



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 beginning a new month that reminds us of God's unconditional love and our generous response to it. This significant month dedicated to St. Joseph invites us to a radical 'YES' that become our response to God's invitation in his plan of salvation as did our great and exemplary Saint even amidst doubts and adversities of life. This month gives us ample opportunities to look up to this great model of 'FIAT,' to continuously strive to adhere to God's holy will and to make incessant efforts to fulfill it in our lives. Adherence to God's will is the secret to being happy on earth which we need very much for serenity in our hearts. To arrive at this goal, our journey here on earth must arise from an intense interior life and be placed in the perspective of holiness that consists of an intense and intimate relationship with God, source of life and joy: This is the will of God: our sanctification (cf. 1 Thess.4,3). Let us draw inspiration from St. Joseph in this art of surrendering ourselves to God's holy will.

Joseph was a just and obedient man. The Gospel does not directly attribute any words to him, but his silence and every circumstance in which he is spoken of, have an enormous specific weight. Saint Joseph, as the father of Jesus and husband of Mary, is defined, precisely because of his faith, with the sober and magnificent title of righteous man, because he is available to faithfully obey the Will of God. He lovingly incorporated the divine plans of God that we could see in him the totality of being immersed in God's grace and able to transform his life into a symphonic blending of Faith, Hope and Charity.

Joseph, man of faith. Joseph gives himself entirely to the plan designed by God for him. He was first and foremost a man of Faith because he was able to see beyond, he was able to see things in a new way: In that mystery that was taking place in the womb of the Virgin Mary he saw not simply a child, but the son of God made man for our salvation. Saint Joseph was able to see in the folds of his history a greater project: to become the guardian of the Redeemer, and for this reason he put aside his personal project. Saint Joseph teaches us that the initiative of spiritual life is always God's. The Lord intervenes, but requires our faith, from whom he asks humble abandonment to Him. Only in this way can God operate, because faith leaves room for divine action. Faith, in fact, requires humble and total abandonment which involves relying solely on the Word of God. In faith, on the one hand, we allow God to be God and, on the other hand, we allow Him to work in us. Faith allows

us to enter the mystery of God and live in full communion with Him. St. Joseph becomes for us an example to remain steadfast in the gift of Faith we received on the day of our baptism and to look beyond the contingencies of our everyday life to be able to see and experience the constant presence of God.

Joseph, man of hope. Hoping means entrusting oneself to God, trusting God, placing ourselves in his hands. Saint Joseph was a man of Hope, because even in the most difficult and incomprehensible moments, he entrusted himself and trusted in God. Let us think for a moment about the moment in which Saint Joseph had to wake up the Virgin Mary at night and with the baby Jesus and had to flee to Egypt, without any security, without any certainty, with who knows how many fears and thoughts would have captured him. Yet in that moment Saint Joseph trusted and entrusted himself to God. We too, in the dramatic moments of our lives, are called not to be dismayed, but to entrust ourselves to the Lord who will lead us as he had Saint Joseph.



Joseph, man of charity. Joseph performed heroic gestures and actions in the hiddenness of his life and in the house of Nazareth- his faithfulness in everyday life, his concern for his family, his total sense of respect, his love for Mary and Jesus. He is termed as a man of great charity. For him, charity consisted in giving oneself to God, in welcoming his divine plan, in guarding, loving, protecting, the most precious gifts of the Almighty: his son Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary.



We know well that there was nothing extraordinary about St. Joseph. We can think of him as an ordinary man, overwhelmed by an event bigger than himself. His greatness lies in having experienced the events in which he was involved, with faith, hope and love, managing to ‘give family’ to the eternal Word of God, made flesh. For this reason, he was proclaimed patron of the universal Church. Let us invoke him as our sure patron and intercessor and our traveling companion in our journey of life especially as we continue to live intensely our Lenten journey. May he help us become men and women of faith, hope and charity capable of building communion with the mystery of God’s infinite love.

One with Christ in the Holy Week

Celebrating the various events of the Holy week which will occur during this month reminds us that we are called to become one with Christ, to share in his agony, passion and death and to express concretely our act of discipleship by our way of life not just in word and thoughts but more explicitly by our deeds and examples. The liturgy of the Holy Week reminds us of our vocation to be a new creature in Christ. It does not close in on itself, but opens up to life. Holy Week, with its rich symbolism, helps us to enter into a more intimate relationship with Christ, but to change our lives and to live - at least a little more - just as he lived. The events that the Church celebrates every year in Holy Week are not just events of history nor ones to be admired, but they are to be imitated and in which to be involved along with Jesus who is not a hero to be exalted but a ‘living’ and

‘contemporary’ model to be followed. Celebrating the rites of Holy Week does not mean admiring the gestures and words of Jesus from a distance, but being involved in his story, in the awareness that it still has something to say concretely to us today, because the passion, death and resurrection of Christ is still a ‘salvific’ event today. The Holy Week, through the liturgy made up of symbols, gestures and the Word of God, makes present the salvific mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. This is not enough, however, if on our part there is not a heart open and available to encounter the Lord. It is necessary to enter these holy days with the availability of those who want to let themselves be met by Jesus and the grace that he wants to give us.



The celebration of the Paschal Mystery of Christ therefore, should stir our lives to make us feel involved in the salvific events of Jesus in order that we could all be a little Simon, a little Joseph of Arimathea, a little Nicodemus, a little one of the Marys and have a ‘direct’ experience of the encounter with the One who ‘loved us to the end!’ With this spirit let us ‘read’ the events of the ‘Great and Holy Week’, in which the Love of God surpasses our human miseries. ‘Holy Week’ should not be considered as the final week of Lent but, as one author writes, “*we would like to define it as the first week of our belief in Jesus, the son of God, who came to earth to be the new Light of the entire world.*”

Preparation for World Day of Gratitude

The Vicar General of our Institute Sr. María del Rosario García Ribas has communicated that the World Feast of Gratitude 2024 will be held at Mozambique with the theme:

***With Mary, guided by the "dream",
we generate peace by taking care of our Common Home.***

Quoting the words of Sr. Maria del Rosario “*in the context of Integral Ecology, the celebration of the World Feast of Gratitude is intended to be a hymn of praise. [...] We are invited to open our eyes and contemplate in the book of nature, the majesty of the Lord our God. What else can one do in front of such a marvelous manifestation, if not to let oneself be enraptured and sing? The sky, the sea, the earth, the stars, the flowers, man whom God has made "little less than the angels," speak to us of the very Author who created us.*”



The logo of the Feast, through some significant elements, recalls Mary, the prototype of caring, who embraces the world, the common home; the different faces of the young people of the five continents, that express the educational mission given to Johnny Bosco in the dream at nine years; the baobab, sacred tree, symbolizing life, powerful symbol of Africa that seems to unite heaven and earth, and which provides the people with nourishment and remedies for various ailments; the colors of the flag of Mozambique that represent the country with its riches, its history, and its commitment to peace.

Kindly find in the attachment the guidelines for the four-week itinerary preparation as proposed by the host province. Other materials and prayers for the preparation of the feast will be made available in the Institute’s webpage for the Feast which is in preparation. Let us unite in communion of hearts to prepare for this feast with great sense of gratitude to God for the gift of our beloved Mother General. We also pray for the Province of Mozambique in this period of intense preparation for this great event of the Institute.

International Women’s Day

The International Women’s Day 2024 will be celebrated this year with the theme “**Invest in women: Accelerate progress**” which aims to collectively amplify the voices and contributions of women, paving the way for accelerated progress in renewable energy and beyond. The stories shared and insights gained will contribute to a growing momentum toward a world where women play a central role in driving positive change. This theme motivates the world that in spite of the disparity aggravated by the limited access to resources and the lack of adequate investment in women, yet they are also at the forefront of solutions, showing resilience and innovation in addressing environmental challenges.

Let us celebrate this day giving importance to the dignity of women as agents of change in this contemporary world and let us put our sincere efforts to empower them in every sphere of our mission and apostolate especially those who are marginalized and sidelined in the society. May our efforts lead us to envision a future where gender equality and environmental sustainability are mutually reinforcing, creating a more resilient and prosperous world for all.



Family News and Communications

Applications: As communicated earlier, our temporary professed Sisters, Novices and Postulants will write their applications on 25 March 2024. Let us continue to accompany them in our chain of one-month long prayer which we have started on 24 February imploring God's grace to accompany them in this important journey in their life. May the Holy Spirit guide and inspire them in their discernment and decision. May I remind all the animators to kindly reach the applications and reports latest by 30 March 2024.

Jerusalem Project: I am happy to communicate to you that Sr. Irine Lyngdoh and Sr. Aitihun Lawai are blessed with the opportunity to go for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land since the proposed trip of last year was cancelled due to the outbreak of the war. The whole group has taken up again with the same project of the previous plan. We wish our sisters a happy pilgrimage and may it bring blessing to them and to our Province at large. They will leave for the Holy Land on 4 March 2024.

Arrival ETG Group: The Sisters of the English Translation Group of the Institute will start to arrive in our Province on 10 March 2024 and will be leaving on 22 April 2024. Let us assure them of our prayers that this important work of the Institute be richly blessed by God and be assisted by His grace. The Sisters of the team are:

1. Sr. Edna Mary Macdonald (Australia, SPR)
2. Sr. Patricia Finn (South Africa, AFM)
3. Sr. Judith Ann Suprys (United States, SEC)
4. Sr. Isabel Geraghty (Scotland, GBR)
5. Sr. Jemella Joseph (India, ING)

Welcome to Shillong dear Sisters and have a happy stay with us!

Welcome back home: We are happy to welcome back home our dear Sr. Ribha Suja and Sr. Joyly Grace Mawthoh who are returning to the Province after the completion of their B.Ph studies at Bangalore. We wish them God's blessings as they return to the Province enriched with experiences that will help them in their future mission. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, Provincial of Bangalore Province and for Sr. Sherly Jacob and the community of Provincial House for their love, care and accompaniment of our Sisters during their stay in the Province. May the Lord bless and reward them graciously in their life and mission. The 2 sisters will begin the train journey on 1 April 2024. We wish them a safe and pleasant journey home.

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 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. We unite in prayers especially with:

- Sr. Rufina Suting at the demise of her eldest sister today 1 March 2024. The deceased is also the maternal aunt of Sr. Ester Suting, our missionary in Ethiopia. We extend our sympathy and prayerful support also to her.
- Fr. Provincial and the confreres of Bangalore Province at the passing away of Fr. George Cheruvalli SDB on 7 February 2024.

May all 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

08 March - International Women's Day	29 March - Good Friday
19 March - Solemnity of St. Joseph	30 March - Holy Saturday
24 March - Palm Sunday	31 March - Easter
28 March - Maundy Thursday	

As I conclude, I would like to extend my warmest greetings of a Happy Easter to each and everyone of you. May the Peace, Love and Joy of our Risen Saviour fill your lives with untold joy and accompany you in the mission of proclaiming his love to all. Easter day is the day of joy. May the mystery of Easter truly enter our lives, embracing it all, embracing our wounds and transfiguring them. May the light of this day make us happy and strong in hope, ardent in charity, certain in faith and confident in the future. The resurrection is not a symbol. Jesus belongs to everyone and for everyone, in the way in which everyone is able to relate to him. The resurrection is not a 'representation' to say a concept but a fact and an event- the revelation of God's power of God that penetrates the universe and transforms it. The feast of Easter brings to us the joyful message that the Risen One is present in our lives every time we repeat his gestures, his words, his actions; every time we live authentically the evangelical attitudes and the Risen One is present in our hearts moved by the strength of the Spirit. Let us experience the presence of the Risen Lord among us at all times by our openness to His graces that form and transform us into instruments of his Resurrection to the world.

"Easter is the event that brought radical news for every human being, for history and for the world: the triumph of life over death; it is the feast of reawakening and of rebirth. Let us allow our lives to be conquered and transformed by the Resurrection!"

-Pope Francis-

With assurance of prayers and loving accompaniment,
Affectionately,



Sr. Elizabeth George FMA
Provincial



HAPPY EASTER