



Provincial Circular

Province of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Auxilium Provincial Office Nongthymmai, Shillong - Meghalaya - 793014

CIR/EG/INS/65/2023

01.11.2023

V.G. dear Sisters,

Affectionate greetings from Auxilium Provincial House, Nongthymmai!

In the first place I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone of you for remembering me during the days of my retreat. The 19 of us from the Interprovincial conferences of PCI, CIAO and SPR, had a wonderful experience of encountering the Lord through the retreat animated by Mother General, Sr. Chiara Cazzuola. During the course of these prayerful days we made a journey back to the community of Mornese, reflecting on the running theme “*With Maria Mazzarello, I will play for you on the ten-string harp*” (Ps 143: 9). With each cord in the harp indicating some essential aspect of the spirit of Mornese, we journeyed with Mother Mazzarello, deepening her spirituality which gave birth to the feminine aspect of the Salesian Spirituality. Today too, if these cords are well tuned, they will create a symphony that gives joy, brings peace to the heart and render our life and our communities generative (fruitful).

Maria Mazzarello lived in creative fidelity the project of the founder, generating the spirit of Mornese which ought to characterize the face of each of our communities. We reflected together on some of the cords that resonate in the life of the Institute, causing vibration in our hearts and in our mission as women consecrated to God:

- Maternal solicitude of Mary which makes us intuitive, foreseeing, courageous, strong in suffering and in love.
- Educative passion especially towards the poor, the young and the women,
- Sense of community which is expressed in family spirit.
- The gift of contemplation in action
- Animation and governance lived in the spirit of simplicity, humility and involvement of all.
- Involvement in the life of the parish for catechesis and the formation of families

Spending these days fruitfully in an attitude of silence, recollection, prayer and experiencing joy in the presence of the Lord and allowing the spirit to guide and transform us enabled us to discover more and more the project of God personally and in carrying out the responsibility given to us. I did bring each of you and our communities in prayer to the Lord every day.

Besides the enriching moments of personal encounter with Mother we had the privilege of meeting her as interprovincial conferences in order to discuss matters of importance and interest to each interprovincial conference. There was also an opportunity for us to meet as PCI to discuss issues of common concern and interest. The vibrations of the centenary celebrations at Shillong were still in the air and they were happy to see the short video highlighting the key events of the occasion. Let us also continue to live those cherished moments of the centenary celebrations with gratitude and responsibility for the future.

Vocation to Holiness

We begin the new month with the celebration of the All-Saints Day- a day which reminds us of our responsibility and our call to become Saints. Saying that the call to holiness is universal reassures us the possibility that something extraordinary happens in the ordinary life of every person and in participation in divine life. Holiness, in fact, is communion with God which begins in this life with the gift of Baptism, which grows in the journey of grace throughout earthly existence and which is to be definitively fulfilled in the glory of heaven. Sanctity is a gift that is already vested in our hands by God the Almighty Father but still awaiting its full maturation in our life. Therefore, holiness is what every baptized Christian hopes to achieve not by relying exclusively on one's own strength, but by



trusting in the mercy of the Lord, in the merits of Christ, in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, allowing oneself to be shaped by the sanctifying and healing presence of the Holy Spirit, cooperating with his action, in prayer, in frequenting the sacraments (in particular the Eucharist and Reconciliation), with the spiritual combat that is renewed every day in our daily life and mission.

Therefore, we can say that every Christian and much more a religious person has got the vocation to Holiness and the responsibility to attain it. It is comforting to think that in heaven, the Saints who were just ordinary people like any of us are enjoying eternal bliss just by living faithfully the will of God in their earthly life and dying peacefully in the grace of God. They lived silently and industriously their Christian vocation without making gestures capable of drawing the attention of the world and the Church. This great host of saints – known or unknown - which accompanies the history of the Church, testifies to the fruitfulness of Christian life. The Church on this first day of the month of November thus invites us to direct our gaze and our hearts to the many people who, like us, have passed through this world facing difficulties and temptations similar to ours, and have won; people who have sinned yet were able to rise above the power of sin, people who were weak yet were able to shine with God's grace and the power of his love. The Saints in Heaven become for us signs of hope and an inspiration to live our earthly life with greater joy, love and commitment.

Let us feel blessed that we have received an immense gift to have been called to faith and know that God is love and that in this inexhaustible source of love, with all our loved ones and all the saints of

every time and place, we will be called to quench our thirst in a communion of eternal love. Let us therefore ask the Lord to lead us to holiness with all the people that He has entrusted to us and that He has put on our path in our life and mission.

The Hope of eternal life

On All Saints' Day we contemplate the multitude of brothers and sisters in humanity and in faith who, having concluded their earthly life, live in God. On 'All Souls' Day' instead we celebrate the commemoration of all our deceased brothers and sisters, our loved ones in a particular way. The commemoration of all the faithful departed invites us to look at our deceased, to pray for them, and to also think about our death, which gives us consolation in the fact that Jesus will embrace us all, after death, in His love, giving us and all our deceased the remission of sins and eternal life. Jesus does all this because he deeply adhered to the will of the Father: "This is in fact the will of my Father, that whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day." On a day as this, we may ask ourselves for a moment: what does it mean to believe in Jesus and to adhere to Him? In other words: how can we live this faith authentically? The only answer to this as shown by our beloved deceased brothers and sisters is that we must believe in love- to live the love that Jesus lived in full, complete and perfect way.



The Day of remembrance for the departed is a day of life, it is a day that reminds us of our life down here, how precious and important it is, despite being only an "exile" and a "vigil", - a preparation for Heaven. From this day we can rediscover what the core of the Christian message is, how love is and how it conquers death. It gives us the good news that in the end, everything will cease and we will only be left with the love of God who will welcome us into his merciful arms. The commemoration of this day reminds us how important it is to love God who is worth more than everything, that the time of our life is not infinite and that it will have an end; it reminds us of the true life, the great, beautiful, joyful, eternal and endless life that awaits us, and which, through the grace and mercy of God, we trust we will arrive.

From the deceased we receive the invitation to trust, to hope, to walk in life, even in the midst of difficulties and suffering, with our faces and hearts turned upwards, because great is the reward that God reserves for his faithful servants.

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

The Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother has a significant tone of solemnity in our religious family. The preparation for this feast with the Novena is indeed a special tradition that our Institute is keeping up to this very day. The Incarnation of Jesus and the entire work of Redemption occurred in our history by the 'YES' of Mary. The significance of this 'YES' also

invites us to make a sincere assessment of our ‘yeses’ said to God and the joy that they have produced in human history.

Mary’s ‘yes’ gives light and strength to every person’s yes and allows God to do “great things” in each one. The reflections and initiatives that each community will take for these days of the novena will definitely present Mary to us as one who remains close to our journey, to our choices, to a more decisive step of conversion to Christ and to the small or big yeses that we repeat in our every day life. Let us fervently prepare ourselves during the Novena days to welcome the great solemnity with a pure and well-predisposed heart and soul.



Family News and Communications

New foundations for Construction: We are grateful to God for His loving providence that has favoured the mission of our Province with 2 new foundations for the constructions at Auxilium, Dholai and Auxilium, Mandwi. This is a sign of God’s love and fruitfulness of our mission in these centres which has necessitated the initiation of a new construction.

- The foundation for the school building at Auxilium, Dholai- Assam was blessed by Rt. Rev. Joachim Walder, Auxiliary Bishop of Aizawl Diocese on 18 October 2023 in the presence of the community members and representatives of the educating community and sisters from the neighboring communities of Vairengte and Kawnpui.
- The foundation for the sisters’ residence and hostel at Auxilium, Mandwi- Tripura was laid on 19 October 2023. Witnessing the day were also representatives from our communities at Nandan Nagar and Bishramganj along with the Salesians of Mandwi Parish and the community members.

We entrust to the Lord and to our Blessed Mother the fruitful completion of these constructions and pray for the safety of everyone.

Cancellation of the Holy Land trip due to war: Our two sisters – Sr. Irine Lyngdoh and Sr. Aitihun Lawai and many other FMAs, Salesians and members of the Salesian Family who were due to visit holy Land after the Missionary programmes in India were unable to proceed to Holy Land due to sudden outbreak of war between the Israel and the Palestinians. A great disappointment for those who were longing for this trip but they have surrendered themselves to God’s plan. We continue to pray for peace in that part of the world as well as in other part of the world where peace is disrupted.

Upcoming elections: The elections in our country are drawing close and as committed citizens of our country we are invited to live our franchise right with dignity and responsibility. However, we are also in a significant moment of contributing towards building up good governance in our country for the common benefit and welfare of everyone in our Motherland. As we gear towards this important moment in our country, may I remind all our communities to kindly pray daily the prayer

for good governance in our country and entrust this intention to the maternal protection and guidance of our Blessed Mother.

Provincial Community Day: All our communities have received the letter from Sr. Carmelina Sun, the Vice Provincial communicating about the Provincial Community Day. I wish you all the best in the preparations for this event which ought to bring down God's blessing upon our Province and our communities.

Schedule for the Annual Spiritual Retreat 2024: Kindly find attached below the schedule for the spiritual retreats which will be held at FMA Outreach, Shillong. As far as possible, please abide by the various specific groups and kindly send the names of the participants to the Provincial Secretary latest by **30 November 2023**. This year, as a Province we will also organize a day of togetherness at the end of every retreat. This is obligatory for everyone and therefore, kindly arrange your departure accordingly after the outing.

1. FIRST GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	School Sisters
<u>Date</u>	:	28 December (evening) – 4 January (Morning)
<u>Preacher</u>	:	Fr. James Mathew SDB
<u>Animation</u>	:	4-5 January
<u>Outing</u>	:	6 January
Arrival	:	<i>28 December by lunch</i>
Departure	:	<i>7 January morning</i>

2. SECOND GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	Temporary Professed Sisters (<i>Students & Intensive Juniorate + few more juniors</i>)
<u>Date</u>	:	20 January(evening) – 27 January(morning)
<u>Preacher</u>	:	Fr. James Mathew SDB
<u>Animation</u>	:	19-20 January
<u>Outing</u>	:	27 January
Arrival	:	<i>18 January by lunch</i>
Departure	:	<i>28 January morning</i>

3. THIRD GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	Provincial Council and Animators
<u>Date</u>	:	3 February(evening) – 10 February (morning)
<u>Preacher</u>	:	Fr. James Mathew SDB
<u>Animation</u>	:	10-11 February
<u>Outing</u>	:	12 February
Arrival	:	<i>3 February by lunch</i>
Departure	:	<i>13 February morning</i>

4. FOURTH GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	Perpetually Professed Sisters
<u>Date</u>	:	16 February(evening) – 23 February (morning)
<u>Preacher</u>	:	Fr. James Mathew SDB
<u>Animation</u>	:	23-24 February
<u>Outing</u>	:	25 February
Arrival	:	<i>16 February by lunch</i>
Departure	:	<i>26 February morning</i>

5. FIFTH GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	Perpetually Professed Sisters
<u>Date</u>	:	1 March(evening) – 8 March (morning)
<u>Preacher</u>	:	Fr. Anthony Roy SDB
<u>Animation</u>	:	8-9 March
<u>Outing</u>	:	10 March
Arrival	:	<i>1 March by lunch</i>
Departure	:	<i>11 March morning</i>

6. SIXTH GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	Temporary Professed Sisters
<u>Date</u>	:	22 July (evening) – 29 July (morning)
<u>Preacher</u>	:	Fr. James Mathew SDB
<u>Outing</u>	:	29 July
Renewal Course:	:	30 July-1 August
Renewal of the Vows:	:	2 August (evening)
Arrival	:	<i>22 July by lunch</i>
Departure	:	<i>3 August / later for those who will attend the professions</i>

****.** **N.B:** The juniors who are coming just for the renewal course are requested to arrive at the venue latest by 4 pm on 29 July 2023.

7. SEVENTH GROUP

<u>Participants</u>	:	Novices & Postulants
<u>Date</u>	:	24- 31 July
<u>Venue</u>	:	Bellefonte

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 remember in our prayers particularly our Sisters who are sick in the hospital and in the communities, the members of the Salesian Family and all the sick relatives of our sisters.

We also offer our heartfelt condolences and prayers to all our Sisters and members of the Salesian Family who have lost their dear ones in 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.

Feasts of the month

* 01 November	-	All Saints Day
* 02 November	-	All Souls Day
* 13 November	-	St. Artemide Zatti
* 14 November	-	Children's Day
* 15 November	-	Blessed Maddalena Morano
* 19 November	-	World Day of the Poor
* 25 November	-	Blessed Mamma Margaret
* 26 November	-	Solemnity of Christ the King

Towards the end of the month, we will also enter into the significant moment of the New Liturgical Year with the dawning of the season of Advent. Advent comes and goes every year and we may run the risk of living it with an ordinary attitude that may tend to bypass the opportunities of grace and blessing. Let us therefore remind ourselves that this important season in the Church and in the life of every Christian is a path that leads to an encounter with the Lord; like pilgrims accompanied by prayer, hope and good works.

Advent is a time that indicates three things:

1. the **beginning** of a new liturgical year, corresponding to the present we live in,
2. a **memory**, that is, of the historical event of the coming in the flesh of the Lord,
3. a **waiting** for the final encounter, in relation to our existence.

Advent thus prepares us for the liturgical and spiritual encounter with the Lord and invites us to reflect on our final encounter with God, when, as the Apostle Paul teaches in the First Letter to the Corinthians, we “*will see him face to face*” (1Cor 13, 12). As believers, let us not hesitate to open our hearts, our minds and our actions to the visits of our Lord and let us cry out to Him with all our strength: “Marana-tha! Come, Lord Jesus!” I wish each and everyone of you a fervent celebration of Advent!



“Each of us is called to a unique and unrepeatable Holiness”

- *Pope Francis* -

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,

Affectionately,

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

Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial