



JNM FMA / Pro. Cir. 19

January 2019

Viva Gesù!

My Dearest Sisters, Wish you all a very Happy and Grace-filled New Year 2019!

***"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD makes His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."
(Num. 6:24 - 26)***

The New Year begins with the festivity of Mary in her most important title: Mother of God! The year opens with great novelty and a wonderful miracle: "Human person is no longer alone, no more an orphan, but forever a child", says Pope Francis. It is the joy of knowing that our solitude has ended. There is beauty in knowing that we are beloved children and this privilege of ours can never be taken away from us. We see a reflection of ourselves in the frail infant God resting on his Mother's arms and realize that humanity is precious and sacred to God. To set out anew at the beginning of another year let us look to our Mother. She simply contemplated! Mary did not speak. ***"Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart"*** (Lk. 2:19). The Gospel does not report a single word of hers in the entire account of Christmas. She was patient, meek and persevered in her journey of fulfilling God's plan. In this New Year, we too are called to persevere in our journey toward holiness with these very same attitudes of Mary, our Mother.

Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Chapter IV, 'Signs of holiness in today's world', speaks of some of the aspects of the call to holiness that will prove especially meaningful for each one of us. There are five great expressions of love for God and neighbour that are of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today's culture. They are: 1. ***Perseverance, Patience and Meekness*** 2. ***Joy and a Sense of Humour*** 3. ***Boldness and Passion*** 4. ***In Community*** 5. ***In Constant Prayer***.

This month we shall reflect on the first sign: ***Perseverance, Patience and Meekness***. A solid grounding in the God who loves and sustains us is the source of our inner strength and it enables us not merely to persevere amidst life's ups and downs, but also to endure hostility, betrayal, and weaknesses on the part of others. We give witness to holiness through patience and constancy in doing good. It is a sign of fidelity born of love because those who put their faith in God can also be faithful to others. We are called not to repay evil for evil, not to seek revenge, and not to be overcome by evil, but instead to 'overcome evil with good'. This attitude is not a sign of weakness but of true strength because God himself 'is slow to anger but great in love'. We need to recognize and ***combat our aggressive and selfish inclinations*** and not allow them to take root.

The Roman Pontiff invites us to ***avoid verbal violence*** which is the greatest evil in our society. It is false witness, lying, and ruthlessly vilifying others. We see, here, how the unguarded tongue, put on fire by hell, sets all things ablaze (cf. *Jas* 3:6). Inner strength,

which is grace, prevents us from being carried away by the violence that is so much a part of life today because grace defuses vanity and makes possible meekness of heart. The saints do not waste energy complaining about the shortcomings of others; they can hold their tongue before the faults of their brothers and sisters, and avoid verbal violence that demeans and mistreats persons. Saints hesitate to treat others harshly; they consider others better than themselves (cf. GE. 110 -116).

The Pope urges us to get rid of the evil tendency to look down on others like heartless judges, lording it over them and trying to teach them lessons. This is a subtle form of violence. Saint John of the Cross exhorts us to prefer always to be taught by all, rather than have the desire to teach even the least of all. The Bishop of Rome goes on to speak about humility which can only take root in one's heart through humiliations. Without them, there is no humility or holiness. If we are unable to suffer and bear up a few humiliations, we are not humble and we are not on the path to holiness. The Apostles, after suffering humiliations rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of Jesus. Mother Mazzarello in her letter to Sr. Ottavia Bussolino insists on the need to cultivate humility of heart in all that one does and this humility should not be mixed with an attitude of self-seeking. While writing to Sr. Ernesta Farina she exhorts the Sister to befriend humility. Never listen to the teacher, pride, who is the great enemy of humility. ***Dear Sisters, do we accept humiliations silently in our daily life or do we retaliate aggressively triggered by pride and anger?***

The Supreme Pastor praises those who keep silence to save their families, who prefer to praise others rather than boast about themselves, or who choose the less welcome tasks, at times even choosing to bear an injustice so as to offer it to the Lord. One, who is free of selfishness, can dare to disagree gently, to demand justice or to defend those who are weak before the powerful even if it brings harm to one's reputation. The Sovereign Pontiff emphasizes that we need to have a heart set at peace by Christ, freed from the aggressiveness born of arrogant egotism. That same peacefulness, the fruit of grace, makes it possible to preserve our inner trust and persevere in goodness. Christ is our peace. As Luke would say, Jesus came to guide our feet into the way of peace. Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to Jesus' mercy (Cf. Diary. Divine Mercy in My Soul). Pope Francis exhorts us not to fall into the temptation of looking for security in success, vain pleasures, possessions, power over others or social status (Cf. GE 117-121). The real challenge of religious life is to fight against worldliness and to become more and more God-centred in the way Jesus has shown us. In this regard, Mother Mazzarello reminds us that our life is a continual warfare and we must never become tired to win Heaven (Cf. L.19). ***Dear Sisters, are we ready to fight our worldliness so as to become more and more God-centred?***

May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, be our Mother and guide us in our vocational journey so that we may enjoy the grace of perseverance, patience, and meekness in the New Year that is just blossoming forth!

FEASTS OF THE MONTH

The month of January is very special and we can rightly call it a Salesian month because we start it with the solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God and as her daughters, we express our joy in celebrating our Mother's Day. We end the month with the solemnity of St. John Bosco our father and founder and a great friend of youth. We have St. Joseph Vaz, the great missionary of Sri Lanka and to him, we entrust our mission in Sri Lanka along with all our new ventures. The feast of St. Francis de Sales, our patron saint whose name we proudly bear is the example we constantly look up to in our educative interventions among the young.

Along with the other blessed of the Salesian Family, we have our young pupil Blessed Laura Vicuna to be set as a model for all our young people in their pursuit of a life of purity and integrity. I invite you to make these celebrations meaningful and life-transforming for us and for the young.

- 01 - Mary Mother of God
- 06 - Epiphany of the Lord
- 08 - Bl. Titus Zeman SDB
- 13 - Baptism of the Lord
- 15 - Bl. Luigi Variara SDB
- 16 - St. Joseph Vaz
- 18-25- Unity Octave
- 22 - Bl. Laura Vicuna
- 24 - St. Francis De Sales
- 25 - Conversion of St. Paul
- 26 - Sts. Timothy and Titus / Republic Day
- 31 - Solemnity of St. John Bosco

ALL IN THE FAMILY

PRAYER CONVENTION

As you know the Youth Charismatic Convention (YCC) was organized from November 30 to December 2 at Auxilium College, Katpadi on the theme ‘Stay with us, Lord’. Around 1050 Catholic students of classes 10, 11, 12 and of higher education from our institutions took part in this Convention. Divine Centre Prayer Group and Youth United for Christ (YU4C) from Chennai, animated this retreat.

The Convention began with the solemn inaugural session on the evening of November 30, during which most Rev. Periyannayagam Soundararaju D.D. SDB, the Bishop of Vellore blessed and inspired this huge gathering of the young people. Eucharistic celebration, adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, Sacrament of Reconciliation and other prayer instances were moments of great healing for body and soul. The climax was the laying of hands and praying over each participant. Many participants received the Anointing of the Holy Spirit and a new life in Jesus. The mega event concluded with each participant receiving a copy of the book on St. Mary Dominica Mazzarello, ‘She the First Woman’, translated into Tamil by Sr. Isabella Joseph. The three-day experience created a great impact in the life of every participant, spurring them to live a life based on the Word of God and strive towards holiness.

I wish to place on record a note of thanks to Sr. Samala J. Amalorpavam and the community of Auxilium College for hosting the grand occasion, to the Province Youth Pastoral Coordinator Sr. Madalaimuthu Lidwin Mary and her collaborators for their meticulous plan and organization, and the animators of communities who prepared the young people to participate in the convention. I request you, dear Sisters, to continue to accompany these young girls by your loving follow up and prayers.

"Holiness for you too" - STRENNA 2019

The Rector Major, Rev. Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, is extending the call to holiness to all of us with his Strenna 2019, ‘So that My Joy may be in you (Jn 15: 11): Holiness for you, too.’

Rector Major insists on an essential reality: holiness on a day to day basis. Daily sanctity becomes a reality in our lives when the Salesian Charism is lived to the full. I recommend you to take part in the dissemination of the Strenna by the Salesians in your region and make an in-depth study of it personally and in the community and make it the programme of life for the year 2019.

World Peace Day Message

His Holiness Pope Francis has given the message for the celebration of the 52 World Day of Peace on January 1, on the theme: ‘Good politics is at the service of peace’. He begins the message with the word of God “Peace to this house” (Lk. 10:5 - 6) and presents beautifully the challenges of good politics and how it can promote trust in others and participation of the young. The Pontiff also recalls the “Beatitudes of the Politician”, proposed by Vietnamese Cardinal François - Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận. Let us pray that the triple aspects of peace: peace with oneself, peace with others and peace with the creation, become a reality in our homes, in our society and in the world.

BEST WISHES AND PRAYERS

SDB Provincial Chapter 2019

Our Salesians of Chennai and Tiruchy Provinces are having the Provincial Chapter during this month, from 12 to 16, and 14-18 respectively, on the theme: ‘What kind of Salesian for the youth of today’. We extend our prayerful wishes to the Provincials and to the members of the PC 2019, that it may bring about great renewal in the life and mission of the Provinces.

XXXI Plenary Assembly of CCBI

The deputy secretary of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) has requested our prayers for XXXI Plenary Assembly of CCBI to be held from January 7 to 14, 2019, at Chennai. More than 150 Bishops are expected to gather to reflect on the theme: ‘The Joy of the Gospel’ and to make deliberations so as to revitalize the evangelizing ministry of the Church in India. Let us support our pastors with our prayers that this plenary assembly bears abundant fruit. Kindly make use of the enclosed prayer for the success of this Assembly.

Regional Congress of the Salesian Cooperators

The Salesian Co-operators will have their South Asia Regional Congress on January 25 and 26, 2019, at the Provincial House, Chennai. All the Provinces of the Region of South Asia will be participating in the Congress. We wish them all the best and the choicest of God’s blessings. From our Province Sr. Devadoss Margaret, Provincial Coordinator of the Salesian Family and Sr. Fernando Amutha, Provincial Delegate of Salesian Cooperators, will participate in it.

New Provincial Council

We congratulate the team of new councillors of Salesian Co-operators of Chennai Province namely, Mr. Aseervatham - Coordinator, Mr. John Alexander - Secretary, Mr. Maria John Bosco – Administrator, Mr. Moses – Formation Incharge, and the Councillors Mr. Marshall, Mrs. Pushpa and Mrs. Mary Demondee. We assure them of our collaboration and prayerful support.

History Writing Commission Meet

In view of the Centenary celebrations of the FMA presence in India, the core group for the History writing will meet at the Provincial House, Kodambakkam from 24 - 26 January 2019.

Sr. Yettukuri Alphonse and Sr. De Rose Amala from our Province will participate in it. We cordially welcome all the members of this commission and wish them all the best.

Training for Child Care Institutions

Sr. Kanikairaj Shermila, Sr. Putti Mary, Sr. Andrew Roseline, Sr. William Vasantha Priya, and Sr. Francis Amala Nayagi will participate in the ‘Training for the Child Care Institutions’ in Manikandam, Trichy, on January 10 and 11, 2019.

Apostolic Planning

I am happy to inform you that we will be having the evaluation of the Apostolic Planning 2018 - 19 and Plan and Project for the academic year 2019 - 20, at Auxilium College on January 20 and 21, 2019, facilitated by Fr. Joseph Xavier SJ. I request all the animators, Team members and the Heads of institutions to participate in the meet.

VIDES Monitoring trip

We welcome Sr. Pala Maria Rita, VIDES International Project Officer, and Sr. Audate Anneece, VIDES International General Director, to our Province from January 29 to February 2, 2019. They will conduct a meeting for all the VIDES Coordinators’ of our Province on February 2, at Kodambakkam.

Project Mornese

The Project Mornese for English speaking group will be held from 18 February - 17 March 2019. Sr. Anandaraj Jeya Shanthi and Sr. Isaac Angela Mary will be participating in this. I wish them fruitful experience in the land of our origins.

SINCERE THANKS

Millions of thanks to the animators and communities that hosted the various meetings of the Province and congratulations to the Sisters who organized the meetings very effectively:

- ❖ To Sr. Fernando Mary Ann and the Community of Negombo for the annual Juniors’ animation course, from December 5 to 15, and the Workshop on New Testament Spirituality for all the Sisters on 14 and 15 and to Sr. Devadoss Margaret for animating the workshop.
- ❖ To Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora and the Community of Kodambakkam for the programme: ‘Training the Facilitators of Child Care Institutions’ in partnership with Miracle Foundation on December 27 and 28 and to Sr. Kanikairaj Shermila and the Core Master Trainers for organizing the same.
- ❖ To Sr. Irudayam Nirmal Rose and the Community of Polur for conducting the retreat and the course on health and hygiene and housekeeping for the House Staff from December 28 to 30.
- ❖ To Sr. Kulandaisamy Lourdummy and the Community of Sacred Heart Home for the Workshop on New Testament Spirituality on December 29 and 30 and to Sr. Devadoss Margaret for the animation.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Heartfelt condolences and prayers:

- To Sr. Pushpa Gracy at the demise of her dear father Mr. Therese Raju (92) who passed away on December 5, 2018.

- To Fr. Provincial and confreres of Shillong Province at the death of Fr. Joseph Celia (82) on 10 December 2018.
- To Sr. Kurusinkal Alphonsa and sisters Guwahati Province at the death of Sr. Minj Alice (70) on 21 December 2018.
- To Sr. Mariadoss Amala at the passing away of her beloved mother Mrs. Philomena (92) on December 23, 2018.
- To Fr. Provincial of Kolkata and all the Confreres, at the passing away of Fr. Jose Alapurackal SDB (70) on December 27, 2018.

UPCOMING EVENTS - JANUARY 2019

05	:	Provincial Team Meet, Kodambakkam
06	:	Headmistress Meet, Kodambakkam
10 - 11	:	Submission of House Accounts, Kodambakkam
12	:	Zonal Educating Community Meet, Chetpet, Chennai / St. Mary's, Vellore
15 - 24	:	Ashram Experience for Candidates, Negombo
19	:	Provincial Community Day, Arni
20 - 21	:	Apostolic Planning Evaluation Meet, Auxilium College, Katpadi
31	:	Salesian Co-operators - Renewal of promise at the local units

As we celebrate the Harvest festival from January 13 to 16 along with the people of our State, let love, affection, joy, and hope overflow from our hearts like the milk from the '*Pongal*' pot!

I would like to conclude quoting a few lines from the Spiritual Testament of St. John Bosco, our father, and founder, "... *Watch, so that neither the love of the world nor the affection for your family or the desire for a more comfortable life tempt you to make the great mistake of profaning the sacred vows and thus betraying the religious profession by which you were consecrated to God. Let none of us take back what we have given to God. If you have loved me in the past, continue to love me in the future by the exact observance of the Constitutions*". (FMA Constitutions, pg. 468 - 469).

Happy feast of St. John Bosco and all the Salesian Saints of this month!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

**Sr. Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial**



ITINERARY OF THE PROVINCIAL

JANUARY 2019

- 01 - Provincial Office
- 02 - Journey to Dharmapuri
- 03 - 04 - Dharmapuri - Provincial Visit
- 05 - Provincial Team Meet, Kodambakkam
- 06 - Headmistress' Meet, Kodambakkam
- 07 - 09 - Chetpet, Provincial Team Visit
- 10 - 11 - Provincial Office
- 12 - SDB INM Provincial Chapter, Citadel
- 13 - 17 - Provincial Office
- 18 - Journey to Katpadi
- 19 - Provincial Community Day, Arni
- 20 - 21 - Apostolic Planning Meet, ACK
- 22 - 23 - Provincial Council, ACK
- 24 - 28 - Kodambakkam, Provincial Team Visit
- 25 - Regional Congress, Salesian Co-operators, Citadel
- 29 - 30 - Vyasarpadi, Provincial Team Visit
- 31 - Provincial Office
- 02 - 03 Feb.- Recollection and Animation for Juniors, Kodambakkam