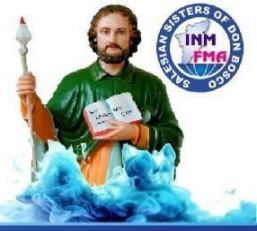




Instituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
St. Thomas the Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India

PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR 2025 - 2026



INM FMA / Pro. Cir. 30

December 2025

My Dearest Sisters,

Viva Gesù! Affectionate greetings to each one of you from Kodambakkam!

The Role of Community in the Formative Journey of Consecrated Persons

INTRODUCTION

The consecrated life is important precisely because it is a sign of unbounded generosity and love. It is a call to transform oneself into the image of Christ, who loved us by laying down his life (Jn 15:13). The secret of community life lies in Christ's love for us and our love for Christ, which is manifested in our love for others. In consecrated life, the community provides an environment for support, growth, and integration through shared practices, exemplary leadership, and mutual encouragement. It offers a sense of belonging and a place for individuals to receive love, acceptance, and accompaniment as they navigate their spiritual journey, thereby fostering holism and spiritual transformation in alignment with the charism of our founders, Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. Loving and genuine relationships form an important part of religious life, which affects the way one sees and understands religious life. The religious community is a communion of consecrated persons who profess to seek together and carry out God's will with a variety of roles but with the same goal and the same passion. The wealth of a community lies in the fact that all its members can share the qualities and gifts of others.

1. The Real Wealth of a Religious Community is Its Members

The real wealth of a religious community is its members, each of them living their life as a wholehearted response to God's love and call. At a day-to-day level, this means that one spends time with one's community: prayer, work, meals, and recreation; that one contributes ideas to the common discussions; that one works hard; that one gives to the community and common mission all that one may receive; that one shares one's inner journey with someone in trust; that one does not claim privileges of space and things and special treatment. The more one gives oneself to this family chosen in faith, the happier one's life is likely to be. Consecrated persons give their best to make the religious community their new and first family. They really build this family together through their sincere daily commitment, spelt out in many sacrifices, collective responsibilities, and shared pains and joys.

The community is the place where the consecrated persons are to experience the most intense positive emotions, such as tenderness, closeness, intimacy, and the security of being loved and cared for, and alas, also some of their most painful emotions. They depend on each other in myriad ways every day. The whole of the religious community has to be clear that the religious life is rooted in a personal relationship with God. With a meaningful inner journey they make a willing and considered choice, a choice as a response to God's call, a choice as a

call to the deeper desires of their heart. The happiest religious are those who give of themselves the most. All spiritual paths are ultimately about moving from self-centredness to love. Without a willing self-gift, one finds neither meaning nor happiness in religious life. The following are signs of a community's wealth.

1.1 The Community's Care for Each Member

The community accepts each member with their gifts and limitations. The community has the obligation to provide opportunities for the member to grow up to be a mature and happy human being, to be qualified for the forms of ministry the congregation is engaged in, and above all, to cultivate one's relationship with God. The young members are there mainly to grow to the human and spiritual stature that God wants for them. For this, the community members provide them with various types of help, assistance and accompaniment: encouragement, fraternal correction, inspiring example, support in difficult moments, guidance at crucial moments of decision-making, and help with discernment.

The community, particularly the superiors and senior members, are to help the younger members by creating a healthy and happy atmosphere for their growth. People grow up best when they are loved and trusted, not when they are suspected or shouted at; hence the importance of providing a happy and loving atmosphere for young members to grow up in. Only in such a setting will a person feel free to be herself and to express herself, ask questions and clarifications, take willing initiatives and commit generously, tend to make fewer mistakes and acknowledge them, be happy and grow up integrally. In a fear-filled setting, a person may do the expected external act, but one's heart will not be in it, and, as soon as the threatening external presence is removed, the same person will tend to do the opposite.

1.2 Celebration Done with Love

Religious communities become so by being together and doing things together. Shared life and memories unite the members of a religious community. Life itself can be a celebration when the consecrated persons live it with love. When love reigns in the community, even simple acts of cooking a meal together, cleaning the house together, preparing a parish programme together with the people, working late into the night, entertaining, spending the night with no proper sleep or food, working together, going for an outing, having a simple meal together or a lovely recreation, conversing with one another, and watching a movie together; all these can be wonderfully happy experiences and material for years of happy memories.

One thing that is indispensable to community building is meaningful celebrations. A well-conducted common prayer, a happy, loving birthday celebration, a spontaneous celebration when a member has achieved something, and participation in the joys and sorrows of a community member's family are heart-warming gestures that can bring people together and build community communion. Some communities have wonderful memories of living together in great poverty, with simple meals, poor accommodation, plenty of hardships but deep and heartfelt joy and peace. It is not buildings, meals, costly gadgets and positions that fill the heart, but the warmth and support of genuine, caring and loving relationships.

2. Signs of Unity as Double Fidelity: To God and to the Mission

The unity in a religious community comes from a double fidelity: to God and to the mission. When each one is seeking God's will rather than one's private preferences, one will be united with the others in the community, seeing the other as a brother or sister sent by God, meant to contribute something unique to the life of the other. Each one must realise that it is to God that one is committed. Life's commitments in religious life cannot be taken half-heartedly. To

realise them, consecrated persons have to commit themselves willingly, generously and cheerfully. Half-hearted commitments will always feel heavy and leave their hearts empty and unfulfilled. Life commitments in themselves and in religious life affect all other choices. Hence, to succeed in this commitment, one has to give to it all one has: time, talents, energy, ideas, qualifications, and future, withholding nothing. Let us ask, what could be the signs of a good religious community?

2.1. Nurturing and Supportive Environment

Religious communities are vital to the life and mission of consecrated persons, providing a nurturing environment for spiritual growth through shared prayer, mutual support, and communal life. The communal context helps individuals to integrate into the chosen lifestyle, cultivate spiritual maturity, and learn to embody the values and mission of the congregation through the witness of experienced members. Communities provide a healthy and supportive setting, allowing the members to cultivate their gifts and talents in a nurturing atmosphere. A healthy community embraces individuals as they are, fostering a sense of acceptance and belonging that is essential for personal and spiritual growth. By living and growing within a supportive spiritual community, individuals are formed and transformed, moving towards spiritual maturity and a deeper understanding of their faith. Through interaction with diverse personalities and experiences within the community, individuals are challenged to grow in empathy, compassion, and maturity. By being educated and formed within the community, consecrated persons gradually learn to embody the mind and life of Christ, which is essential for concretely expressing their vows and mission.

2.2. Mutual Support and Sense of Belonging

Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God, mutual support and belonging. It is one of the clearest signs that their hearts have found, one of the clearest signs of a good, healthy community. The community provides support during periods of uncertainty, fatigue, or spiritual struggle, offering a place of refuge and encouragement. This fosters a sense of assurance, communion, and belonging. Faith, belonging and community life demonstrate that strong bonds, founded in shared faith and purpose, can be forged and sustained, helping to overcome personal and societal divisions. Participation in a faith community creates a crucial sense of belonging, which is foundational for developing individual identity and spiritual formation. An authentic community embraces individuals with their unique backgrounds and experiences, fostering empathy and strengthening bonds within the group. The community offers the chance for humble acceptance of and participation in fraternal correction, fostering accountability and growth.

3. Shared Mission and Service

A core aspect of community life is the focus on Christ as the centre of the group, which strengthens the bonds between members and fosters their collective mission. The community provides a space to develop an individual's relationship with God and fosters a deeper understanding of one's consecration. It provides the foundational context to grow in understanding and compassion, enabling them to serve others with greater empathy. The community unites individuals in their shared mission, helping them to serve God and the people of God with greater understanding and compassion. In essence, the religious community is the "family" where a consecrated person is continually integrated and transformed into a more complete expression of their vocation. Compassion, vocation, and involvement in the mission can make religious people aware of the complex realities of the world, of the tremendous goodness and horrendous cruelty that are a part of human life, of biased reports in the media, and of the power games going on in society, and help them

understand how small and manageable our problems are when compared to the sufferings and challenges lay people face daily.

3.1 Inspiring and Humble Leadership

Leadership should be marked by simplicity, availability and readiness to serve. Superiors are the ones with the greatest responsibility for the atmosphere of a community. In pursuing a faith-vision of religious life and living its mission with enthusiasm, the superior sets the tone for the community. When superiors behave like loving brothers/sisters to the members, they teach them valuable lessons about Jesus' lifestyle and values (Jn 13:13). Unexpected acts of kindness and humble witness have far more impact than hundreds of conferences and exhortations. Jesus' teaching is about treating everyone with kindness, especially the poor, not just those we consider "our own" or those who can invite us in return. Jean Vanier, in his book "Community and Growth", states: "Communities, if they close themselves off from the poor, close themselves off from God. Every community must be concerned about the poor and the broken of the world. Everyone must be close to the poor who are close by and who are calling us to love. It is not possible to eat the broken Body of Christ in the Eucharist and to drink his blood shed for us through torture and love without opening our hearts to the broken and the crucified people in our world today." The exemplary life and values of mature community members, particularly those in leadership positions, serve as an inspiration and guide for others. Experienced members must inspire the younger ones through their lived example, demonstrating a commitment to communal values and a life centered on God. They serve as role models, integrating the new members through their exemplary lives and value-based living.

CONCLUSION

The non-negotiable foundation on which the religious community rests is each person's genuine and correctly discerned response to God's call. Religious community requires, for its functioning and health, the free self-gift of each member to God and to the common goals, the community's support of each member, and a life shared at all levels. A good religious community has certain distinguishing marks. To prepare religious to be constructive members of happy, God-centered, service-orientated communities, we need to make sure that the younger members receive a realistic, inspiring and integral religious and human formation.

Today, in many fields, people trust experts and tend to look for an expert. What is supposed to be our expertise as religious? "Consecrated persons are asked to be true experts of communion and to practice the spirituality of communion as 'witnesses and architects of the plan for unity which is the crowning point of human history in God's design.' Communion leads to mission and itself becomes mission." As religious people, our best contribution to the world is not the external work we do, but a personal commitment to Christ. Our real mission is to promote communion between human beings and God and among human beings as God's children. Good religious communities can be beacons of light showing people of goodwill that it is possible and worthwhile to live together in love, work together in unity, and grow together into the kind of humanness that Jesus came to show us.

Points to Ponder, Share and Live:

1. What is the role of the community in the formative journey of consecrated persons?
2. How can you say that the real wealth of a religious community is its members?
3. Why are the signs of unity as double fidelity, to God and to the mission?

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

31 Sun - First Week of Advent
01 Mon - International Aids Day
03 Wed - St Francis Xavier
05 Fri - Bl. Philip Rinaldi
08 Mon - Feast of the Immaculate Conception
10 Wed - International Human Rights Day
12 Fri - Our Lady of Guadalupe
25 Thu - CHRISTMAS
26 Fri - St Stephen
27 Sat - St John the Apostle and Evangelist
28 Sun - Holy Innocents
29 Mon - Feast of the Holy Family

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Congratulations to the 28 Salesian Cooperators, including four from our FMA units, who made their solemn Promise on 25 November 2025 at the Don Bosco Shrine, Aynavaram, Chennai. It was truly inspiring to witness the extension of the Salesian charism through their committed lives and apostolic services. I sincerely thank Sr Ambrose Arokia Jayaceli, Sr Joseph Jackulen Anthony, the Province Delegate for the Salesian Family, and the Local Delegates of the FMA Units for accompanying the Aspirant Cooperators in their initial formation. Let us continue to revive all our units by promoting lay collaboration and apostolic fruitfulness in all our institutions, and by encouraging our young people to dedicate themselves as promised Cooperators.

Annual Spiritual Retreat: The Sisters will be making their Annual Spiritual Retreat from 26 December 2025 to 2 January 2026 at Sacred Heart Home, Gandhi Nagar, Katpadi. We thank Fr Innasi Sathian OFM, the Retreat preacher, for his availability. We wish our Sisters a happy experience of deep encounter with the Lord, reviving their vocational freshness.

CONGRATULATIONS

Heartfelt congratulations to our dear Sr Johnson Towle Irine, on the successful completion of her doctoral thesis and the defence of the same on 28 November 2025. May this well-earned achievement be a source of joy, inspiration, and greater service to many, especially the young girls!

NOTE OF THANKS

- ❖ My heartfelt gratitude to Sr Stanislaus Mary Dora and the Avvai Nagar community for hosting the Tri-Monthly Recollection for the Senior Sisters on 3 November 2025.
- ❖ I express my sincere gratitude to Sr Arulanandu Arockia Mary and the Sisters of Negombo for hosting the Tri-Monthly Recollection for Sisters on 5 and 6 November 2025.

- ❖ My heartfelt gratitude to Sr Anandaraj Jaya Shanthi and the Kingsford community, and to Sr Chinnappan Gracy Fatima and the community of Sacred Heart Home, for organizing the Tri-Monthly Recollection for Seniors on 8 November 2025.
- ❖ My sincere appreciation to Sr Fernando Majella, Provincial of INT and the community of Auxilium Provincial House, Manikandam, for graciously hosting the Tri-Monthly Recollection and Animation for INM and INT Juniors on 8 and 9 November 2025.
- ❖ My sincere gratitude to Sr Samala Elisa and the Sisters of Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur, for hosting the Tri-Monthly Recollection for the Senior Sisters on 9 November 2025.
- ❖ My gratitude goes to Sr Anthony Raj Mary Josephine, the Superior, and the community of Auxilium College, Katpadi, for their warm hospitality and generous service during the Provincial Council Meeting held on 15 November 2025.
- ❖ I express my deepest gratitude to Sr Anthony Raj Christina, the Vice Provincial, for her dedicated coordination in organising the Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist, celebrating the Canonization of St Maria Troncatti on 16 November 2025, in Vellore. My sincere thanks to Sr Amali Alexander and the community of St Mary's, Vellore, for graciously hosting the celebration. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Provincial Councillors, all the Superiors, and the Educating Communities for their invaluable contributions and participation, which enriched the Jubilee celebrations.
- ❖ My heartfelt thanks to Sr Anthony Raj Christina, Vice Provincial, for coordinating the Thanksgiving Holy Eucharist celebrating the Canonization of St Maria Troncatti on 22 November 2025. I am grateful to the Provincial Councillors for their dedicated service and support. Special thanks to Sr Anthony Raj Christina, and the Fatima Convent community for hosting the celebration with generosity and sacrifice. I also appreciate the Provincial Councillors, Superiors, and Educating Communities for their contributions that made the celebration memorable and grace-filled.
- ❖ My sincere thanks to Sr Ambrose Arokia Jayaceli and Sr Joseph Jackulen Anthony and the local delegate for their dedicated preparation of the Salesian Cooperators Aspirants who made their Promise on 23 November 2025 at Don Bosco Shrine, Ayanavaram.
- ❖ Heartfelt thanks once again to Sr Antony Raj Christiana, Superior, and the community of Fatima Convent, Kodambakkam, for graciously hosting the NDF Meeting and Child Safeguarding workshop held from 24 to 29 November 2025, the FMAPCI Meeting from 26 to 27 November 2025. I thank Sr Kunnathu Anna and Sr Susai Josephine Rani for their sacrifices, which contributed greatly to the success of the meeting.
- ❖ A word of appreciation to Sr Francis Jeyamani and Sr Salas Silviya, the Province Delegates for Past Pupils, Sr Anthony Raj Josephine, Sr Ambrose Arokia Jayaceli, the educating community of Auxilium College, Katpadi, and the Past Pupils for their dedicated organization and active participation in the Walkathon for Ecological Care, held on 29 November 2025.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

To Sr Susai Josephine Rani, at the demise of her dear Father, Mr Susai Chinnasamy (86), in Tirupattur, on 5 November 2025.

- To Sr Susai Raj Mary Sheila at the demise of her elder sister, Mrs Nirmala (72), in Secunderabad, on 9 November 2025.
- To Sr Kasu Sleeva Showrilu (SL), at the demise of her elder brother Mr Kasu Chinapureddy (59), on 20 November 2025.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

Sr Madalaimututhu Antoinette will participate in the Renewal Course at NBCLC, Bangalore, from 1 January 2026 to 31 May 2026. We wish her a fruitful experience!

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY

03 † Sr Giovanna Battista (1982), Sr Martha Griffiths (2008),
 † Sr Annina Vembenickel (2015)
 04 † Sr Berta Sperrfechter (1991)
 07 † Sr Priscilla Fernandes (2002)
 08 † Sr Helen Fernandes (2012)
 11 † Sr Mary Josephine Anthony (2004)
 14 † Sr Clementina Lobo (2002)
 15 † Sr Terezija Medvesek (2001)
 17 † Sr Mary Bout (1994), Sr Rafaela Gisbert (2006)
 19 † Sr Amalorpava Mary Asirvatham (2019)
 22 † Sr Maddalena Maretti (1966)
 27 † Sr Beda Maria Fernandes (1967), Sr Angela Daglio (1996)
 28 † Sr Raffaella Arduini (1970)
 30 † Sr Vittoria Devasahayam (2017)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2025		
05.12.2025	Fri	Principals Meeting, Sisters SL, Columbuthurai
07.12.2025	Sun	Provincial Council Election SC, Chennai & Vellore SC
09.12.2025 To 10.12.2025	Tue To Wed	Provincial Council, Auxilium College, Katpadi
10.12.2025	Wed	Human Rights Day, Formal & Non-Formal Sectors, Local Communities
11.12.2025	Thu	Quiz Competition, Parishioners and ADMA Members, Online/Local Community
26.12.2025 to 02.01.2026	Fri to Fri	Annual Retreat – I for Sisters, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi Animation for the Retreatants
27.12.2025 To	Sat To	House Staff Retreat, MIC, Tirupattur

28.12.2025	Sun	
28.12.2025	Sun	Principals Meeting, Online
JANUARY 2026		
02.01.2026	Fri	Animation for Retreatants, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
03.01.2026	Sat	Provincial Team Meet, Auxilium Home, Katpadi Orientation Programme for Teachers, Columbuthurai, SL
04.01.2026 To 05.01.2026	Sun To Mon	Provincial Council, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi,

On **5 December**, we commemorate **Blessed Philip Rinaldi (1856–1931)**, the third successor of St John Bosco and a gentle, wise spiritual father of the Salesian Family. Deeply inspired by Don Bosco, he dedicated his life to guiding young people and forming countless vocations with extraordinary kindness and practical holiness. Known for his humility, patience, and interior spirit of prayer, he strengthened the Salesian mission worldwide and founded the Institute of the Don Bosco Volunteers, opening new paths for consecrated life. Bl. Philip Rinaldi reminds us that true holiness is lived in daily fidelity, quiet service, and deep trust in God. May his example inspire us to love God and serve others with simplicity and joy.

On **8 December**, we celebrate the Solemnity of **the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary**, a profound feast that honours Mary as being conceived without original sin, prepared from the first moment of her existence to become the Mother of God. This solemnity reveals God's great plan of salvation, accomplished through Jesus Christ and highlights Mary's unique role in human history. Chosen in purity and filled with grace, she stands as a model of faith, humility, and obedience to God's will. The feast invites us to renew our devotion to Mary, to seek her powerful intercession, and to strive for holiness in our daily lives.

This day is also deeply significant for the Salesian Family because Don Bosco began his mission for poor and abandoned youth on 8 December 1841 with a simple Hail Mary prayed with the young boy Bartholomew Garelli. From that moment, guided by the Immaculate Virgin, Don Bosco's work grew into a great educational and spiritual movement, transforming the lives of countless young people. Inspired by Mary's maternal care, he dedicated his life to forming good Christians and honest citizens. Adhering to the invitation of Mother General, Sr Chiara Cazzuola, let us ask Mary Immaculate for the precious gift of peace, a peace based on dialogue, justice and forgiveness.

Human Rights Day, observed annually on **December 10**, marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, a milestone document that proclaims the inherent dignity, freedom, and equality of all people. This day reminds us of our shared responsibility to protect the rights of every human being regardless of nationality, religion, gender, culture, or social status and to stand against injustice, discrimination, and violence. It calls us to work continually for a world where every person can live with peace, respect, opportunity, and hope. May Human Rights Day inspire us to uphold compassion, solidarity, and justice in our communities and beyond.

Christmas, celebrated on December 25, is a joyful and sacred feast that commemorates the birth of **Jesus Christ**, the Saviour of the world, born in Bethlehem to bring hope, peace, and salvation to all humanity. In the humble setting of a manger, God became man and chose to dwell among us, revealing His unconditional love. Christmas invites us to reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation, God's light entering our darkness, and His promise of eternal life offered to every person. It is a time to open our hearts to God's grace and to welcome Christ into our lives with faith and gratitude.

Beyond festive celebrations, Christmas calls us to live the values that Jesus came to teach love, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion. It is a time to share joy with family and community, to reach out especially to the poor, the lonely, and the suffering, and to become instruments of peace and goodwill. As we gather around the crib, may the Child Jesus fill our hearts with His tenderness, and may His birth renew our commitment to build a world of harmony, unity, and love. **Merry Christmas!**

A very happy feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mother Mary to all, especially to the communities of Mary Immaculate, Tirupattur and Yellagiri Hills, who keep their feast!

I wish each one of you, Sisters, young people, members of the educating Communities, and Salesian family members a fervent Season of Advent and a Blessed celebration of Christmas!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Devadoss Margaret

Sr Devadoss Margaret FMA

INM Provincial



ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL

DECEMBER 2025

31Nov - 01	Sun - Mon	PV - Jawadhi Hills
02 - 06	Tue-Sat	PV - Auxilium College, Katpadi
07	Sun	Personal work
08	Mon	Yercaud
09 - 10	Tue - Wed	Provincial Council, Auxilium College, Katpadi
11- 12	Thu - Fri	PV - Anmarudai
13- 14	Sat - Sun	Personal Work
15-16	Mon - Tue	PV - Dharmapuri
17-25	Wed - Thu	Provincial Office, Kodambakkam
27- 02	Sat - Fri	Annual Retreat - I, Sisters, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
JANUARY 2026		
03	Sat	PV - Auxilium Care Home, Katpadi
04- 05	Sun-Mon	Provincial Council, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi
06 -09	Tue-Fri	PV - Kodambakkam
10	Sat	Journey to Tirupattur
11-13	Sun-Tue	PV - Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur
12	Mon	Silver Jubilee of Deepam, Jawadhi Hills

