



JNM FMA / Pro. Cir. 08

February 2018

Viva Gesù!

My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate Greetings to you!

This month we will reflect on the Initial Proclamation that leads people to experience a personal encounter with Jesus who attracts them to himself with his words and his works. Many people opened up to God with sincerity of heart. Let us consider the story of **Nathaniel's Encounter with Jesus.**

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee and he found Philip. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathaniel, and told him, "We have found the one about whom Moses wrote in the law and also the prophets, Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth". But Nathaniel said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?... " (Jn.1:43-50).

Closed in by his own prejudice he could not imagine how Nazareth, an insignificant city, could possibly produce something worthy of attention. Nathaniel sees nothing good in those who do not have a decent "business card" to present. Jesus, instead, sees the good in him, in his person, in the depths of his being, and discovers it spontaneously. Although conditioned by prejudice and apparent indifference, this young man has a fundamental human quality, sincerity. Later, even with the rich young man, who is undecided, but has good will, Jesus focuses on his uprightness, appreciates his efforts in searching, and encourages him to continue (cf. *Luke 18. 18-23*). This is Jesus' constant style. He sees not the appearance, but the heart, not the external, but hidden intentions and innermost desires for good. He looks with sympathy at all people and discovers a reflection of God, although often hidden, covered, and obscured.

The disciples he calls to be his followers are all good men, but imperfect, unprepared, and not free, perhaps, even from serious defects. Nevertheless, it is precisely these men on whom Jesus places the greatest dreams for his Church. He trusts them and appoints them to accomplish the unique task of prolonging his own mission of salvation.

"He who holds heaven in his heart sees heaven everywhere", goes the proverb. Jesus sees the piece of heaven which every man and woman carries within and makes it known so that it becomes ever larger and brighter. He recognizes in each human face the reflection of his own image. He is in strong solidarity with people and has a great passion for each person. For each person, Jesus is the older brother and perfect model (cf. *Rm. 8:29, Col.1:15*). He can discover hidden seeds of

goodness, recognize gifts hitherto unknown, grasp unexpressed desires, comprehend even the weak expressions of love, and understand the language of the heart.

Stunned by Jesus' words, Nathaniel asked with wonder, "How do you know me?" and Jesus replied, "*Before Philip called you, I saw you when you were under the fig tree*". Jesus sees "before" and sees in depth. He sees the man in his exact context, "**under the fig tree**", and does not miss any detail. Everything is important and valuable to him. St. Paul also confesses with emotion: Jesus Christ, the Son of God "*loved me and gave himself for me*" (*Gal. 2:20*). John is even more explicit: "*We love him because he loved us first*" (*1Jn. 4, 19*).

How much joy comes from the wonder of being known and loved first! It is more than one could imagine or desire! "*I have seen you...*", "*I loved you...*". Even today Jesus continues to make his words heard, and this is what gives meaning and beauty to life.

SIGNIFICANT FEASTS OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY 2:

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord: World Day for Consecrated Life

The celebration of the feast of the Presentation of the Lord at the Temple occurs forty days after the birth of Jesus. Presentation of Jesus signifies God's entrance to His temple. God made man entered His temple, presenting Himself to those who were really searching for Him (Mal 3:1). On this day we are invited, together with Simeon and Anna, to contemplate the Divine child, the Word made Flesh brought to the Temple, the Temple of our heart. This feast is also known as the Feast of the Encounter: the encounter between Jesus and his people, represented by Simeon and Anna. On this day, the Church demonstrates its gratitude to all those in the community that dedicate themselves in a privileged way to a life of prayer and mission, to those who have a particular religious vocation to the contemplative life.

We are called to renew our consecration and mission following the example of the chaste, poor and obedient Jesus. Through our evangelical witness, Christ the Lord who is the light of the people, should shine in the Church and illumine the world.

FEBRUARY 8:

4th International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking:

On this day we celebrate the feast of **St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita**, a Sudanese-born slave who later became a Canossian Religious Sister in Italy, lived and worked there for 45 years. In the year 2000, she was declared a saint by St. Pope John Paul II. As human trafficking continues to be a tremendously important issue with an estimated 20 million victims worldwide, St. Josephine Bakhita, kidnapped and sold into slavery at the age of 7, has emerged as a patron not only for her home country of Sudan but for all victims of trafficking. Her feast day marks the fourth international day of prayer and reflection against human trafficking.

Trafficking violates basic human rights, including the rights to life, equality, dignity, bodily integrity, health, security, and freedom from violence and torture. Awareness of human trafficking and appropriate protection and support should be extended to all trafficked persons. Let us support the persons who are committed to the cause of anti-human trafficking through our prayers and preventive mission among the children, youth, and women at risk.

FEBRUARY 11: 26th World Day of the Sick:

The theme for this year's World Day of the Sick is provided by the words that Jesus spoke from the Cross to Mary, his Mother and to John: *"Woman, behold your son . . . Behold your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home"* (Jn. 19:26-27).

Pope's message for the world day of the sick reminds us of the Church's mission of tenderness and compassion toward the sick. Pope Francis says, **"Health care ministry"** will always be a necessary and fundamental task to be carried out with renewed enthusiasm by all, from parish communities to the largest healthcare institutions. The healthcare given to persons in families is an extraordinary witness of love for the human person. This needs to be fittingly acknowledged and supported by suitable policies. Doctors and nurses, priests and laity, consecrated men and women, volunteers, families, and all those who care for the sick, take part in this ecclesial mission". Let us continue to pray for our sick sisters and dear ones.

FEBRUARY 14: Ash Wednesday:

The Season of Lent beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Holy Thursday is a season of penance, reflection, and fasting which prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Placing the ashes on the forehead symbolizes the dust from which God made us. It is also a symbol of the grief we experience in the fact that we have sinned. While ashes symbolize penance and contrition they are also a reminder that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts. His Divine mercy is of utmost importance during the season of Lent.

February 22: The feast of the Chair of Saint Peter

This feast brings to mind the mission of teaching and preaching conferred by Christ on Peter, and which continues in an unbroken line down to the present Pope. On this day we celebrate the Unity of the Church, founded upon the Apostle and renew our assent to the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff. We celebrate also the love, presence, and the protection of Christ over us and the Church. The title Chair of Peter recalls the supreme teaching power of St. Peter and his successors. From the pastoral power that is given to him, the Pope shepherds Christ's flock. "God Bless Our Pope".

COMMUNICATIONS

FIRST PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY DAY OF FMA INT

With immense joy and profound gratitude to God and our Blessed Mother, we join our youngest daughter Province and celebrate her first Provincial Community Day on February 2 and 3, 2018. We implore God's choicest blessings on Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret, the Provincial and all the Sisters of the Province of Our Lady of Snow and assure them of our sisterly support and accompaniment.

SILVER JUBILEE OF FMA INK

Another dear daughter Province, FMA INK, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bangalore, is celebrating the Silver Jubilee of her birth on February 4, 2018. We congratulate Rev. Sr. Jacob Celine, the Provincial and all the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Province of Bangalore on this great occasion. We join them in the hymn of thanksgiving to the Lord and our blessed Mother who had done marvels in the life and mission of the Province. We congratulate the Sisters for their

commitment to the consecrated life and their commendable service to the society. *May God continue to accompany them on their onward journey!*

DIAMOND JUBILEE

The joyous Diamond Jubilee celebration of Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi on January 13, 2018, was a remarkable moment of joy and gratitude to God for the wonders He has done during the past 60 Years. Erected as the Sacred Heart Novitiate in the year 1957 and became the Juniorate and Home for student Sisters, from 1969, Sacred Heart Home is committed to the formation of Aspirants and Postulants. It is a cradle of integral human, Christian and Salesian formation to hundreds of young women who were gently accompanied in their vocational discernment and maturity and who are now happy religious as FMA. We remember with gratitude the pioneers of this house and all the Sisters who rendered their relentless services with their holiness, hard work, and apostolic zeal.

I congratulate Sr. Kulandaisamy Lourdu Mary, the animator, the Sisters and the candidates of the community of Sacred Heart Home who organized a significant celebration of the diamond jubilee. May this momentous event remind us of our commitment to pray and work persistently for many holy vocations to our institute and to our province!

PROVINCIAL COMMUNITY DAY

The Provincial Community Day celebrated on January 20, 2018, at Our Lady's Centre, Chetpet, was indeed a true sign of community communion and an expression of the joy of being together as in a family. I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the Sisters, Youth and the Members of the Salesian Family for their gracious presence, to **celebrate the togetherness**, to thank the Lord for His Blessings and to express mutual sentiments of Gratitude. I **thank** Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora, the Vice Provincial, for the month-long spiritual preparation based on the **Strenna 2018: "Sir, Give me this Water"** and for the coordination of this delightful event with the sisterly collaboration of the Provincial Councillors and the Provincial Team. A **'big thank you'** to Sr. Devadoss Margaret and the community of our Lady's Chetpet, for their generous hosting of the occasion, Sr. Lourdusamy Eugene and the community of Arni and Sr. Susai Josephine Rani and the community of Pallikonda, for the fervent animation of the morning prayer and the Holy Eucharist, and to all the local animators and Sisters who contributed toward the happy celebration of the Provincial Community Day 2018.

TRIENNIAL EVALUATION FMA-PCI

The historical moment of the Triennial Evaluation, FMA PCI, commenced on January 24, 2018, and ended on January 28, 2018, at the INC Provincial House, Dum Dum, Kolkata. There were 42 participants including our beloved Mother General, Yvonne Reungoat, Sr. Alaide Deretti, General Councillor for Missions, Sr. Runita Borja, General Councillor for Youth Pastoral, Sr. Lucy Rose Ozhukayil and Sr. Phyllis Neves, the Visiting Councillors, and the seven FMA Provincials of India along with their two FMA delegates, a layperson and a youth.

The great moment was flagged off at Auxilium Convent School, Dum Dum, by a picturesque presentation of the State of West Bengal in an excellent array of songs, dances, and tableaux. There was creativity and variety in the celebration of the daily Eucharist and the different prayer moments animated by the different provinces. **'La Madre'** shared a resourceful reflection on the day's theme, setting all the participants on the right track. The active participation of the laity

and young people with their deep reflections was enlightening and encouraging. Their determination to join hands with Sisters in the FMA mission is indeed laudable. I eagerly wait to share with you the details of the beautiful experiences of the triennial evaluation during our meetings after the annual retreats.

We thank Sr. Rose Ezarath, Provincial of Kolkata and the PCI President, for the admirable organization and the splendid execution of FMA PCI Triennial Evaluation. We say a huge 'Thank You' to her councilors and to all the Sisters of the Province and a special word of gratitude to Sr. Adampakallel Teresa, the vice-provincial and the superior of the provincial house community.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

"It is important to begin a process of management control on all the activities, both formal and informal, present in our house." (Cfr. Guidelines for the management of Goods in the FMA Institute, 75-76).

As per the recommendations of our Institute, the Provincial Council has formed the Province Finance Management Committee for the renewal and re-qualification of our apostolic works. I am happy to communicate to you that along with Sr. Puliyani Lucy, the Province Economist, Sr. Chinnappen Mano Ranjitham, Sr. Samala Rayapan Elisa and Sr. Rayappan Leema Rose will be the members of Province Finance Committee.

I gently remind all the communities about the need to take time and effort to make the budget for the new financial year. Let this be a community exercise. Every expense foreseen for the coming year should reflect in the budget. It will be difficult for the Provincial Council, during the course of the year, to sanction the projects and plans which are not reflected in the budget. The last date for submission of the budget is 17 February 2018.

WORKSHOP ON CHILDREN'S MISSION:

Sr. Rayappan Selvi and Sr. Perianayagam Auxilia will be participating in the Workshop on Children's Mission organized by the Legal Cell on 24-25 February 2018 at Santhome- Chennai.

SINCERE THANKS TO

- Sr. Mariadoss Amala Mary and the community of Auxilium Home Katpadi for hosting the Provincial Team meet.
- Sr. Gaspar Celine and the Sisters of Mary Immaculate Convent Tirupattur for making all the arrangements for the success of the Past Pupils' Meet.
- Sr. Antonyraj Christina and the Sisters of St. Mary's Vellore for hosting the meeting of the Principals of Primary, Nursery and Matriculation Schools, and the Vellore Zone Educating Community Meeting.
- Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora and the community of Kodambakkam for their hospitality toward the local economists during their meeting to submit the annual accounts and for hosting the Chennai Zone Educating Community Meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS & ASSURANCE OF PRAYERS

- To Fr. Januarius S. Sangma SDB who is appointed as the 12th Provincial of the Salesian Province of Guwahati and to Fr. Paul Olphindro Lyngkot SDB as the 2nd Provincial of the Province of Shillong.

- To Sr. Mathew Philomena who is re-elected as the Superior General of MSMHC Congregation, which is part of the Salesian Family.
- We assure them of our prayers that they may experience the loving presence of God in their mission of leadership.

HEART-FELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS

- To dear Fr. K. M. Jose and the confreres of Chennai province at the demise of Fr. Stanislaus M. Fernandez SDB (85) on January 19, 2018, in Don Bosco Senior Salesians' Home, Aluva, Kerala.
- To the Provincial and the Salesians of Shillong Province at the sad demise of Fr. Leonard Kharkongor (75) on January 15, 2018, and at the unexpected death of Fr. James Poonthuruthil (62) on January 21, 2018.
- To Sr. Amalanathan Mary Margaret and the Sisters of Tiruchy Province at the sudden death of our dear Sr. Muthusamy Rosary (84) on January 24, 2018, in Thanjavur.
- To Sr. Ezarath Rose and the Sisters of Kolkata Province at the demise of Sr. Geraldine Barratt (66) on January 26, 2018.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - FEBRUARY 2018

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| 03 - 04 | - | Tri- monthly Recollection and Animation for Junior Sisters |
| 04 | - | VIDES General Body Meeting, Pallikonda |
| 10 | - | Tri-monthly Recollection for Senior Sisters |
| 17 - 18 | - | Meeting of the Animators and the Provincial Team |
| 19 | - | Centenary Committee Meet/ Province Finance Committee Meet |

Let me conclude with a few practical directives proposed by 'la Madre' in her concluding talk at the Triennial evaluation: *"Give priority to vocation pastoral in all the provinces, revive the Past Pupils' Movement, accompany the young people so that they feel at home with the Sisters. Be joyful always, for a joyless community is a meaningless community"*.

I wish each of you a fervent and spiritually fruitful Lenten season!



Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

**Sr. Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial**