



JNM FMA / Pro. Cir. 15

September 2018

Viva Gesù!

My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!

*“Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother
and sister and mother.”- Mt.12: 50*

I have just returned from Sri Lanka loaded with warm greetings from our Sisters and fresh memories of the wonderful mission carried on lovingly by them and the experience of God’s great providence which is expressed in the flourishing of the mission, earnest requests from the bishops to start new presences and the ever-increasing number of children and young people who frequent our centres. Let us continue to pray for missionary vocations to Sri Lanka.

On the 8th of this month, we celebrate the Birthday of Mother Mary and the popular Marian feast in our State of Tamil Nadu, under the title of ‘**Our Lady of Good Health**’, widely known as ‘**Our Lady of Vailankanni**’. As we witness to the thousands of Mother Mary’s devotees, irrespective of caste and creed, taking on a pilgrimage on foot to Vailankanni, the Marian Sanctuary, to obtain graces and to express their affection and gratitude to Mother Mary, we are invited to ponder more and more on her life lived as a true disciple of Jesus her Son, and her readiness to help those in need with humility and love.

This month I would like to reflect with you on our **call to holiness as a commitment to grow in humility and charity**.

St. Paul invites us to remember that “everything depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy” (*Rom 9:16*) and that “He loved us first” (cf. *1 Jn 4:19*). Sometimes we may be tempted to exalt not the power of the intellect, but the human will, the personal effort, and thus forget the place of mystery and grace in our lives (GE 48). Pope Francis names this plague as ‘**Pelagianism**’. At times we can be struck with this Pelagian or semi-pelagian mindset and speak warmly of God’s grace but ultimately trust only in our own powers and feel superior to others because we observe certain rules or remain rigidly faithful to a particular style of life. Often we lack a heartfelt and prayerful acknowledgment of our limitations because this prevents God’s grace from working more effectively within us, making progress toward a sincere and genuine journey of growth. The Pontiff says that Grace, precisely because it builds on nature, does not make us superhuman all at once and that kind of thinking would show too much confidence in our own abilities. Dear Sisters, let us not be overconfident about our talents, gifts, and capabilities and slowly forget the Giver of all these gifts! All that we are and all that we have belongs to Him who made us!

God speaking to Abraham, tells him: “I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be blameless” (*Gen 17:1*). In order to be blameless, we need to live humbly in his presence, stay

in union with him, recognize his constant love in our lives; we need to lose our fear before that presence which can only be for our good (cf. GE 49-51). We need to believe that God is the Father who gave us life and loves us greatly.

Once we accept him and stop trying to live our lives without him, the anguish of loneliness will disappear (cf. *Ps* 139:23-24). In this way, we will know the pleasing and perfect will of the Lord (cf. *Rom* 12:1-2) and allow him to mould us like a potter (cf. *Is* 29:16). Are we ready to let the Lord mould us according to His will? Do we habituate ourselves to see God's mediations in our Superiors, the Sisters the members of our Educating community and in the daily realities of life? All we need is humility! Mother Mazzarello in her letters to the Sisters constantly reminded them to **be humble and accept humiliations in good faith** (cf. L.23, 24, 28 etc.). St. Basil the Great remarked that God's faithful people glory in Him alone, for they realize that they lack true justice and are justified only through faith in Christ. Humility is the real touchstone of true greatness and the right key to success in life. "We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility". Let these words of Rabindranath Tagore re-echo in our ears as often as possible! Fr. Alfonso Elengikal, SSP, in his article in the 'New Leader' on 'Humility' says that **humility is the Hallmark of the truly great** and that humility alone leads us to the heights to which we are called.

The Bishop of Rome reminds us that only on the basis of **God's gift, freely accepted and humbly received**, can we cooperate by our own efforts in our progressive transformation. He admonishes us and warns us of the temptation to have excessive concern with programmes of self-help and personal fulfilment; we need to let ourselves be led by the Spirit in the way of love, be passionate about communicating the beauty and the joy of the Gospel and seek out the lost among those who thirst for Christ (cf. GE.54-57). There is a temptation which perennially besets every spiritual journey and pastoral work: that of thinking that the results **depend on our ability to act and to plan**. God, of course, asks us really to cooperate with his grace and therefore invites us to invest all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that **'without Christ, we can do nothing'** (Cf. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 38).

There is a hierarchy of virtues that bids us seek what is essential. The primacy belongs to the theological virtues, which have God as their object and motive. **At the centre is charity**. St. Paul says that what truly counts is "faith working through love" (*Gal* 5:6). Pope is firm in telling us this important truth that the face of God is reflected in so many other faces. For in every one of our brothers and sisters, especially the least, the most vulnerable, the defenseless and those in need, God's very image is found (Cf. GE. 61-62). We shall ask ourselves: "what endures, what has value in life, what riches do not disappear? The Lord and our neighbour, these two riches, do not disappear! (Cf. Pope Francis, *Homily* on November 13, 2016). The Salesian Spirituality proposed by Don Bosco is based on **a practical commitment to good works in service to one's neighbour and is a measure of progress in personal holiness; it is a service rendered to those in need, especially those who suffer**, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters. Dear Sisters, are we willing to give primacy to Love? Can we rely on God and His grace rather than relying on our own abilities? Let us make progress in the path of holiness and walk humbly with our Lord!

FEASTS OF THE MONTH

- 05 - St. Teresa of Kolkata / Teachers' Day
- 08 - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 14 - Exaltation of the Cross

- 15 - Our Lady of Sorrows
- 22 - Blessed Joseph Calasanz Marques & Enrico Saiz and 93 companions, martyrs
- 29 - Archangels - Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

ALL IN THE FAMILY

HEARTY WELCOME!

We are happy to have the amiable presence of Rev. Sr. Alaide Deretti, the General Councillor for Missions ad/inter gentes, in Sri Lanka from September 15 to 23, 2018. Let us accompany her with our prayers. She comes in the name of our beloved Mother General to discern the new horizons of mission and formation in Sri Lanka. *Benvenuta dear Sr. Alaide!*

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The golden jubilee celebrations of our four Sisters, Sr. Devaraj Amalia Assunta, Sr. Devasahayam Cecilia, Sr. V.R. Mary and Sr. Yettukuri Alphonse Maria, at Auxilium College, Katpadi, on August 18, was indeed a joyous, solemn and a great family event in the Province. The morning prayer followed by the spontaneous family moment of Sisters offering felicitations to the jubilarians was significant. The Holy Eucharist presided by Rev. Fr. K. M. Jose SDB, the Salesian Provincial of Chennai and concelebrated by many Salesian and diocesan priests enabled us to unite ourselves to the heavenly choirs of angels in raising an unending praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of our beloved jubilarians. The various colourful symphonies of cultural items by the students of St. Mary's Vellore, Polur, Pallikonda, Sacred Heart Home and Auxilium College, to express sentiments of affection and gratitude toward the Jubilarians was indeed a spectacular event, thanks to the animators, Sisters, and teachers of these communities. The presence of Sr. Kayaniyil Teresa, companion of the jubilarians from INK Province, added further joy to the event. Sr. Teresa has rendered selfless service in our province for many precious years. We thank the communities of Auxilium Home, Katpadi, and Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur for animating the liturgical moments, the morning prayer and the Holy Eucharist respectively. Our special thanks to Sr. Samala J. Amalorpravam and all the Sisters of Auxilium College community for their wholehearted collaboration and involvement which paved the way to the remarkable golden jubilee celebrations.

VOCATION CAMP

I appreciate Sr. Alexander Lilly Rose, the Vocation Promoter in Sri Lanka, who along with Sr. Arockiasamy Rackel Mary organized the vocation camp from August 5 to 8, at Auxilium Convent, Negombo. A group of 35 girls from different dioceses of Sri Lanka participated in it and have given the hope of joining our Institute. Let us pray that the tiny seed of vocation sown in their hearts may be productive and bear fruit in the flourishing of vocations. Special thanks to Sr. Fernando Mary Ann and the community of Negombo for hosting the camp.

BLESSING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE

On August 24, we had the joy of blessing the foundation stone for the international School at Columbuthurai, Sri Lanka. It was, without a doubt, a great day of rejoicing! All the Sisters from the communities in Sri Lanka as well as the candidates of formation period were gathered in the name of our Blessed Mother to erect yet another milestone in the history of our Province, and the FMA Presence in Sri Lanka. At 9.00 am, a significant prayer moment was conducted by the communities of Jaffna and Urimpirai. Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin B.

Gnanapragasam, Bishop of Jaffna, blessed the foundation stone, congratulated us for our new venture, imparted his blessings and exhorted us to make a difference in the territory by our presence in keeping with the signs of the times. We are extremely indebted to him for his generous availability and paternal presence on this day and for his continuous guidance and support for our mission in the diocese of Jaffna. I appreciate Sr. Nicholas Susheela, who worked hard day and night for this project, corresponding with and contacting the agencies, sacrificing her time and energy to get it all realised.

FESTAL GREETINGS AND PRAYERS

As Indians, we are proud to celebrate the feast of St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata on 5 September 5. May we imbibe from her an ardent love for the poor and the marginalised, and the neglected children of God. May this love urge us to reach out to them with a heart full of passion for Christ and compassion for the poor! At this juncture, I recommend you, dear Sisters, to offer solidarity and support through the gift of our prayers for them as they go through challenging times in their mission.

SINCERE THANKS

Sincere thanks and appreciation to the communities that hosted various animation programs and meetings during the month of August:

- To Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora and the community of Kodambakkam for holding the trimonthly recollection for Juniors and Seniors on August 4th, and animation programme for Juniors of INM and INT Provinces on 5th, meeting of the Formators on 14th, meeting of the New Animators on 21st & 22nd and Workshop on 'Youth Citizenship' for the Youth of Madras - Mylapore Diocese, on August 26, 2018.
- To Sr. Anthony Raj Christina and the community of St. Mary's Convent, Vellore for the Catechetical animation of Teachers on August 2018.
- To Sr. Bathalapallil Irudaya Mary, Anmarudai Community, and the Province Social Development Office for giving animation sessions at Anmarudai, on August 6, to the members of the Women Groups.
- To the communities of Sacred Heart Home, Tirupattur, Yercaud and Vavuniya, Sri Lanka for the Tri-monthly recollection for seniors on August 11.
- To Sr. Samala J. Amalorpavam and the Sisters of Auxilium College for hosting the Animators Meet on August 19th.
- To Sr. Mathew Alice and the community of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, for hosting the Animators and Juniors meet on August 24, 2018.
- To Sr. Mariadoss Amala Mary and the Auxilium Home Community for the Human Rights Education Seminar for students and teachers on August 28, 2018.

Thank you, dear Sisters! Your sense of belonging, the spirit of hard work and generous sacrifices in arranging everything aptly for the meeting, and your smiling faces that welcomed the Sisters to the community are truly appreciated!

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

We raise a hymn of thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty God, for the sixty years of grace, blessings, guidance, and accompaniment He has lavished on the Management, Staff and Students of Fatima Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Kodambakkam. As they celebrate this event on September 5 and 6, 2018, we rejoice with them and celebrate the diamond years of the institute. Sixty years of labour in love for the children of God, by all those who spread the values of God's Kingdom and sowed seeds of peace and brotherhood.

May all those who have gone through the portals of Fatima school and those who will have the privilege of learning from its classrooms live their motto 'God and Country'! May God continue to bless every 'Fatimite' and be the inspiration for all those who make them.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

I wish to communicate to you the various courses and seminars our Sisters will be participating in various institutions.

- ✓ Sr. Mahimainathan Sathiyavani, Sr. Kanikairaj Shermila, Sr. Mariapragasam Reetha, Sr. Joseph Victoria, Sr. Sebastian Amala, and Sr. Solomon Kalai Gnani will be attending the National Level Training on Sustainable Developmental Goals conducted by NDF at Mannivakkam from September 16 to 18, 2018.
- ✓ Sr. Adaikalam Rekha, Sr. Andrew Roseline, Sr. Anthony Cruz Mathalen and Sr. Thirukumaran Tamil Selvi will participate in the Guide Captains and Flock Leaders Basic Training at Anmarudai from September 17 to 23.
- ✓ Sr. Yettukuri Alphonsa Maria, Sr. Devaraj Amalia Assunta, and Sr. V. R. Mary will attend the Renewal Programme for the Golden Jubilarians from September 24 to October 9 at PRERANA, Ignatian Spirituality Centre, Bangalore.
- ✓ Sr. Maindan Jeya Priya and Sr. Arokiaraj Deepika will take part in the Seminar on Creative Writing at Kanyakumari from September 24 to 28, 2018.
- ✓ Sr. Savariappan Irene Novila Rani will attend the International Congress: "Youth and Choices of Life: The Educational Perspectives" organized by the Salesian Pontifical University and Pontifical Faculty of the Sciences of Education Auxilium, Rome, from September 20 to 23, 2018, at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

We express our deep condolences and offer prayers to our dear Sisters who lost their dear ones during these days:

- To Sr. Mairadoss Bridget at the demise of her beloved father Mr. Mariadoss (71) on August 4, 2018.
- To Sr. Asirvatham Anthony Amali at the loss of her baby niece Agitha (4 months) on August 5th.
- To Sr. Chinnanayagam Sheela at the sudden death of her nephew Valankannan Raj (28) on August 9th.
- To Sr. Sebastian Vimala and Sr. Sebastian Elizabeth who lost their brother-in-law Mr. Xavier (61) on August 11, 2018.
- To Sr. Anthony Sheeba at the passing away of her dear father Mr. Anthony (68) on August 11th.
- To Sr. Samuel Gloria Navaneetham at the loss of her dear brother and the beloved father of Sr. Robinson Jenny Grace (INT), Mr. Antony Robinson (66) on August 11th.
- To Sr. Cyril Elizabeth at the passing away of her brother-in-law, husband of Mrs. Linus, on August 23rd.
- Rev. Fr. Januarius S. Sangma SDB, the Provincial of Guwahati and the confreres, at the demise of Rev. Fr. Jose Nadackal SDB (69) on August 4, 2018.
- To the Provincial and the Sisters of the Province of San Paulo, Brasil at the death of Sr. Ilka de Moraes Perillier, on August 4, 2018. She was a general councillor from 1967 to 1990.

UPCOMING EVENTS - SEPTEMBER 2018

- 02 - 04 : Counselling Course for Teachers, Yercaud
- 02 - 16 : Community experience for Postulants
- 08 - 09 : Workshop on New Testament Spirituality, Yercaud

- 10 - 21 : Ashram Experience for Aspirants, Mannivakkam
15 : Animation for Boarding Sisters, Auxilium Home
17 - 18 : Economers' Meet, Michaelpuram
27 : Media animation for the children of Non-Formal education and Children's Parliament at Anmarudai

We are well aware of the unprecedented floods and a series of landslides that have caused immeasurable damage and unparalleled misery and devastation in our neighbouring state of Kerala. Thousands of people are rendered homeless, as houses and roads have collapsed due to floods and landslides. Our timely assistance will help to reach out to the affected people with relief and recovery activities and thus reduce their misery and sufferings. There is an appeal for solidarity and contribution for the immediate relief and quick recovery of victims, from the Church and other humanitarian organizations. As I recommended during the Animators' Meet, our generous contribution towards this cause will be sent to the FMA Province of Bangalore to reach out to the needy. Let us express our solidarity towards them by our daily prayers and mobilize our students and the educating community members to contribute generously.

Let us entrust the suffering humanity - the sick and those affected by natural calamities - to the motherly care and protection of Mother Mary - Our Lady of good health!

May the Feast of the Nativity of Mary be an apt occasion to reflect on her motherly solicitude toward others and lead us to offer words of consolation, acts of solidarity and gestures of love and mercy toward our Sisters and brothers!

Once again I wish you all a very **Happy Feast of Our Lady of Vailankanni!**



Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

Sr. Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial

ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL

SEPTEMBER 2018

- 01 - 02 - Salesian Family Major Superiors Meet, Shillong
- 03 - Returning from Shillong
- 05 - 06 - Diamond Jubilee - Kodambakkam
- 09 - Recollection
- 10 - 11 - Provincial Council
- 14 - 23 - Visit of Sr. Alaide Deretti, Sri Lanka
- 24 - Returning from Sri Lanka
- 25 - Journey to Thailand
- 26 - 28 - South Asia Formators' Meet, Thailand
- 29 - Returning from Thailand

