



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

2020-21



PROVINCIAL CIRCULAR

Mazzarello Convent, Kodambakkam, Chennai - 600 024

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Viva Gesù!

"Behold, I am making all things new." – Revelation 21:5

My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!

A very happy New Year 2021 to you! As we begin this New Year, I pray that **"God may bless you abundantly, so that in all things and at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work"** (2 Corinthians 9:8).

The Year 2020 that seemed to have just begun has already reached its unbelievable end. We are grateful to the Lord who in his infinite goodness has brought us to see its gradual closure despite all odds of uncertainty and anxiety due to coronavirus pandemic. COVID 19 has changed our lifestyle in so many ways. We had been making every possible effort to creatively carry out the community mission, finding alternative ways of fulfilling our apostolate. Looking at a situation with the eyes of faith and responding to it in hope, love, and fidelity gives us greater reasons to experience the abiding presence of God. We are entering into the New Year with great hope and optimism because we have begun the year with Mary the mother of God; the supreme pontiff has declared it as a year with St Joseph and has given his peace message on the theme, "A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace"; Rector Major has given a hope-filled Strenna: "Moved by hope: "Behold, I make all things new"; Mother General has placed us on the right track of building up human fraternity based on the love of God; UNO has announced four themes - International year of peace and trust; Creative economy for sustainable development; Fruits and vegetables; and Elimination of Child labour. Spurred on by all these incentives we continue to cope up with the dangerous trenches of COVID-19 with the powerful weapons of prayer, faith in God, solidarity, synodality, missionary and prophetic community spirit. As we continue to forge ahead amidst the uncertainties of tomorrow the globalization of indifference may at times threaten us but the necessary antibodies of the spirit of justice, charity and solidarity will help us to keep going ahead. Let us walk along with our Blessed Mother, the Mother of God, whose feast we celebrated on the very first day of the year.

THEMES OF THE YEAR 2021

Strenna 2021

In this new year, our Rector Major, Don Angel Artime, has gifted us a very relevant Strenna, on the theme "Moved by hope: See I am making all things new" which beautifully spells out for us the pathways to hope despite the challenging ordeals the world is facing. He sums up his insights in six nuclei, highlighting the urgency for a pro-active response in an attitude of Hope. He presents to us the example of Don Bosco, our Founder, who was moved by the virtue hope, every time he had to face the harshness of situations, rejection, loneliness, misunderstandings and the tragedies of life. Rector Major draws our attention to how God, through his Spirit, accompanies the history

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of humankind, even during the most adverse and unfavourable circumstances. It is the movement of the Spirit that enables renewal, making all things new. The core message of the Strenna challenges us to a Salesian interpretation of the present moment and to give a daring and dynamic response that involves a constant movement: 1. from closure to openness, 2. from individualism to solidarity, 3. from isolation to genuine encounter, 4. from division to unity and communion, 5. from pessimism to hope, and 6. from emptiness and lack of meaning to transcendence. He concludes his message pointing towards **Mary, the star of hope**. She, who experienced helplessness and loneliness at the birth of her Son pondered in her heart the announcement of sorrow that would pierce her heart and experienced hostility and rejection directed at her Son at the foot of the Cross, understood that **Hope would not die**. I am sure you will take up an in-depth reading of the message of our Rector Major and savour the beauty of the same.

Peace Message 2021

The year 2020 was marked by a series of events particularly the pandemic Covid-19 and by various forms of fake ideologies, wars and conflicts that struck humanity in many ways. In this prevailing situation, Pope Francis in his message for the **54th World Day of Peace** has brought to light the necessity of building up a fraternity, a caring attitude for one another and care for God's creation with a well-chosen theme "**A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace**". He calls on the international community and every individual to foster a "culture of care" by advancing on the path of fraternity, justice, and peace between individuals, communities, people, and nations. His recent encyclical "Fratelli tutti" offers us valid points and thoughts for reflection and action to concretize his exhortations of living in fraternal love with all brothers and sisters. Let us, therefore, ask God for the gift of wisdom, prudence, courage, strength, and perseverance, so that peace does not remain only a desire of the heart but is translated into life choices that build up communion and fraternity in the world.

UNO Themes 2021

The UN General Assembly has proposed four themes for the year 2021 declaring it as the International Year of **Peace and Trust, Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, Fruits and Vegetables** and the **Elimination of Child Labour** in order to achieve **the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030**. The proposal recognises the need to promote peace and trust and sustained and inclusive economic growth, foster innovation and provide opportunities, benefits and empowerment for all and respect for all human rights and the ongoing need to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in diversifying production and exports, including in new sustainable growth areas and creative industries. It encourages all Member States, organizations of the United Nations System and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, private sector, non-governmental organizations, academics and individuals, to observe the International Year, to raise awareness, promote cooperation and networking, encourage sharing best practices and experiences, and directing policy attention to the nutritional and health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption, healthy diets and lifestyles, and to promote activities aimed at the eradication of child labour.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

In this second historic year in preparation for the FMA India Centenary Celebrations, we continue to 'journey with Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and Beyond', with the objective "**Accept the mandate: I entrust them to you: Reviving the Family Spirit and strengthening Community Communion**". This month I invite you to reflect on "**the Family Spirit lived and transmitted to us by the first community of Mornese, in particular, by our co-foundress**

St Mary Domenica Mazzarello” enlightened by the book of Carlo Colli SDB, “Pact of our Covenant with God”.

Like the beginnings of Don Bosco's work at Valdocco, the remote origins that constituted the prehistory of the Institute contained in germ the experience made in Mornese by the first Daughters of the Immaculate Conception who with Mary Domenica gave life to the tiny school-family, to the small hospice, and the small festive oratory can give us valuable insights into the spirit which would later shape the FMA. Carlo Colli says that there seem to reign in Mornese a more lively sense of fraternity when compared to Valdocco. Undeniably, one of these is the free flow of more people who, moved by the Spirit, little by little decide to join Mary Mazzarello to fraternally share the common ideal of life and the same apostolic anxiety. This is prolonged and accentuated after the foundation of the Institute in the expectation that Don Bosco would designate or send the one who would be the superior. All this seems to have contributed strongly to creating the family environment of the origins and, above all the ***rich and balanced personality of Mary Mazzarello and how she interpreted the service of authority***.

From the diligent documentation of the Cronistoria, we find that some aspects of the ***rich and balanced personality*** of Mother Mazzarello seem to have particularly contributed to the creation of the family environment of the origins. First of all, her ***frankness***, her implacable uprightness, absolute transparency in relationships, and her disarming sincerity. Secondly, her absolute ***impartiality***. Frankness and impartiality were dominated by ***goodness***, by her benign and indulgent understanding of the weakness and frailty of others, by her delicate attention to the person of each Sister. Knowing well that pride and selfishness are real obstacles in our relationships with God and neighbour, Mary Mazzarello practised profound humility, achieved a high level of inner freedom and acquired a remarkable capacity to live and work in ***great simplicity*** in the environment where Providence had placed her.

First of all, she ***simplifies her relationship with God*** to the utmost. She has the sense of the essential and knows how to seize it pruning it from all the complications that pride, selfishness, and vanity can build around her. True piety for her consists essentially "in fulfilling all duties at the right time and place and only out of love for the Lord" (Con Art.48), in obeying with simplicity without excessive quibbling over the given order, in being so available to God's will as to become 'the broom of the house', and in the serene acceptance of her limitations without making peace with them."

Mother Mazzarello also ***simplifies rapports with the Sisters*** and the delicate relationship between authority and obedience. She does not hesitate in assuming its precise responsibilities alien from any formalism and cancels out the distances. Maccono testifies: she considers herself the last of all and asks advice from everyone; asks permission from all of them, invites all to collaborate, and asks that no other privilege be reserved for her than that of the worst things or the hardest work. She is always ready to listen, as the following affirmation proves: Everyone could always and freely approach her and no one went to bed with a secret or bitterness in her heart". We easily understand how the relationship of simple openness, of transparent sincerity, of profound mutual trust that Mary Mazzarello was able to establish with her Sisters offers her the possibility to simplify relations between them.

Convinced that there cannot be authentic communion as long as there are privileges, preferences, and discriminations in the community she tries to maintain full ***equality*** first of all with her words

and action. Where such disparity exists by the very nature of things she seeks to be more attentive towards those who are more in need, towards the postulants, towards the infirm, with the simpler, more timid and less educated Sisters, even with indiscreet and bizarre characters.

The unconditional esteem that they nurture for her, the affection by which they feel surrounded allows Mother Mazzarello to tell them the ***truth that frees, that heals, that saves***. When she had to correct someone, a certain unction was felt, so that the one being corrected understood that she merited the reproof and that this was done only for the good of her soul, and thus she left content. On the other hand, it is also affirmed that she was prudent and delicate: she was always attentive to the character and virtue of the one with whom she spoke in order not to humiliate her too much or provoke her to anger, or make her get discouraged. If she later realized that she was wrong, she had no fear of humiliating herself by apologizing. She immediately tried to mitigate it with some good words, which showed esteem and affection and left the souls of those who were corrected serene and increasingly persuaded that Mother had spoken only for their good.

From all this, we can identify the factors that most contributed to creating in Mornese that family spirit, made of "***true union of spirit and charity***". This family environment made up of transparent relationships, of love and mutual trust, brought serenity and authentic joy to Mornese as well as Valdocco, and ends up affecting the girls. This can be verified by the continually ***increasing number of vocations*** among the girls, many of whom entered the houses of the Institute with a completely different intention than to become a Sister.

Let us then, dear Sisters, keep our Saintly mother as our model and reflect on our specific role in creating a family environment in our community and our mission field. ***What aspects of my personality contribute to the creation of the family environment? How simple is my relationship with God, with Sisters and the lay collaborators of my mission? What aspects do I need to correct in myself and strengthen in me to witness to the true union of spirit and charity?***

CELEBRATIONS DURING THE MONTH

- 01 - Mary, Mother of God
- 03 - The Epiphany of the Lord
- 08 - Bl. Titus Zeman SDB
- 10 - The Baptism of our Lord
- 15 - Bl. Louis 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 - Republic Day
- 30 - Bl Bronislao Markiewicz SDB
- 31 - St John Bosco

ALL IN THE FAMILY

NOTE OF THANKS

- ✚ Hearty congratulations and thanks to Sr Hilda Braganza, INB and the FMA India Media Team who organized the Zoom Meet of FMA PCI on 8 December 2020 from 5 to 8 pm, to celebrate the Memories of our Pioneers who arrived in North East India in the year 1923; to Sr Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, the General Visiting Councillor for the keynote address, the juniors of Auxilium College, Katpadi for the well-prepared video presentation on the life of Sr Maria Bricarello, one of the six pioneers and the community of Kodambakkam for honouring mother Mary with a Marian hymn on behalf of the Province.
- ✚ Sincere thanks to Sr Kunnathu Anna and the Community of Auxilium College Katpadi for their generous availability to host the Annual Retreat -1 from 26 December 2020 to 2 January 2021. 47 Sisters participated in this retreat preached by Fr A. J. Franklin SDB and felt renewed spiritually. We are grateful to Sr Alexander Amali, General Coordinator and the team members and Fr Clement Rosario SDB who animated the retreatants on 2 January 2021.
- ✚ Thanks a million to Sr Pathi Margaret and the community of Mannivakkam and Sr Doss Rosalia, the Directress of SEARCH Ashram, for accommodating and animating the third special retreat on 'Contemplation in Action' to 20 of our young seniors from 26 December 2020 to 5 January 2021.
- ✚ Congratulations to Sr.Ratinaswamy Regina Mary, Core Group Member, ISS – FMA Asia, for the effective organization of International Webinar on "Human Trafficking - A violation of Human Rights" of ISS- FMA Asia on 12 December 2020 from 11.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m. to mark the International Human Right's Day and to Sr.Alphonse J.Isabella for the input session on the topic of the day.

PCI PROVINCIALS AND CENTENARY COMMISSIONS MEET

On 23 December 2020 we had the on-line meet of FMA PCI centenary preparatory meet. At 10.00 a.m. the 7 provincials of PCI had the meeting to decide upon the finance for the expenses to be met by the various commissions and other common issues. At 11.00 a.m. all the coordinators of the centenary commissions along with Sr.Joseph Teresa INB, the General Coordinator of FMA PCI Centenary commissions, joined the meet and presented the action plans of each of the commissions. It was very exciting to see that all the commissions are dynamic and have started in earnest the various preparations. Thanks a million for the enthusiastic organization of Sr.Teresa, the general coordinator, and for the efficient coordination of the zoom meet of Sr.Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi, the Province Secretary.

WELCOME BACK TO SRI LANKA

We thank the Lord for the safe arrival of Sr Rodrigo Kaushalya from the Phillipines. After her profession on 31 May 2020, she remained there due to the lockdown and returned to Sri Lanka on 28 November. On her arrival, she was quarantined in a hotel for 14 days and has now joined the community at Negombo, Auxilium Convent. As we welcome her warmly, we wish her a fruitful experience of community and mission in her motherland!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW SDB PROVINCIALS

Our hearty congratulations and prayerful wishes to the SDB Provincials newly appointed by the Rector Major: Fr Jose Koyickal SDB, Provincial of the Sacred Heart Province of Bangalore (INK) and Fr Davis Maniparamben SDB, Provincial of the Province of Jesus the Good Shepherd, New Delhi (INN). We assure them of our prayers as they take up the ministry of animating the Provinces!

FMA PCI FORMATORS' MEET

The National Coordinator for Formation Sr Kanickaraj Mary Tamizharasi is organizing an online meeting from 25 to 27 January 2021, from 5 to 6.30 pm with the objective of inculturating the document 'Guidelines for the formation period of temporary vows' in which two formators from the seven Indian provinces will participate. I am happy to communicate to you that from our province Sr Fernando Mary Ann and Sr Susai Josephine Rani will take part in this meet. We wish them a fruitful work!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Let us continue to pray for all those who lost their lives due to COVID-19. Our loving prayers and condolences to all those who lost their dear ones during the last month:

- ✠ Sr Elizabeth David at the passing away of her sister in law Mrs. Fatima (66) on 27 November.
- ✠ To Sr Fernando Amutha at the demise of her dear mother Mrs Rajam Fernando (73) on 8 December.
- ✠ Sr Thomas Rita Dora and the Sisters of INB at the passing away of Sr Monteiro Beatrice (82) on 24 December.
- ✠ Fr K. M. Jose and the confreres of Chennai Province at the demise of Fr Felix Koikara (83) on 25 December.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY: JANUARY 2021

- 03 † Sr Appiano Clotilde (1968)
- 14 † Sr Villa Teresa (1989)
- 24 † Sr Mania Caterina (1983)
- † Sr Muthusamy Rosary (2018)

UPCOMING EVENTS- JANUARY 2021

- 02 : Seminar on Preventive System for retreatants in view of centenary preparation, ACK
- 03 : Provincial Team Meet, Auxilium Home, Katpadi
- 04-05 : Provincial Council, Auxilium College, Katpadi
- 09 : Educating community Meet, online
- 10-11 : Submission of House Accounts, Kodambakkam
- 11-17 : Ashram Experience for Aspirants and Postulants, Mannivakkam
- 16 : Golden Jubilee of our Sisters, Auxilium College, Katpadi
- 24 : VIDES General Body Meeting, Chetpet

A year with St Joseph

In the **Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde***, published on 8 December 2020, 150 years after the *Quemadmodum Deus Decree*, with which Blessed Pius IX declared St Joseph as Patron of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis has announced the year 2021, a special Year with Saint Joseph'. In it, Pope Francis presents him as a beloved, tender and loving, accepting, working, obedient and courageous father.

Saint Joseph is the patron of our Institute, wanted by Don Bosco (FMA Constitution 1885) to invoke his intercession and embark on a path of holiness made of silence, humble availability, and acceptance of God's signs. In the FMA communities, St. Joseph is invoked as 'treasurer' and protector of the works: "In Nizza too, St Joseph was elected "treasurer" of the house; he was entrusted with the health of the Sisters and girls and the task of distancing sin. ... Then this year, with the new building wing started in Spring, how can we not rekindle confidence in the Saint of Providence? ... Therefore, the invitation continues: "Let's pray to St Joseph! Let's tell St Joseph! The filial appeal to the head of the Holy Family is general." (Cronistoria III 170).

Beloved Mother Yvonne Reungoat in a Message on 19 March 2020, the solemnity of St. Joseph, invited all the Educating Communities of the FMA Institute to entrust themselves to his intercession during the time of particular trial for the Covid-19 pandemic: "We ask him to continue to keep alive in every Educating Community and each of us, the commitment to preparation for GC XXIV; to listen with a willing heart to the word of Mary, his Bride, who tells us: 'Do whatever He tells you' ... May he teach us to live in prayerful silence as he did in the face of delicate, precarious, and humanly difficult situations, especially due to the coronavirus." Let us confide ourselves to this powerful saint that he may watch over us with his 'patris corde'!

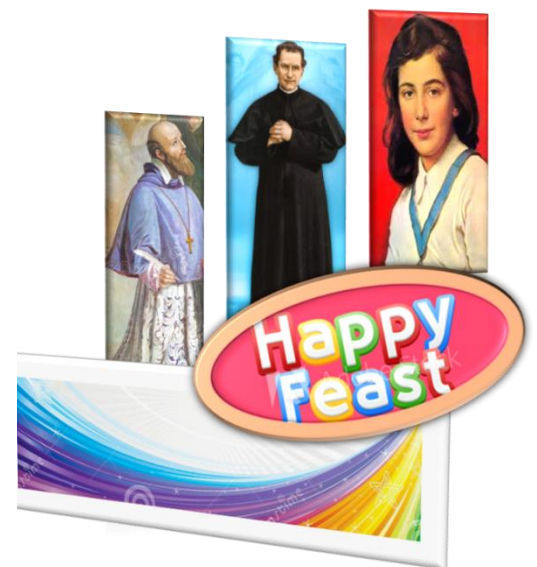
In this month we celebrate with joy the feast of our dear Salesian Saints: St Francis De Sales, the model of Salesian loving-kindness and sweetness, St John Bosco, our founder who showed us the way to love the young people and work with and for them with the zeal of 'da mihi animas' and our little Bl. Laura Vicuna, the fruit of our Salesian education. May their exemplary life spur us to walk towards the path of holiness with hope and joy.

***I wish you all Very Happy Feast of St Francis De Sales,
Blessed Laura Vicuna and St John Bosco!***

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

**Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA
Provincial**



Itinerary of the Provincial January 2021

- 03** - Team meeting, Auxilium Home
- 04-05** - Provincial Council, ACK
- 06** - Jawadhi Hills PV
- 07** - Journey to Yellagiri
- 08** - Yellagiri Hills PV
- 09** - Educating Community Meet - online
- 10** - Provincial House, Kodambakkam
- 11-13** - Visit to Novitiate, Trichy
- 14** - Provincial House, Kodambakkam
- 16** - Golden Jubilee, Finance Policy, ACK
- 18 - 21** - Kodambakkam PV
- 22** - Governing Body Meet, ACK
- 23 - 24** - Provincial House, Kodambakkam
- 25** - Thoraipakkam PV
- 27** - Vyasarpadi PV
- 28** - Nandambakkam PV
- 29-31** - Provincial House, Kodambakkam

