



INM FMA/Pro.Cir.39

September 2020

Viva Gesù!

'Here am I, the servant of the Lord: let it be with me according to your word.' (Lk. 1:38)

My Dearest Sisters,

Affectionate greetings to you from Kodambakkam!

After five months of lockdown due to COVID-19, the State government has relaxed many restrictions. But it does not mean that we can lapse our safety measures, perhaps, the worse is not over yet. We are grateful to God and our Blessed Mother Mary for their protection and providence, at the same time, we need to take care of ourselves and follow the guidelines strictly, regarding spiritual immunity, healthy diet, social distance, travel and personal cleanliness. As we are in the novena for the feast of Our Lady of Good Health, let us pray earnestly that she may continue to intercede for us and all her children. Let us go on with greater enthusiasm and creativity to accompany and reach out to our young people, staff, parents and educating community members.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

As FMA INDIA we are journeying **with Mary through the Course of the Century (1922-2022) and Beyond**. We continue our reflection on the theme **“Living our FMA Identity with Gratitude”** based on the **Fourth Article of our Constitutions** which highlights the **‘Marian Identity’** of our Salesian Religious Vocation.

“Mary Most Holy inspired our Institute and continues to be its Mother and Teacher” (C 4).

At the foundation of Don Bosco’s work and all along the course of its history, Mary Most Holy is so vividly present in every path of the Institute and intimately participating in its life that this fact must be perceived as an integral part of its Charism. It is a unique presence whose meaning perhaps has not yet been fully understood but already contributes to give a deep Marian imprint to the Institute, determining a particular style of life and action.

It seems the most important declaration for laying the historical foundation for the singular place that Mary occupies in the life of the Institute is that of the first article of the Constitutions: “Through a gift of the Holy Spirit and with the direct intervention of Mary, St John Bosco founded our Institute as a response of salvation to the profound hopes of girls and young women”. If we want to further ask ourselves on which historical statements and testimonies such declarations are based, it seems that better than one episode or other in the life of Don Bosco, we need to find its solid justification in a collection of facts that made

his work emerge. In fact, by gathering the data of his heritage in this regard, we have found that the more we study the life of Don Bosco, the more we sense its vibrations in the saint who from the time Mary entered into his life, experienced her foreseeing love, constant guidance, and the power of her intercession.

We are aware not only of Don Bosco's conviction about Mary's direct intervention in the founding of the Institute, but also in the process of its maturation and in the consciousness of an intervention that endures over time, in her continuing maternal assistance, and her living and active presence. Article 4 asserts not only that "Mary Most Holy inspired our Institute", but also that "she continues to be its mother and teacher". From this, it concludes: "***We are, therefore, a religious family that belongs entirely to Mary***". Even more explicitly, Article 44 affirms that "Mary, Mother of God and the Church, is actively present in our lives and the history of our Institute". Etched in this last statement we see the emphasis of the theological foundation that justifies this intervention: ***Mary is 'actively present'*** in the life and the history of the Institute precisely because she is 'Mother of God and the Church'.

With this consciousness matured through experience from the origins and throughout the history of the Institute, the life of the FMA becomes a life lived with 'Mary': "Let us be aware of Mary's presence in our lives". Presence not only in times of prayer, but habitually, from the time when, according to Don Bosco's affirmation, she is considered the ***'true superior' of every FMA community and the entire Institute, and also 'Mother and Teacher'***. Feeling her close, full of motherly solicitude as well as knowing the mighty power of her intercession with God Most High, arouses spontaneous feelings of love, of gratitude, and complete confidence.

"We strive to make her dispositions of faith, hope, and charity, and her perfect union with Christ, our own. Let us open our hearts to the joyous humility of her Magnificat." (C 4)

There is nothing more evangelical than this re-thinking, re-meditating, and 're-living' the figure of the Church, the Word, and the mysteries of Christ in communion with Mary. This re-living them with Her necessarily brings with it the need to make our own her way of seeing, of feeling, and of acting and thus, translate it into a life 'like hers'. Thus, Article 4, after affirming that ***"we are aware of Mary's presence in our life"***, continues by saying, "We strive to make her dispositions of faith, hope, and charity, and her perfect union with Christ, our own. Let us open our hearts to the joyous humility of her Magnificat". The Articles that develop one or another of these aspects of the process of the identification of every FMA with her as the mother are numerous.

For example, regarding formation, it emphasizes that it "is above all the work of the Holy Spirit and as such it requires listening, docility, and collaboration", and immediately adds, "Our model and guide in this fundamental attitude is Mary, Most Holy, mother and educator of every Salesian vocation". Again it is said that ***"In Mary, the Immaculate Help of Christians, let us contemplate the fullness of self-giving to God and neighbour"*** and to avoid the impression that it is a sterile contemplation and an end to itself, it adds: "Let us imitate her ***openness to God's Word***, to live as she did the beatitude of 'those who believe' and devote ourselves to apostolic action that inspires hope".

Therefore, imitating her is nothing other than configuration to Christ. The Council affirms: "But Mary's function as mother of humankind in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. The Blessed Virgin's salutary influence

on humankind originates not from any inner necessity but from the disposition of God. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but on the contrary, fosters it”.

We see that the text of the Constitutions presents Mary Most Holy as, “***Mother and Educator of every Salesian vocation***”. With her example, her word, her powerful intercession she indicates the way, guides, and in the order desired by Providence, offers a most valid and determined help for our configuration to Christ, by uniting ourselves fully to Him in seeking only the glory and will of the Father and in the total spoliation and sacrifice of ourselves to give ourselves totally to His brothers and sisters.

We shall ask ourselves the following questions which will help us to deepen the Marian dimension of our identity as FMA:

- *Am I aware of Mary's continuing maternal assistance, her living and active presence in my life and that of others?*
- *Do I have and nurture the feelings of love, of gratitude, of complete confidence in Mary Most Holy?*
- *How do I strive to make Mary's dispositions of faith, hope, and charity, and her perfect union with Christ, my own?*
- *Do I constantly seek Mary's intercession which offers a most valid help for my configuration to Christ and like her do I give myself totally to my brothers and sisters?*

CELEBRATIONS OF THE MONTH

- 05 - St Teresa of Calcutta / Teachers' Day
- 06 - Bl. Carmen Moreno & Maria Amparo Carbonell
- 08 - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary / Our Lady of Vailankanni
- 12 - Holy Name of Mary
- 14 - Exaltation of the Holy Cross
- 15 - Our Lady of Sorrows
- 21 - St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
- 22 - Bl. Joseph Calasanz & Enrico Saiz Apricio SDB & Co
- 24 - Our Lady of Ransom
- 29 - Archangels: Michael, Raphael and Gabriel

ALL IN THE FAMILY

NOTE OF THANKS

I sincerely thank and appreciate all our dear Sisters for their hard work and creativity in the organization of various on-line meetings and webinars during last month.

- Sr Mary Celine Gaspar and Sisters of Kodambakkam, Sr Anna Kunnathu and the community of Auxilium College and Sr Arockia Mary Arulanandu and Nochchiyagama community for organizing the Tri-monthly Recollection for the Juniors on 1 August; To Sr Margaret Devadoss and Sr Mary Ann Fernando who animated the Juniors on 2 August at Auxilium College and Nochchiyagama respectively.

- ✚ Sr Margaret Devadoss and the community of Sacred Heart Home for accompanying the candidates and for organizing the retreat for them from 2 to 4 August and Postulants' Medal Receiving Ceremony on 5 August.
- ✚ Sr Mary Ann Fernando for organizing the Montessori Schools' Principals' Meet, at Nochchiyagama, Sri Lanka on 3 August.
- ✚ Sr Anna Kunnathu and the Sisters of Auxilium College for their commitment and family spirit with which they prepared everything excellently for the Final commitment of our three Sisters on 5 August, and to Sr Amala Mary Mariadoss and the community of Auxilium Home, Sr Margaret Devadoss and the community of Sacred Heart Home, Sr Christina Anthony Raj and the community of St Mary's Vellore, for their sisterly collaboration which made the event a joyous celebration. May God bless and reward you abundantly.
- ✚ Sr Nirmala Mudiappaswamy, Coordinator for Youth at Risk, for conducting the Zoom Meet for Boarding Mistress and Sisters in-charge of Shelter Home on 9 August.
- ✚ Sr Arockia Jayaceli Ambrose and Sr Jackulen Joseph Anthony, Past Pupils Delegates, for the Online Past Pupils animation and orientation Meeting on 9 August.
- ✚ Sr Gracy Fatima Chinnappen and Sr Jeyamani Francis, Catechetical Coordinators for organizing a webinar on 'Scripture and Catechesis' for the Sisters: Session-1, on 13 August; Online Catechetical animation for teachers: Session-1 on 20 August and Quiz on Luke's Gospel to teachers on 25 August.
- ✚ Sr Christina Antony Raj, Academic Coordinator, for the webinar on the 'Highlights and main features of the National Education Policy 2020' for Animators, Principals and Headmistresses of Schools and Colleges on 13 August.
- ✚ Sr Solomon Kalai Lourdusamy, Media Coordinator, for the Media animation to Sisters on "Pandemic-Infodemic", on 21 August.
- ✚ To Sr Victoria Mary Joseph, Human Right Education Coordinator, for the webinar on 'Sustainable Development Goals' to the teachers of our Schools, Session-II on 22 August.
- ✚ Sr Shermila Kanikairaj, Social Development Coordinator, for organizing the Panel on Human Rights Violation and the Impact of COVID -19 to teachers and parents of Kodambakkam on 24 August.
- ✚ Sr Isabel Sirumalar Louis and Sr Jaya Sunitha Mahimai Dass, VIDES Coordinators, for the webinar on Impacts of COVID-19 for VIDES members on 29 August.

FMA PCI FORMATORS' MEET

As you know FMA India Formators' Meet was held from 24 to 28 August 2020. It was a joyful encounter and an exciting moment of meeting each other after a long time, for the FMA of north and south, east and west. Nearly 100 Sisters including FMA India Provincials, Formators and animators participated in this week-long online meeting.

For the first three days, from 24 to 26 August, all the animators of INM and INT provinces along with the PCI Formators and Provincials had the enriching experience of participating in the webinar on ‘Psychology of Relationships’ based on the Transactional Analysis of Dr Eric Berne by Sr Mary Tamizharasi Kanickaraj, the National Coordinator for Formation. The participants of FMA India were enabled to self-introspect, reflect and analyze their interactions with each other to improve the quality of relationships. We are grateful to Sr Maria Nieves Reboso, General Councillor for Formation for her enlightening video message on the first day.

On the 27 August, the Provincials and Formators reflected on the interiorization of the document: ‘Guidelines for the Formative period of temporary vows’. It was enriched by the sharing of Sr Michael Cruz (INT) with suggestions to accompany the Junior Sisters in the communities; and Sr Philomena D’Souza (INB) on “Introduction to the inculturation of the Document” by bringing out the strengths and weaknesses in the South-Asian context. This was followed by sharing of the reflections on the Document by all the provinces.

On the 28 August, we had the joy of having Sr Lucy Rose Ozhukayil, General Visiting Councillor, Rome, who gave the introductory talk. Sr Rita Dora Thomas, INB Provincial presented the overview of the itinerary of ongoing formation referring to the FMA Plan of Formation and FMA India Formation Programme, including all the salient features of formation in today’s context with its internal and external challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing formation coordinators of all the Provinces shared their journey of formation and some suggestions in this regard. The day’s reflections and sharing brought home the message that *ongoing formation is ‘being and becoming new wineskins’*. Congratulations to Sr Mary Tamizharasi Kanickaraj, National Coordinator for Formation for the well-organized zoom meeting and to Sr Margaret Amalanathan, President, FMA-PCI, for her constant guidance and accompaniment.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

HOLY FATHER’S INTENTION: ‘That the Planet’s resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner’.

Please continue to offer your special prayers for the approval of the plans of the Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) building in Kodambakkam.

SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation is an annual ecumenical event held from 1 September to 4 October. It is meant to be a time of prayer and action in favour of our common home. Inaugurating the Season last year, Pope Francis said: “This is the season for letting our prayer be inspired anew by closeness to nature which spontaneously leads us to give thanks to God the Creator. It is also a season to reflect on our lifestyles and how our daily decisions about food, consumption, transportation, use of water, energy and many other material goods, can often be thoughtless and harmful”. As we celebrate this Season of Creation, I request all our communities to evaluate our ‘ethics of enough’ and focus on the initiatives which will maintain and enhance the greenery in our campuses and earnestly embark on this green path.

HEARTFELT SYMPATHIES

Thank you, dear Sisters, for your closeness and prayers for me and my family during the sorrowful moment of the sudden demise of my nephew Melvin Gilbert (20) on 19 August. Kindly continue to support with your prayers my brother's family who suffer the loss of their only child.

May God grant eternal peace to 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:

- ✠ To Sr Cecilia Devasahayam at the passing away of her nephew Mr Gilbert (61) on 10 August.
- ✠ To Sr Philo Rani Soosey at the demise of her younger brother Mr Felix (60) on 13 August.
- ✠ To Fr Joseph Pauria, Provincial and the Confreres of INC Province at the passing away of Fr Thomas Kanjirathumkal (87) on 3 August 2020 due to COVID-19 and Fr Reginald Thomas D'Silva (68) on 16 August.
- ✠ To Sr Mathalen Mary Anthony Cruz at the sudden demise of her young brother Franklin (21) on 22 August.

LIVING IN OUR MEMORY: SEPTEMBER 2020

- 04 ✠ Sr Maria Dal Corso (1986)
- 06 ✠ Sr Elizabeth Gullery (1996)
- 12 ✠ Sr Giacomina Borrini (1972) & Sr Maude Hale (2009)
- 13 ✠ Sr Judith Aranha (2011)
- 19 ✠ Sr Stefanina Stefani (1949)
- 23 ✠ Sr Maddalena Marengo (1978) & Sr Margaret Yettukuri (2004)

UPCOMING EVENTS: SEPTEMBER 2020

- 01-10 : Ashram Experience for Intensive Juniorate Sisters, Mannivakkam
- 06 : Provincial Council, Kodambakkam
- 12 : Orientation for local YPC on 'Laudato Si', Zoom Meet
- 12 : Media animation for students on: The Impact and Role of Social Media during COVID 19
- 13 : Catechetical animation-2 on Case Study, Games and Songs and the Methodology of Teaching Catechesis using Scripture'.
- 14 : Online course for Sisters on Social Entrepreneurship, Organization Management, and Social work
- 16 : Online updating course on Clinical Psychology for Marialaya Sisters
- 18 : Quiz on Luke's Gospel chapters: 9 to16
- 19 : Online Human Rights Animation on Sustainable Development Goals for Teachers and Students-Session III
- 30 : Presentation of a lesson plan on a parable from Luke's Gospel

Every human birth is a call for new hope in the world. The child has the potential to be a channel of God's love and peace. All this is true in a magnificent way in Mary. Birthday celebrations bring happiness to the celebrant as well as to family and friends. On 8 September we celebrate with joy

the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on its traditional fixed date nine months after the 8 December, the celebration of her Immaculate Conception as the child of Saints Joachim and Anne.

If Jesus is the perfect expression of God's love, Mary is the foreshadowing of that love. If Jesus has brought the fullness of salvation, Mary is its dawning. Saint Augustine connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. ***"She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth, the nature we have inherited from our first parents is changed."*** Through her, by the will of the Trinity, the unbelieving receive the gift of faith; the afflicted are tendered the works of mercy, and the members of Christ grow in the likeness of their Head. In Mary human nature is exalted.

As we rejoice at the nativity of our blessed Mother Mary, we also celebrate the popular feast of **Our Lady of Vailankanni, Our Lady of Good Health**. The mother who appeared at Vailankanni gives us the message of health, hope, wellness and joy. Let us often call upon the Blessed Virgin as **'Cause of our joy'**, one of the most beautiful titles attributed to her. Through the powerful intercession of **'Health of the sick'** let us intensify our prayers for all her children across the globe who are afflicted by the pandemic COVID-19, especially our Sisters, members of the Salesian family, our dear ones who are sick, her devotees and all those who have recommended themselves to our prayers. On 08 September, the day dedicated to the Girl Child, let us renew our commitment to the cause of the millions of girl children who are not able to enjoy their childhood.

Let us greet with joy all our teachers who render a truly laudable service in our institutions across the province. Although the ongoing pandemic will certainly restrain the celebration of the occasion this year, I am sure we will find ways to express our gratitude to them using social media and offer our prayers for them. May God bless them abundantly for the dedicated service they offer as collaborators in our educational ministry!

I wish you all very Happy Teachers' Day & Birthday of Mother Mary!

Yours affectionately,

Sr. Nirmala Lazar

Sr Nirmala Lazar FMA

Happy
Feast

