



JNM FMA / Pro. Cir. 05

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My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate Greetings to you!

In my previous circular, I presented Chapter 2 of **“Initial Proclamation Today”** by *Alfred Maravilla*, dealing with Pastoral and Theological reflections and Youth Ministry. This month I invite you to reflect on Chapter **3: “What is Initial Proclamation?”**

Initial proclamation may be defined as the witness of every Christian and the whole Christian Community, every activity or group of activities that foster an overwhelmingly exhilarating experience of Jesus through the action of the Holy Spirit and inspires a search for God while safeguarding the freedom of conscience which, ultimately, leads to an initial adhesion to Him, or to a revitalization of faith in Him.

The journey of Jesus to Jericho became the initial proclamation for Bartimaeus. In the awareness of his blindness, Bartimaeus accepted the good news in his heart and cried out for Jesus to have mercy on him that he might see. Once cured of his blindness, Bartimaeus became a disciple **“and followed him on the way” (Mk 10: 52)**. Similarly, the initial proclamation is to lead people to meet Jesus saying to them, **“Courage! Get up, he is calling you.”**

Just like the encounter of Bartimaeus with Jesus, the initial proclamation is not planned and organized. It is neither a programme nor a method, neither an activity nor a celebration. It occurs in **“each single moment of our daily lives, through Christian charity, faith and hope”, in season and out of season” (2 Tim 4: 2)**, especially in the context of ordinary daily life, in different forms, according to the culture, context, the pace of life and the historical and social situation of those to whom the proclamation is directed. It is an invitation, free and respectful, to the interlocutor, who freely decides to accept or reject the invitation. ***We see this in the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (Jn. 4. 3 - 42).***

It is **“initial”** not because it is heard for the first time but because it is that moment preceded by other essential conditions which, through the power of the Spirit, can arouse an initial interest in the person of Jesus Christ.

It is, therefore, necessary, first of all, to create an environment, in which we can encourage and provoke the desire to know Jesus Christ. Certainly, a clear understanding of Christology is important for Christians. But the main challenge regarding initial proclamation is not the

correct formulation of the faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, the concern of initial proclamation is not to proclaim *who* Jesus is, but rather *how* to lead others to the discovery of Jesus and to be fascinated by his person, who alone leads to faith.

Life witness, a personal relationship, and dialogue prepare the heart for initial proclamation. Faith is not the result of an educational program or a scientific study. In fact, neither an ethical nor a doctrinal discourse, nor even a logical exhortation or a presentation of faith-based arguments can trigger the desire to know Jesus Christ. Faith is but the result of an encounter with God who reveals Himself freely in Jesus Christ.

Similarly, initial proclamation needs to be deepened through the other phases of the process of evangelization (conversion, catechumenate, baptism, sacramental initiation, and catechesis). It goes on throughout life. In this light, even Catholics who attend our parishes, courses of catechesis and religious instruction, as well as Christians in all our centers, are all in need of the first proclamation of the Gospel in view of deepening their faith and their personal adherence to Jesus Christ.

With this understanding of initial proclamation it is not important whether one serves in a school, a parish, a youth center, or a mission station; whether one is involved in first evangelization through education, pastoral activities or promotion of human development. What matters most is to live one's life as a Christian and a religious '**permanently in the state of mission**'; In this way, every person and every community becomes a radiant center of Christian life which favors initial proclamation.

ALL SAINTS DAY - 1st November

The Solemnity of All Saints is a special day on which Catholics celebrate all the saints, known and unknown. This tradition goes back to the first century, where there were so many Christian martyrs who died in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but, were too numerous to be recorded and canonized by the Catholic Church and so a day was instituted to remember those who died for Christ. These unknown or unsung saints, who may have been forgotten, or never been honored specifically are examples of universal holiness, worthy of our imitation, and powerful intercession before God on our behalf. On All Saints Day, we celebrate these holy individuals and ask for their prayers and intercessions.

The concept of All Saints Day is connected to the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. The Catholic Church teaches us that all of God's people, in heaven, on earth, and in the state of purification (*Purgatory*), are spiritually connected and united. The Catholic Catechism concisely describes this communion among believers, by which we are connected to Christ, and thus to one another: *"Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness... They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us... So by their fraternal concern our weakness is greatly helped."* (CCC. 956. 957).

I recommend you to read the circular sent by Sr. Sylvia Ciekowska, Vice-Postulator for the Causes of the FMA, for the all saints day and all souls day. Let us cooperate in promoting the cause of our Salesian Saints by praying through their powerful intercession to obtain miracles.

ALL SOULS DAY - 2nd November

All Saints Day is followed by All Souls Day, the day on which Catholics commemorate all those Holy Souls who have died. This holy day is set aside by the Church for honoring the dead and is dedicated to prayers for the dead who are not yet glorified. According to Catholic belief, when the people die, they do not attain full sanctification and moral perfection, a requirement for entrance into Heaven. This sanctification is carried out posthumously in Purgatory. Consistent with these teachings and traditions, Catholics believe that through the prayers of the faithful on earth, the dead are cleansed of their sins so they may enter into heaven. May their souls rest in peace!

FEAST OF SAINT MARY DOMINICA MAZZARELLO - 13th November (May 13)

Mary Domenica was born on May 9, 1837, in Mornese. Her parents helped her to nurture a solid spirituality and a profound charity, a candid joy and a wise discernment, an indefatigable work and an exceptional common sense... Under the wise guidance of Fr. Pestarino, Mary made great progress in spiritual life. In 1872 Don Bosco chose her to begin the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians. As Congregational Leader, she proved to be a loving mother and a capable formator, an inspiring model and a teacher of spiritual life. She was cheerful and serene, humble and charitable. She radiated joy and involved other young people in her dedication to the education of women. She left her Daughters a spiritual heritage - an educational tradition, permeated by Gospel values: the search for God, responsibility in work, sincerity and humility, austerity of life and joyful self-giving. As we celebrate her feast along with our young people, let us imbibe the spiritual heritage she has left behind and impart the same to our young people.

FIRST WORLD DAY OF THE POOR - 19th November

After the extraordinary jubilee year of Mercy, Pope Francis wanted to offer the Church a *World Day of the Poor*, so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need. Pope begins his Message with a quote from the letter of John: "Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but indeed and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). He concludes his Message thus: "This new *World Day*, therefore, should become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. *The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw, as we strive to accept and practice in our lives, the essence of the Gospel.*" In our love for the poor, we are called to take the Lord as our example. The message of Pope Francis for the first World Day of the Poor and the poster for this day will be sent to you. They will be of help to observe this day meaningfully and make it known to our educating community.

VENERABLE MAMA MARGARET - 25th November

Margherita Occhiena, the mother of Don Bosco, was born on April 1, 1788, at Capriglio, in the province of Asti as the sixth of ten children. In 1812, she married Francis Bosco, a widower of 27 years, with a three-year-old child, Anthony, and a sick mother to look after. Joseph was born the following year and in 1815, John (the future Don Bosco). In 1817 Francis died of pneumonia. She was a wise teacher and she knew how to combine fatherliness and motherhood, kindness and

firmness, vigilance and trust, familiarity and dialogue and brought up her children with disinterested love, both patient and demanding. Her accompaniment in the life of our founder is remarkable. In 1846 when Don Bosco was seriously ill, Margaret went to be with him, and discovered there, the good that he had been doing for poor and abandoned youngsters. She became a mother to all the boys in the oratory of Valdocco. She died in Turin, struck down by pneumonia on November 25, 1856, at age of 68. Generations of Salesians called her and will continue to call her Mama Margaret.

COMMUNICATIONS

CELEBRATING THE MISSIONARY JOY - 14th November

“The Day of days has come, are you ready?” Our hearts are filled with missionary joy and our lips sing God’s praises, for the day has come to hand over the gift - 140th year of the first missionary expedition”. (Sr. Alaide Deretti’s Letter). It was this missionary impulse that on 14th November 1877, determined the departure of the six very young FMA: Sr. Angela Vallese (23), Sr. Giovanna Borgna (17), Sr. Angela Cassulo (25), Sr. Angela Denegri (17), Sr. Teresa Gedda (24), and Sr. Teresa Mazzarello (17). With an unconditional *‘Yes’*, they responded to God’s call to be missionaries with courage, serene detachment, and a joyful response to the *mission ad gentes*. Hence, on this day, together with the entire FMA world, let us celebrate this blissful event in all our houses with the members of the educating community combined with the feast of St. Mary Domenica Mazzarello. This celebration in our community united with that of all the provinces will become a prophetic sign in the Institute: with the young missionaries of hope and joy. The theme of the day is *“Go out to the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16: 15)*. We will be sending you the practices for the triduum, orientation for the celebration, prayer service and logo of the missionary expedition which will be of great help to celebrate this day with the heart and sentiments of Don Bosco, Mother Mazzarello, and the first missionary Sisters. Let us *“commit ourselves to rediscover that fire which burned in the hearts of the first missionaries in order to live the present with a sense of responsibility and look to the future with hope”*. (Cf. Circular 972). After Celebrating the 140th year on November 14th at the local level and on the 22nd at the province level all of us will be a **‘HUGE THANK YOU TO GOD’** for arousing in Don Bosco and in Mother Mazzarello the desire for the *mission ad gentes*, the ‘dream’ of bringing the Gospel to the young on every continent. Our special thanks to Rev. Sr. Alaide Deretti, general councilor for *mission ad gentes*, and her team, for keeping us alive with the missionary zeal throughout the year by their enriching animating materials and suggestions.

TWIN CELEBRATIONS - 22nd November

I am certain that you are preparing yourselves and young people with enthusiasm for the twin celebrations at the provincial level: 140th anniversary of the first FMA Missionary expedition and 95th of the arrival of first Missionaries to India on the 22nd November 2017. You have been given adequate content and guidelines both by the Mission ad gentes sector at the center and by our Province, to prepare and celebrate these two great events. Let these days of preparation and

celebration be a strong moment to encourage vocations among our young girls and persuade many missionary vocations among our Sisters. Let us thank God for the life and vocation of all the FMA missionaries *ad gentes*, both past, and present and pray in particular for all the missionary Sisters from our province working in different parts of the world.

HEARTY WELCOME!

I am happy to announce to you the arrival of our dearest Sr. Ozhukayil Lucy Rose, the Visiting Councillor, to our Province. She will be with us to animate the Triennial Evaluation Province Assembly. We joyfully welcome her as she brings with her the blessings of our Mother General and all the General Councillors of our Institute.

TRIENNIAL EVALUATION Province Assembly 2017

We will be having the Triennial Evaluation Province assembly in two groups at Kodambakkam on the 25th and 26th November 2017. The theme is *“Courage, get up, He is calling you” (Mk. 10:49)*. The time and participants list of the two groups will be sent to you later. May this moment of reflection, evaluation and sharing as a Province, under the guidance of Sr. Lucy Rose enable us to recommit ourselves to assume the guidelines of the GC XXIII and together with the young be missionaries of hope and joy!

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr. Irudayam Nirmal Rose and Sr. Kulandaisamy Lourdummy will be attending the course on **Formation for Mission: Present-day Challenges**, at Ishvani Kendra, Pune from 13th November to 2nd December 2017.
- Sr. Puliyan Lucy, Sr. Chinnappan Mano Ranjitham and Sr. Rayappan Leema Rose will be participating in the seminar on **“the spirituality of Financial Administration”** at Indoor from 20 to 24th November 2017.
- Sr. Kanikairaj Shermila, Sr. Fernando Amutha, and Sr. Dharmalingam Jeyaseeli will take part in the National level **Mission ad gentes meet** at Nandigama, Andhra Pradesh from November 18 to 20, 2017, organized by FMA - PCI National Coordinator for Mission ad gentes.

HEART-FELT CONDOLENCES AND PRAYERS

- To Sr. Xavier Wency at the demise of her beloved mother Mrs. Amali (73) on 7th October, 2017.
- To Sr. Amalanathan Margaret and all the Sisters of Tiruchy Province at the sudden death of our dear Sr. Fernando Juliet (78) on 22nd October 2017.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - NOVEMBER 2017

- 04 - 05** - **Tri-monthly Recollection & Animation for Juniors, Manikandam - Tiruchy**
- 09** - **Faith Formation Seminar for Teachers**
- 11** - **Tri-monthly Recollection for Senior Sisters**
- 14** - **Celebration of the 140 years after the Missionary Expedition (local level)**
- 22** - **Twin Celebrations: 140th anniversary of the first Missionary expedition and the 95th anniversary of the arrival of first Missionaries to India (Province level)**
- 25** - **Triennial Evaluation Province Assembly I**
- 26** - **Triennial Evaluation Province Assembly II**

I wish you a very happy solemnity of all saints and for all the celebrations and feasts in the month of November! Throughout the month let us remember to offer up prayers for the souls in purgatory that they may soon be able to enjoy the beatific vision in the company of the Triune God, Blessed Mother Mary, and all the saints known and unknown.

Like Mary, let us broaden our vision and quicken our steps, to be with the young, missionaries of hope and of joy!



Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

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Provincial