



Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice
Salesiane di Don Bosco
S. Thomas Apostle Province - INM
Madras - India



Provincial Circular

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

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Viva Gesù!

"... the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Is. 7:14).

My Dearest Sisters,

Warm and affectionate greetings to you from the Provincial House, Kodambakkam!

I am glad to wish you **a very happy feast of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother Mary** on December 8. This feast celebrates the Church's dogmatic teaching that the Blessed Virgin was given the gift from God of being conceived without original sin. It means that from the moment of her conception, Mary was given the grace not only of freedom from original sin but of being the only human being other than her Divine Son to live a life free from sin. In 1854 Pope Pius IX, in his papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, using papal infallibility, declared the Immaculate Conception of Mary to be a doctrine. Mother Mary was given this very special Grace of liberation from the effects of sin because she would be the Mother of God and bear the second person of the Blessed Trinity in her womb. This feast expresses the grandeur of God's love. Not only does God forgive sin, but in Mary he even averts the original sin present in every man and woman who comes into this world. This is the love of God which precedes, anticipates and saves.

Let us continue to journey with our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis to explore the world of young people as we reflect on **chapter three of his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Christus vivit"**, **'You are the "now" of the God'**. In this chapter he takes time to look at the reality of young people in today's world without claiming, however, to be exhaustive in his analysis.

First of all, he points out that the world of young people is not a uniform world; demographically, socially, historically, religiously, culturally, politically and economically, they live in multiple worlds. **They are exposed to various types of suffering and manipulation** such as war and violence in different forms: kidnapping, extortion, organized crime, human trafficking, slavery and sexual exploitation, wartime rape and so forth. Some young people are discriminated because of their faith, struggle to find their place in society and endure various kinds of persecution and even murder; some others are forced to commit crimes and acts of violence (CV 72). There are also numerous young people who because of their vulnerabilities become tools of wrong ideologies and are used and exploited by the powerful; many others are deeply hurt and undergo immense suffering and yet are unable to share their suffering with anyone, "since they no longer believe in anyone" (CV 77). Do these sufferings of young people disturb us? Can we empathize with them? Our Holy Father challenges us: "Can I weep when I see a child starving, on drugs or on the street, homeless, abandoned, mistreated or exploited as a slave by society? Or is my weeping only the self-centred whining of those who cry because they want something else?" (CV 76) St. Mary Mazzarello had the tender heart of a mother. When 'Main' along with Petronilla had begun the workroom in Mornese, two orphan girls needed a home, and she willingly admitted them

in the workroom and welcomed them to reside with them permanently. The Sisters testify that Mother Mazzarello had a compassionate heart and a humane approach that enabled her to perceive instantly and identify troublesome situations and effectively soothe the consciences of her daughters.

Are we sensitive to the reality of the young people who undergo tremendous suffering right at their tender age? Do we guide our youth to find strength and comfort in Jesus and extend our care and concern toward them?

The Pope criticizes the *present-day culture* which exploits the image of the young. This culture, he says, associates beauty with a youthful appearance. Young bodies are constantly used as a means of selling products, states the Holy Father, “It is not an appreciation of youth but only its commoditization, once their utility for sale is exhausted, young people are discarded and they become victims of the throwaway culture that has spread in our societies”(CV 79). The Sovereign Pontiff continues to say that the young people live in a world that constantly exalts sexuality and that they struggle to maintain a healthy relationship with their body and live a serene affective life. As a consequence, sexual morality often tends to be a source of “incomprehension and alienation from the Church, in as much as she is viewed as a place of judgement and condemnation” (CV 81). St. Mary Mazzarello, a mere village girl of Mornese, had the wisdom to educate girls of the workroom to moral life. When carnival time returned, Mary neither bolted the door of the workroom for the girls nor did she allow them to participate in the public fair. Rather, she organized those days in such a way that the girls could enjoy it like everybody else or perhaps even more than the others, but without their getting involved in morally dangerous situations. As Salesian educators how do we counteract the negative effects of consumerist culture in order to educate our young people to sound morals and ethics?

The world of young people, in spite of its many problems, is not a completely gloomy world. In it, Pope acknowledges a deep desire for God, though often vague and lacking in the knowledge of the God of revelation. In this world we can see a glimpse of “an ideal of human fraternity” which is really a great thing. He *highlights many positive aspects of young people*: they have a genuine desire to develop their talents in order to offer something to our world, artistic sensitivity, desire to communicate and to live life differently; inner resources open to a word of incentive, wisdom and encouragement (CV 84). Like Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello do we recognize and promote the inner resources of young people entrusted to our care?

Pope Francis continues to reflect on *three important areas affecting young people* to which the Synod itself had given particular attention: **1. Digital environment** in which young people live today. It exerts tremendous influence on our understanding of self, others and the world and on our ability to communicate, learn and relate with others. **2. Issue of migration**: Church is concerned that a sizable section of migrants is young people “seeking opportunities for themselves and their families”, wanting to fulfil their dream of a better future. **3. All kinds of abuse in Society and the Church** perpetrated by some bishops, priests, religious and laity. This is a serious obstacle to the mission of the Church. The desire to dominate, lack of dialogue and transparency, forms of double life, spiritual emptiness, as well as psychological weaknesses are the terrain on which corruption thrives (CV 98).

As persons accompanying the young people are we aware of the harm lurking behind the above-said phenomenon? In the footsteps of our saintly founders and Pope Francis, the lovers of young people, let us enter into the world of the young to learn the art of accompanying them with love and care.

FEASTS OF THE MONTH

- 01 - I Sunday of Advent
- 03 - St. Francis Xavier
- 05 - Bl. Philip Rinaldi
- 09 - Feast of the Immaculate Conception
- 12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 25 - Christmas
- 26 - St. Stephen, the Proto-martyr
- 27 - St. John the Apostle & Evangelist
- 28 - Holy Innocents
- 29 - The Holy Family

ALL IN THE FAMILY

COMMUNIO INDIA SUNDAY

The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) launched *Communio India* in the year 2018 with the purpose of building a culture of sharing and caring in solidarity with our needy brothers and sisters in the country and to encourage the faithful to pray and help the missions and missionaries. This year we celebrate this day on December 1, 2019, the first Sunday of Advent with the theme “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). Let us be generous in supporting the missionary work of the Church in India and pray for missionary vocations including the lay missionaries.

HEARTY WELCOME!

I happily and warmly welcome all the Provincials of FMA India to Sri Lanka for the annual retreat from December 01 to 08, 2019 at Auxilium, Negombo, Sri Lanka. They will grace the occasion of the blessing of Novitiate building on December 8. I request your fervent prayers for the fruitfulness of our spiritual retreat.

At this important juncture, I express my heartfelt thanks to our dear Sr. Fernando Mary Ann and the community of Negombo for the dedication and hard work which enabled the successful completion of the Novitiate building. We offer prayerful greetings to Sr. Mathew Josephine Siriapushpam, Novice Mistress, Sisters and the novices, the first group to bless the new building with their presence and holy lives.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES

We rejoice to extend our hearty congratulations and send our prayerful greetings and best wishes to Rev. Msgr. Antonysamy Savarimuthu (59) who has been appointed by His Holiness Pope Francis on November 20, 2019, as the Bishop of Palayamkottai.

I am happy to share with you the news that Father General of the Jesuits has appointed Fr.L.Jebamalai Irudayaraj S.J. as the first Provincial of the soon to be established Jesuit Province of Chennai. We wish him the very best to carry out his responsibility and assure him of our fervent prayers.

We feel proud to congratulate our dear and Most Rev.Thomas Menampampil SDB, Archbishop emeritus of Guwahati for his unique contribution to the society as a messenger of

peace. He is being conferred the award of “*Ambassador for Peace*” by the Delhi-based International Human Rights Council on December 9, 2019 in New Delhi in the presence of invitees from all over the country and abroad. One of the earlier recipients of the Award is the Dalai Lama among many other internationally known figures.

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Our sincere thanks to Sr. Stanislaus Mary Dora and the Community of Kodambakkam for hosting the Tri-monthly Recollection of Seniors of Chennai zone and the juniors, and the animation of juniors on the 2 and 3 November 2019 respectively and the Miracle Midterm Review meet on November 24, 2019.
- ✚ Heartfelt thanks to the animators and communities of Mary Immaculate Convent, Tirupattur, Sacred Heart Home, Katpadi and Mornese, Yercaud for organizing the tri-monthly recollection for the senior Sisters of their respective zones.
- ✚ Sincere expressions of thanks to Sr. Joseph Jackulen Anthony and the community of Mazzarello Home, Tirupattur for holding the VIDES meet on November 24, 2019.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Sr. Joseph Jackulen Anthony will be attending the animation course for Superiors from December 7 to 13, 2019, organized by National CRI at Cluny Provincialate, Trichy.
- Sr. Kanickairaj Shermila, Sr.Lourdusamy Jebamani and Sr. Perianayagasamy Prema Rani along with Mr.Praveen Baskar of SDO will be participating in the NDF Annual Meet at Mornese, Yercaud from December 12 to 14 organized by Sr. Alphonse J. Isabella, NDF Coordinator.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones during the last month:

- ✚ To Sr.Isaac Angela at the demise of her dear mother Mrs.Mariammal (81) on November 11, 2019.
- ✚ To Sr.Pannirselvam Alphonsa at the demise of her beloved mother Mrs. Susai Theresa (83) on November 29, 2019.
- ✚ To Fr.K.M.Jose SDB and the confreres of INM Province, to Most Rev.Lawrence Pius, Bishop, and the faithful of the diocese of Dharmapuri, at the loss of Most Rev. Joseph Antony Irudayaraj SDB, D.D. (84) Bishop emeritus of Dharmapuri, on November 29, 2019.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY - DECEMBER 2019

- 03 † Sr. Baptista Giovanna (1982), Sr.Griffths Martha (2008) and Sr. Vembenickel Annina (2015)
- 04 † Sr. Berta Sperrfechter (1991)
- 07 † Sr. Fernandez Priscilla (2002)
- 08 † Sr. Fernandez Helen (2012)
- 11 † Sr. Anthony M. Josephine Rani (2004)
- 13 † Sr. Lobo Clementina (2002)
- 17 † Sr. Bout Mary (1994) and Sr. Gisbert Rafaela (2006)

- 22 † Sr. Maretti Maddalena (1966)
 27 † Sr. Fernandes Beda Maria (1967) and Sr. Daglio Angela (1996)
 28 † Sr. Arduini Raffaella (1970)
 30 † Sr. Devasahayam Victoria (2017)

UPCOMING EVENTS - DECEMBER 2019

- 10 to 20 : Juniors meet and Ashram Experience for Aspirants, Negombo
 22 - 23 & 26 - 30 : Ashram Experience for Novices Negombo
 12 to 14 : NDF Annual Meet, Yercaud
 27 : Provincial Team meet, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
 28 : Workshop of NICT, Auxilium College, Katpadi
 28 to 29 : House Staff Retreat, Pallikonda / Mannivakkam

We begin the Advent season on December 1, with eager sentiments of longing and waiting for the Lord as we cry out “*Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!*” Our hopeful waiting will soon turn into great joy and celebration on December 25, the solemnity of Christmas and during the festive season that follows. Yes, we renew the joyous proclamation of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace among those whom he favours” (Luke 2:14). Let us hearken to the call of our Holy Father who beckons, “Like the shepherds who first went with haste to the stable, let us halt in wonder before the sign that God has given us: “A baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12). In silence, let us fall to our knees and worship the newborn Christ.” (Message of Pope Francis: Christmas 2018). What does that Child, born for us of the Virgin Mary, have to tell us?

The universal message of Christmas is that God is a benevolent Father and we are all brothers and sisters. It is the core message of fraternity and friendship: Fraternity among individuals of every nation, religion and culture; Fraternity among people with different ideas, yet capable of respecting and listening to one another and celebrating the differences.

May the little child whom we contemplate today in the manger, in the cold of the night, watch over all the children of the world, and every frail, vulnerable and discarded person! May all of us receive peace and joy from the birth of the Saviour and in the knowledge that we are all loved by the one and the same heavenly Father realize anew that we are all brothers and sisters and come to live as such!

I wish each one of you, your families, Salesians, young people, and members of the Salesian family and educating community, a fervent Season of Advent and a very happy and fraternal Christmas!

Yours affectionately,
Sr. Nirmala Lazar
 Sr. Nirmala Lazar FMA
 Provincial

