alphonsa Kurisingal and the Sisters of Guwahati Province (ING) at the departure of Sr. Elizabeth Chinir Moyon on 30 April 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Trichy Province (INT) at the passing away of Fr. Sevadurai Paulraj SDB on 10 April 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Guwahati Province (ING) at the demise of Fr. George Chittappanattu SDB on 11 April 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Chennai Province (INM) at the passing away of Fr. Kodadala Jayaprakash SDB on 11 April 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Bangalore Province (INK) at the departure of Fr. Joseph Neeliyara SDB on 17 April 2023.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Dimapur Province (IND) at the demise of Fr. N. J. Joseph SDB on 28 April 2023.

Feasts of the month

- | | |
|--|--|
| - 01 May: St. Joseph the Worker | - 18 May: St. Leonardo Murialdo |
| - 06 May: St. Dominic Savio | - 24 May: Solemnity of Mary Help of Christians |
| - 09 May: Birthday of St. Mary Mazzarello | - 28 May: Solemnity of Pentecost |
| - 13 May: Solemnity of St. Mary Mazzarello | - 29 May: Blessed Joseph Kowalski |
| - 16 May: St. Louis Orione | - 31 May: Feast of the Visitation |
| - 18 May: Solemnity of Ascension | |

During this month of May, we will also celebrate the great event and solemnity of **PENTECOST** that gives us reasons of delight and happiness, a feast of joy and of invocation. The solemnity of Pentecost celebrates not a memory, but an event that is continuous, the event of our union with the



Spirit. We have the best example of constant union and communion with the Spirit in the person of our Blessed Mother who always enlightened and supported by the work of the Holy Spirit, constantly lived her admirable vocation as a woman of faith, of prayer, in the fullness of God's grace and in charity. Mary's greatness lies in her living the presence of God, of fulfilling his will, of exercising charity by joyfully serving the Lord in her daily life and of faithful listening to God who spoke to her heart, to her life and to her sublime calling through the Holy Spirit. We have another living example of complete adherence to the Holy Spirit in Mother Mazzarello who guided and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, was able to create family warmth, enthusiasm, and passion to serve God and the Institute with intense love among the sisters and the young people.

While we prepare for this great solemnity of Pentecost with a Novena [19-27 May 2023], let us pray that we may follow the example of our Blessed Mother and of Mother Mazzarello to strive ever better to be true temples of the

Holy Spirit in humility, purity, charity, and self-giving. May each of us be worthy of being thus united with the Holy Spirit in our personal lives and mission always. I wish each and everyone of you a fervent Novena and Happy Feast of Pentecost. May the Spirit of God inspire us always to walk with and together Mary in our journey towards Jesus. May the Spirit open our hearts and our lives to the love of God, to his grace and mercy, as Mary was able to do, always attentive to God and to his will.

I also take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Feast of **St. Dominic Savio**, of **Mother Mazzarello** and of **Mary Help of Christians**. May these Salesian Feasts enkindle in us greater ardor and passion to give ourselves totally to God and to rekindle the fire of love lit by our Founders and by our early missionaries.

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,
Affectionately,

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial

